

# Dragonology

by Dugald Steer

 Printable text •  Modelling slides  Photocopiable text and questions • pages 34 to 37

Children have always been fascinated by magical and mythical creatures, arguably none more so than the dragon. This unit's text is a work of fiction written in the style of non-fiction. The author, Dugald Steer, takes on the imaginary role of a dragonologist to inform readers about the fictional science of dragonology and explain how to become a dragonologist. You could discuss this text alongside that of [Unit 2](#), an extract from *How to Train Your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell.

## 1 Get ready

Discuss the **Key vocabulary** identified in the **Language toolkit** and then complete the vocabulary activities as desired. Please note that the selected vocabulary is a guide. Depending on the needs of your cohort, additional vocabulary discussion may be beneficial before, during and after reading. Next, display the text (pages 34 to 35) so the children can see the title and any illustrations, and encourage the children to discuss the following questions before reading.

- This text is written in the style of a non-fiction text but it is about a fictional topic. Have you read any other books like this?**  
If the children have not read texts like this before, you may wish to share some similar titles from the **Reading list**. It is important that the children understand that this text blends fiction and non-fiction.
- The text is about the study of a mythical creature. What is a mythical creature? Can you name any?**  
If the children do not understand what a mythical creature is, spend some time exploring the concept, and offer some of your own examples (e.g. unicorns; mermaids; the Minotaur).
- This text is about a particular mythical creature: the dragon. What do you know about dragons?**  
Many children are likely to have encountered dragons in other stories they have read and films they have watched. You could relate the children's knowledge to other subjects (e.g. how dragons feature in celebrations for Chinese New Year).
- This text is written in the style of a how-to guide. What features might you expect to find?**  
Answers will vary. You may wish to discuss an example of a how-to text, such as those in the non-fiction section of the **Reading list**, to help the children identify common features such as lists of equipment, sequential steps and warnings.

## Language toolkit

### Key vocabulary

depleted	diligently	enhancing
eschew	exhortations	grave
hypnosis	mechanism	put into perspective
retribution	tendency	underestimated

### Vocabulary discussion questions

- If something is **put into perspective**, does it help you to understand it more clearly? Why?
- If everyone in the class was working **diligently**, what would they be doing?
- What do you have a **tendency** to do as soon as you get home from school?
- If my fruit bowl is looking **depleted**, do I have lots of fruit or do I need to buy more?

### Vocabulary activities

- The word **grave** is used in this text as an adjective meaning 'very serious/bad', but it can also be used as a noun meaning 'a place where people are buried'. Can the children think of other homonyms?
- Retribution** comes from the Latin verb *retribuere*, from *re* meaning 'back' and *tribuere* meaning 'to assign' or 'to give'. Discuss possible synonyms for **retribution** (e.g. 'payback'; 'punishment'; 'revenge'). How many verbs can the children find that use 're-' in the same way?
- Explore the meanings of **eschew** and **exhortations**. Share some example sentences using the two words and challenge the children to come up with their own sentence ideas.

