


- Ask the children to analyse the use of colour in this description. Encourage them to construct a table in which each column is used for a different colour, with each row listing a different object seen. Then ask different individuals to tell the class what objects they have identified in a particular colour.
- Eva writes in her diary, 'I wish Mama could have seen it'. Ask the children to adopt the persona of Eva and, writing in the first person as she does here, compose a letter to her mother in Spain. Discuss how her language might differ in a personal letter. Then allow the children to write in the style of a twenty-first century letter or e-mail, describing the same event. Encourage them to choose a different range of colours as they describe the scene – for example, silver and blue rather than gold and red.
-  Initiate a class discussion of wedding customs by describing a wedding that you attended. Fully involve any children from different cultural backgrounds and ask them to tell you about any special wedding traditions that they know about. Encourage the other children to contribute by asking questions and making comparisons.

The way through the woods (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 4 (page 8)


Genre: Classic poem

Author: Rudyard Kipling

Introduction This elegantly lyrical poem is worth reading aloud, to enjoy the atmospheric use of alliteration, assonance, rhythm and rhyme. The children may recognise Rudyard Kipling's name as author of *The Jungle Book* and the *Just So Stories*. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading.

Answers 1. 'anemones' 2. *it is overgrown; animals and birds are unafraid; trees grow where the road once ran* 3. *the riders are heard, not seen; the sound follows the course of the now non-existent road* 4. *the otter's mating call* 5. *uninhabited areas; lonely, isolated, secluded places* 6. *fish (trout) surfacing* 7a. *e.g. a rise in tempo to emulate the horse's cantering feet; slowing down for the 'misty solitudes'* 7b. *e.g. quieter when the text describes isolation and slightly louder when the keeper is mentioned – reflecting the human presence – and/or the noisy horse's hooves.*

Further activities

- Check that the children understand the language used ('undone', 'coppice', 'heath', 'cantering'). Explain to them the meaning of 'the keeper' (gamekeeper), and why he is the only person who can see where the road once ran. (It is likely that he has known the forest for many years and is familiar with every inch of the land and the animals that inhabit it.)
- Challenge the children to name all the animals mentioned in the poem (ring-dove, badger, trout, otter and ghostly horse) and to suggest other animals that might also have been in the wood, though they are not referred to here.
- Ask the children, in twos, to describe to each other an outdoor place that they know well. Encourage them to draw on all their senses, especially those of sight, sound and smell. Partners should ask questions to elicit further detail. Let the children make notes and begin to draft a poem about this familiar location, describing the feelings it evokes in them when they visit.
-  Invite the children to look for further poems by Rudyard Kipling. Ask every child to choose an extract they enjoy to present to the rest of the group, explaining what they like about it.

Chocolate (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 4 (page 10)

Source: *Boy, Tales of Childhood*

Genre: Autobiography


Author: Roald Dahl

Introduction Even Dahl's autobiographical writing has a story-telling tone and the children will doubtless recognise the author's schoolboy experience as a source of inspiration for his popular book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*: film versions of this novel are available on DVD. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading.

Another text by Roald Dahl appears in **Key Stage 2 Comprehension Book 3** (page 12, 'Matilda joins Crunchem Hall', which is an extract from *Matilda*).

Answers 1. *it is fact-based autobiography* 2. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* 3. *so that the testers would be influenced by taste alone; at that stage of development a name would serve no purpose* 4a. *Cadbury's Coffee Cream bar* 4b. *as a 'benchmark'; as a known quantity, for comparison purposes* 5. *took part enthusiastically* 6a. *they were old enough to have wide experience of eating chocolate; they knew every existing bar intimately* 6b. *'connoisseurs'* 7. *not distinctive enough in flavour to be widely popular* 8. *'irresistible'*.

Further activities

- Ensure that the children understand any unfamiliar vocabulary – for example, 'manufacturers', 'stunt', 'palate', 'laboratory', 'concocting'.
- Invite the children to imagine their own perfect chocolate box collection. What fillings would they like? What flavours, textures, colours, shapes? Ask them to write a mouth-watering description of each of a dozen new chocolates, giving each a temptingly descriptive name reflecting its properties (for example, Strawberry Sizzle or Damson Diamond).
-  Ask individuals to list their 12 chocolate names and read out their 12 descriptions, while the rest of the group give marks out of 10 according to how attractive the author has made each chocolate sound. The children should take into account the name of the chocolate as well as its description. Find out which is the most popular and discuss how successful the writing was in its appeal. List the 12 most popular chocolate names and vote on a favourite, creating a bar chart of the results.
- Challenge the children to write a memory from their first week at school: they should include how they felt, what happened, why they will never forget it. (A battle in the sand tray? Spilling paint? Making a new friend? Feeling homesick?)

Two owls (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 4 (page 12)


Author: 'The Owl', Edward Thomas;
'Owl', John Agard

Genre: Classic poem and more recent poem

Introduction These two poems, dating from opposite ends of the twentieth century, offer an opportunity to compare a classic and a more recent poem describing the same subject. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the poems to the children before they start reading.

Answers 1. the first person 2a. hunger, cold, tiredness 2b. *he reaches an inn that meets all his needs* 3. *both offer shelter, an observation platform, a contrast to the night outdoors* 4. *the owl sounds sad, which makes the speaker sound sad in sympathy* 5a. 'melancholy' 5b. *sad and gloomy* 6. *he thinks about all homeless people, sleeping rough, especially soldiers and the poor* 7. the owl 8. rhetorical 9a. e.g. a hollow tree seems like heaven 9b. e.g. the moon puffs out my feathers 10. *cold: owl's feathers puffed out; clear night encourages frost and makes things 'twinkle'* 11. *it is made up of four-line verses (quatrains) with regular metre or ABCB traditional rhyme pattern* 12. *that owls are wise.*

Further activities

- Ask the children to draw a picture of something they have all seen – such as a tree. Advise them to think of a specific tree that they can picture in their mind's eye. When they have drawn it, ask them to add some other elements to their drawing – perhaps someone climbing the tree, or a building nearby, or a creature in or near the tree, or flowers nearby. Finally, ask them to put themselves in the picture. Collect the pictures and look at each in turn, reminding the children that they were all given the same subject to draw: a tree, and yet each picture is different. Explain that it is the same with poetic writing. There are many English poems in existence on the subject of owls. Just as each person draws a different picture, so each poet will paint (in words) a different image of the same subject. Invite them to write a poem about their tree, focusing on whatever aspect is most striking to them: for example, the tree itself, its age and physical appearance; its 'function' to animals who thrive in it; the shade it offers from the sun; the sound of the wind through its leaves; the smell and taste of its fruit, and so on.
- Read both owl poems aloud. Focus on selected elements of the detail of the poems – particularly those not covered by the comprehension questions. In the first, ask the children the meaning of 'All of the night was quite barred out' (line 7). In the second, ask them the meaning of 'bespectacled' (line 6).
-  Ask the children to choose the poem they like best and explain in a few sentences why they like it. Invite them to find more poems by these two poets to read and present to the rest of the group – again, saying why they like them.

Mammoth find (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 4 (page 14)

Source: *Guardian*, 11 July 2007

Genre: News report

Author: Luke Harding

Introduction The extremely cold climate and isolation of Siberia helped preserve the carcass of this juvenile woolly mammoth for around 10 000 years. The rarity of such a complete specimen is what made this valuable find so newsworthy. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading.

Answers 1a. a baby woolly mammoth 1b. *to grab readers' interest and make them read on* 2. *cold, sparse Arctic area with few trees* 3. northern Russia/Siberia 4. *the animal is complete and well preserved* 5. female 6. 'lopsided' 7. *by selling them as souvenirs* 8. *illegal trade* 9. around 12 000 years ago/during the Ice Age/Pleistocene era 10. 'It is being sent to Japan for further tests.'

Further activities

- Reiterate that the opening paragraph of this article contains the pronouns 'its' and 'it', which are normally only used after the noun in whose place they stand. Discuss why the