

Introduction

Children in the final year of primary school and those moving on into secondary school should read fluently, accurately and independently. When asked questions about what they have read, they should be able to support their responses with references to the text, showing and explaining preferences and opinions. They should also be able to draw conclusions through direct comprehension and inferential deduction.

Meanwhile, the children's vocabulary will be increasing – particularly their 'passive' vocabulary, which comprises the words that they understand but do not yet use. As they meet new words, the meaning should usually be apparent from context, through association of words with a common root, and by syntactical clues, such as a word's function in a sentence. Nevertheless, a dictionary will prove invaluable.

Because the children will meet many new words in this book and because some familiar words have entirely different meanings when used in different contexts, it is recommended that they have dictionaries to refer to throughout.

The texts in this book reflect the broadening interest areas of young people. They offer a variety of genres, including fiction and drama from different times and cultures, diaries, information texts, articles and a letter. The close reading of poetry in a range of styles and forms will encourage comparison and comment.

The comprehension questions will help the children to appraise and evaluate texts, recognising themes, objectives and perspectives while retrieving information and supporting their opinions with specific references. The questions will also increase children's awareness of the structure of different texts, the devices of layout and the choice of language used.

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