

FICTION

TO 14

ANSWER BOOK

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

2.1 'Games at Twilight' by Anita Desai, 1978

Basic reading skills (page 25)

- 1 Re-read the opening paragraph. What different emotions is Ravi feeling here?

Delight, fear, relief, suspense

- 2 List four things that the shed smells of.

Rats, ant hills, dust, spider webs

- 3 What is the only source of light in the shed?

The light from the cracks around the door

- 4 Explain why you think Ravi hunches himself into a ball.

He is scared and doesn't want anything to touch him.

- 5 Why does Ravi begin to tremble in the final paragraph?

He has been still and tense for so long.

- 6 Draw a simple sketch of the setting. Use labels and arrows to highlight any specific details.

The sketch should include some, or all, of the following features: inside shed with low roof, door, old wardrobes, broken buckets, bedsteads piled on top of each other, an old bathtub, cobwebs and insects, dust, rats.

Advanced reading skills (page 25)

- 1 Re-read the opening paragraph. What other location does the author contrast the current setting with? What effect does this create?

The linen cupboard. This is contrasted as a comfortable, clean place that smelt of starch and his mother, whereas the shed is dirty, full of dust, insects, nasty smells and possibly snakes. The contrast between the two emphasizes Ravi's discomfort in the shed.

- 2 Look at the following descriptive details from the text. Choose one and explain how it conveys Ravi's fear.

'It was dark, spooky in the shed.'

'It had a muffled smell, as of graves.'

'The roof was very low.'

Sample answer

'It had a muffled smell, as of graves.' This description conveys Ravi's fear because of the mention of 'graves' with their connotations of death and decay. The word 'muffled' suggests that no sounds can be heard on the outside, conveying the impression of being trapped in an airless place where one could suffocate.

- 3 Writers can use repetition for emphasis or to draw the reader's attention to specific details. Find an example of repetition in the extract and explain the specific effect it creates.

Sample answer

'like a snake. Snakes!' The repetition of the word 'snake' is effective because it is first mentioned as a logical conclusion to something that Ravi is thinking about, but its repetition as an exclamation echoes Ravi being startled at the possibility, as he realizes snakes can be dangerous and he is immediately alarmed.

- 4a Writers can convey atmosphere through their choice of imagery. Choose an adjective from the list below that best describes the atmosphere of the text.

tense sinister cheerful
claustrophobic calm

Claustrophobic

- 4b Select the quotation that you think most effectively contributes to creating this atmosphere. Give reasons for your choice.

Sample answer

'how many more creatures were watching him, waiting to reach out and touch him, the stranger'

This image increases the sense of claustrophobia because Ravi is trying to stay as small as possible so that nothing touches him, even though he imagines crowds of other creatures in the shed, just wanting to invade his space.

- 5 How does the writer's use of sentence forms and punctuation help to build up a picture of the setting?

Sample answer

The writer builds up an idea of the setting using conjunctions at the beginning of sentences, 'also', 'but', 'and', linking new features as Ravi thinks of them and gradually becomes more aware of his surroundings. The sentences describing the linen cupboard have multiple clauses and flow smoothly, reflecting the relative peace of that place. In contrast, the writer uses shorter, often simpler sentences in describing the shed. The use of multiple commas and dashes gives the writing a slightly breathless, tense feel, as if Ravi's own breath is uneven and his thoughts are anxious and fragmented. In the final paragraph Ravi relaxes more and the sentences become longer as he looks more carefully at what's in the shed. The list of objects and commas echo the heaped up stack of old furniture and household goods.

- 6 At the end of the extract, do you think Ravi wants to be found? Refer to the text to support your answer.

Sample answer

I think Ravi would like to be found by the end of the extract. We are told that he was trembling 'with the effort, the inaction', and the squashed spider had dried on his neck. The fact that he sits down on the edge of the bath indicates that he is relaxing, not caring quite so much if he makes a noise, and he is tired.

2.2 Railhead by Philip Reeve, 2015

Basic reading skills (page 28)

- 1 Re-read the opening paragraph.
- a List three details that show Ambersai station is a noisy place.
Booming loudspeakers, buskers, captains squabbling
- b List four types of people who can be seen at the station.
Beggars, street kids, buskers, street vendors

- 2 How do Zen's actions indicate that he is nervous? List one detail from the text and explain how this suggests his nervousness.

'Itching to look behind him' suggests that Zen feels uneasy and has to restrain his instinct to keep looking around him.

- 3 Zen's luck is described as 'glitchy'. Write down what you think 'glitchy' means in this context.

Likely to be difficult or prone to disruption

- 4 What is Zen being followed by?

A drone

- 5 Re-read the closing paragraph. Write down two ways in which this world is different from the world Zen has just left.

It is daytime and the gravity is lower.

Advanced reading skills (page 28)

- 1 Figurative language, including similes and metaphors, is often used by authors to create comparisons that can help to convey settings and characters in vivid and interesting ways.

a Ambersai station is described as 'grand and high-fronted like a great theatre'. What impression does this give you of the station?

Sample answer

It is large and ornate, a statement building designed to impress by its architecture. Perhaps suggestive of a place where dramatic or important things happen.

b Identify three more examples of figurative language from the text. Choose the example you think is most effective and explain the impression it creates.

Sample answer

'eyes big and empty as the eyes on moths' wings'

'the blank windows'

'a whole spider-cluster of eyes'

The simile about the eyes on moths' wings creates an impression of trickery, because these are eyes that can't really see anything, they are just designed to look like eyes and scare off enemies.

- 2 Look at the description of the Express. Choose one adjective from the list below that best describes the impression the writer gives you of the train.

impressive shabby majestic
grand ordinary

Select a textual detail that you think helps to create this impression and explain the reason for your choice.

Sample answer

Majestic. The description of the hull 'sheathed in shining red-gold scales' hints at wealth and royalty, with strong scales protecting the valuable contents.

- 3 The writer uses onomatopoeia to describe the movement of the drone 'as it burred along'. What does the verb 'burred' make you think of the way the drone is moving?

Sample answer

The verb 'burred' makes me think of the sound of the rotor blades as they swish round and round in a constant, smooth motion, echoing the persistent and constant motion of the drone.

- 4a The writer describes the train travelling through the K-gate 'with a soundless bang - a kind of un-bang'. Explain how the writer plays with language here and what effect it creates.

Sample answer

An 'un-bang' is a contradictory expression, as a bang is a loud noise that you can hear, but it's difficult to imagine an 'un-bang', unless it is like a pop, or an inverted bang somehow. This expression creates the effect of surprise and inversion, implying that something has been reversed or cancelled out.

- 4b Select two other details that help to convey the experience of travelling between the stars. Explain the effect each of these details helps to create.

Sample answer

'There was a sense of falling, although there was no longer any down to fall to.' This description creates an effect of otherworldliness and disorientation because things aren't anchored in the same way. The sense of direction and position is different, so recalibration is needed.

'Everything got reassuringly weird.' This description is intriguing because it is contradictory. 'Reassuringly' suggests that something is comfortable in its familiarity, but 'weird' suggests something out of the ordinary, away from the normal.

- 5 Read what this student says about the text:

I think the writer takes a familiar experience and makes it extraordinary.

Explain what you think this student means and then say whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Give reasons for your answer.

Sample answer

I think this student means that there is plenty of detail that echoes our normal experiences, but also additional detail that makes it out of the ordinary and rather fantastical. I agree with this view.

2.3 Dracula by Bram Stoker, 1897

Basic reading skills (page 32)

- 1 Re-read the opening paragraph. List three things you learn about the weather.
It is windy, cold and snowing.
- 2 What makes the driver stop the coach?
He sees a flickering blue flame.
- 3 The narrator reports seeing a strange optical effect. In your own words, explain what this is.
The flame can be seen through the body of the coach driver, as if he is transparent.

2. Setting

4a What causes the horses pulling the coach to 'snort and scream with fright'?

The horses are aware of the wolves gathering around the coach.

4b Find a phrase or sentence in the text which tells you that the narrator experiences the same emotion.

'I felt a sort of paralysis of fear.'

5 What causes the wolves to disappear?

The driver issues a command from the road and gestures with his arms.

6 Draw a map showing the narrator's journey to Castle Dracula as described in the text. Use labels and arrows to highlight any specific details about the landscape the coach travels through and the incidents that occur on the journey.

The map should include the road, the castle, the woods, the hills and troughs, rocks and blue flames close to and distant from the road.

Advanced reading skills (page 32)

1 Look again at the opening sentence: 'Soon we were hemmed in with trees, which in places arched right over the roadway till we passed as through a tunnel; and again great frowning rocks guarded us boldly on either side.'

a What impression does this sentence give you of the setting?

This gives an impression of a hostile, powerful and menacing setting.

b How does the writer's use of prepositions help to create a claustrophobic sense of place?

The prepositions and prepositional phrases 'hemmed in with', 'over', 'through', 'on either side' build up a sense of enclosure and claustrophobia, as though there is no escape.

2a Create a tension graph to plot how the tension builds in the text. You should record the details and quotations that help to create a tense or unsettling atmosphere on the graph, positioning these to show the rise and fall of tension in the text.

Quotations might include:

'frowning rocks'

The wind 'moaned and whistled'

'trees crashed together'

'howling of dogs'

'baying of the wolves'

'awful nightmare'

'horses began to tremble and scream with fright'

The wolves were 'a hundred times more terrible'

'living ring of terror'

'his voice raised in a tone of imperious command'

'vast ruined castle'

'no ray of light'

'broken battlements'

2b Identify the point in the text where you think the tension reaches a climax.

'living ring of terror'

3 Look again at the final paragraph where the narrator arrives at Dracula's castle. What impression do you get of this location? How does the writer use language to convey this?

Sample answer

The writer gives the impression that the castle has seen violence ('broken battlements') and is ancient and decaying ('ruined'). It also appears uninhabited and cold as there is 'no ray of light' from the windows. The words 'vast' and 'black' convey the suggestions of power and things which are hidden.

4 Read what this student says about the text:

I think the setting is quite clichéd.

Explain what you think the student means and say whether you agree or disagree with their statement. Justify your answer with references to the text.

Sample answer

I think that the student means that the description of the setting isn't very original, as lots of horror stories contain similar features, for example, the dark night, cold ruined castle, black windows, etc. However, this story was written at the end of the 19th century and was one of the first to make gothic novels popular, so although we judge it as clichéd now, because so much has since been written in a similar way, when it was first written it was probably fresher and more unusual.

8.1 *The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd, 2007

Basic reading skills (page 92)

- 1 Re-read the opening four paragraphs.
- a What does Kat want to tell Mum and Aunt Gloria about what has happened to Salim?**

Kat wants to lie and say that Salim got lost in the crowds.

- b What action does Kat perform that suggests she wants Ted to do as she says?**

Kat grabs Ted by the wrist.

- c What word does Ted repeat? What does this suggest he thinks about Kat's suggestion?**

Ted repeats the word 'lie' because he's not sure exactly what Kat intends. He also probably knows that lying is wrong, so he is hesitating.

- d Why does she change her mind about what they should say to Mum and Aunt Gloria?**

Kat changes her mind because she knows that Ted is useless at telling lies.

- 2 The narrator says his mum and Aunt Gloria are 'sat talking up another storm'. Using your own words, explain what this phrase suggests.

This phrase suggests that the two women are talking intensely and emotionally about a subject, perhaps using lots of gestures and speaking quite loudly.

- 3 Why does Ted say the man gave them a free ticket for the London Eye?

Ted said the man gave them a free ticket because he had claustrophobia.

- 4 'Mum's face scrunched up' but 'Aunt Gloria's face remained smooth like paper without a crease'. Explain what this contrast suggests about their different emotions.

This description suggests that Mum is very anxious and worried, so the lines and concentration show in her face. Aunt Gloria's smooth face suggests that she is unruffled, not too concerned.

- 5 Where does Aunt Gloria think Salim is?

She thinks he is going round the Eye one more time.

Advanced reading skills (page 93)

- 1 The way people speak reflects who they are. What different impressions do you get of Ted and Kat from their dialogue in this extract?

Sample answer

Kat gives the impression of being quite forceful and outspoken because she grabs Ted's wrist and tries to tell him what to do. However, she is also realistic because then she remembers that Ted can't lie convincingly. Kat's speech seems to be quick and tumbles freely from her. She uses lots of short sentences conveying a sense of urgency. She is obviously anxious because she has her hand to her mouth and her fingers are wriggling. She is agitated. Ted, on the other hand, seems much more measured in what he says. He is more analytical than Kat, shown when he explains that Salim 'defied the law of gravity'. He is also a bit slow at working things out, as he knows that his mother's face could signify three different things – he's not very intuitive.

- 2 Look at Mum's and Aunt Gloria's dialogue. Copy and complete the following sentences to explain how their reaction to Ted and Kat changes.

When Mum says, 'What on earth do you mean, he wasn't on it?' this shows that Mum is reacting with alarm to what Ted and Kat say.

When Aunt Gloria says, 'Bet I know what happened' this suggests that there is a perfectly reasonable explanation and that there is no need to worry after all.

- 3 Look at the following student's statement about the extract:

The dialogue adds to the tension of this scene.

a Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement.

Sample answer

I agree that the dialogue adds to the tension of the scene because the reader is initially alarmed, then reassured, then alarmed again, so the tension is increased because it is intermittent. The adults voice alarm and reassurance, then alarm again.

b Find the most tense line of dialogue and explain your choice.

Sample answer

I think the most tense line of dialogue is, 'He defied the law of gravity. He went up but he didn't come down. Which means Newton got it wrong.' I think this is alarming because it also suggests something mysterious, almost magical or supernatural, has happened.

4 This extract is written in the first person from Ted's perspective.

a Choose a word from the list below that you think best describes Ted's narrative voice.

worried conversational sensitive
thoughtful determined touching

Thoughtful

b Give reasons for your choice.

Sample answer

I think 'thoughtful' is appropriate because it isn't particularly emotional or chatty but seems to be trying to work things out in a logical manner.

8.2 The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie by Muriel Spark, 1961

Basic reading skills (page 96)

1 Why does the headmistress say the girls need to work hard this year?

They need to pass their qualifying examination.

2 List two things Miss Brodie does that show her annoyance at the headmistress.

She shuts the door that the headmistress left open, and stares at the door after her departure.

3 Why does Miss Brodie keep a long division sum on her blackboard?

If anyone comes in when they are supposed to be doing maths it will seem as though they really are studying maths.

4 Miss Brodie says, 'I don't believe in talking down to children, you are capable of grasping more than is generally appreciated by your elders.' Using your own words, explain what she means by this.

Miss Brodie means that she talks to children almost as if they are equals or adults because she thinks that children are far more intelligent than most adults give them credit for.

5a Choose an adjective from the list below that you think best describes Miss Brodie's personality.

rude mean superior stern
strict polite refined

Superior

5b Select the line of Miss Brodie's dialogue that you think best suggests your chosen adjective. Explain your choice of quotation.

Sample answer

'Qualifying examination or no qualifying examination, you will have the benefit of my experiences in Italy.' This sentence suggests that Miss Brodie sees herself as above the instructions of the headmistress. She is dismissive of the examination, believing that what she has to tell the girls is much more important.

Advanced reading skills (page 96)

1 Re-read the opening three paragraphs. What impression do you get of the headmistress from this section? Think about her actions and dialogue.

Sample answer

The headmistress seems rather lax in her behaviour, leaving the door open, much to Miss Brodie's annoyance. We get the impression that perhaps she isn't as aware as she should be of what is going on (the class aren't really studying maths) and she doesn't spend a lot of time finding out (she says she's 'only just looked in'). The way she speaks to the girls is rather dull. She repeats the description 'nice' and just comments on their looks, without much apparent depth of interest or attempt to engage the girls.

2 Which line of dialogue does Miss Brodie repeat? What is the effect of this repetition?

Miss Brodie repeats the phrase, 'Hail Caesar!', giving the effect of a dramatic performance in front of the girls, as if she is trying to recreate the atmosphere in Ancient Rome at the Colosseum.

3 What impression do you get of Miss Brodie from this extract?

Sample answer

I get the impression that Miss Brodie is a very precise, determined and individual teacher. She obviously likes to decide exactly what she wants to teach and when, rather than follow a conventional timetable. She does not naturally agree with the behaviour or attitudes of people supposed to be her professional superiors, and can be quite ruthless in her opinions, for example, she describes Mary as 'Stupid as ever'. The students seem to find her entertaining (they giggle at her as she stares at the door after the head's departure), and probably enjoy being party to Miss Brodie's rebellious streak.

4 Do you think Miss Brodie is a good or bad teacher? Justify your answer with evidence from the text.

Sample answer

I think Miss Brodie is a good teacher because she wants to pass on her knowledge and experiences to the girls in an enthusiastic, informed way, rather than just slavishly follow the curriculum. She is also concerned that the girls learn good manners and behaviour, as well as information. The fact that she wants them to answer in full sentences shows that she wants them to speak precisely and in detail, rather than just give short responses.

8.3 Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen, 1813

Basic reading skills (page 98)

1 What is the name of the man who has rented Netherfield Park?

Mr Bingley

2 Why does Mrs Bennet call her husband 'tiresome'? Choose the correct answer from the list below.

- He doesn't understand why she is excited.

3 Why does Mrs Bennet want Mr Bennet to visit Mr Bingley as soon as he comes?

She wants him to visit so that she and her daughters can then visit too, in the hope that Mr Bingley will fall in love with one of them and want to marry her.

4 Which of his daughters does Mr Bennet prefer? Justify your choice with evidence from the text.

Mr Bennet prefers Lizzy. He says, 'Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.'

Advanced reading skills (page 99)

1 *Pride and Prejudice* is set in the early 19th century. Pick out one example of dialogue that you think best indicates the time the story is set. Explain your choice.

Sample answer

I think that Mrs Bennet's speech starting 'Why, my dear, you must know...' indicates the time the story is set because she refers to a 'chaise and four' (horse and carriage) and mentions 'Michaelmas' and servants, neither of which feature in modern-day life.

2 Dialogue can reveal a character's attitudes and personality. Later in the chapter, Mrs Bennet is described as 'a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper'.

Explain what you think this description means in your own words.

Sample answer

I think this description means that Mrs Bennet isn't very perceptive or intelligent, that she doesn't have much knowledge about things and that she is rather unstable emotionally.

- 3 Re-read the dialogue about Mrs Bennet's nerves.
a Rewrite this dialogue in modern-day language.

Sample answer

"You like upsetting me. You don't care if I get stressed."

"That's not true, my dear. I do care if you get stressed, I am very well aware of how stressed you get and have had to bear that in mind for the last twenty years of our marriage at least."

- b What does this conversation reveal about Mr and Mrs Bennet's relationship?

Sample answer

This conversation shows that Mr and Mrs Bennet have been married a long time. He has had to be very tolerant of her emotional instability and stress levels. She doesn't really understand that her husband is playing with her, knowing full well her motives and intentions, but determined to make her spell things out to him. He has the upper hand in the household, but has probably had to be very patient in putting up with her erratic personality and limited intelligence. Mr Bennet has a sense of humour, something that isn't evident in her.

NON-FICTION

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2.1 'Something Called "Attention Residue" Is Ruining Your Concentration' by Tanya Basu, 2016

Basic reading skills

- 1 Look again at the first paragraph. Give three examples of things that the writer lists as potential distractions.

Eating lunch; reading the latest news about what Donald Trump has said; sending out a few memos.

- 2 What is the title of Professor Cal Newport's new book?

Deep Work: Rules for Focused Success in a Distracted World

- 3 The writer states that Professor Newport's book 'attempts to understand how workers can rise above their infomania'.

a Using information from the blog, provide definitions for the following terms.

- **infomania** – the desire to access information from different sources the whole time
- **time-crunched** – time is squeezed and compressed as people try to fit more into less time
- **attention residue** – thoughts and concentration from one task that is still lingering when working on the next task
- **deep work** – intense focus on a single activity

b Using your own words, explain what Professor Newport's book is trying to help workers to do.

To maximize their productivity by focusing on doing one thing at a time, rather than by trying to multitask and change activities before one has been completed thoroughly.

- 4a Did Sophie Leroy's 2009 study find that people were more or less productive when switching between different tasks?

Less productive

- 4b Using your own words, explain why Sophie Leroy thought this was.

Sample answer

Leroy thought that unless people finished one task before starting another they would still have part of their mind focused on the previous task when starting the new one, so they don't concentrate fully and work less productively.

- 5 Look again at the final paragraph. Summarize the advice this gives.

Just focus on one task at a time and don't let anything else distract you until you complete that particular task.

Advanced reading skills

- 1 A blog post is designed to be read online and has to compete for a reader's attention with other articles and tasks. How does the language that Tanya Basu uses help to attract and maintain the reader's attention?

Sample answer

The writer uses the second person to address the reader directly, as 'you'. This creates the effect of a very direct personal approach, which it would be impolite to ignore. The language style is conversational, for example, the repeated use of 'but', and the reflective tone of 'well' and the rhetorical question 'right?' This tone feels intimate and chatty, like a friendly voice. Some phrases are very informal, for example, 'banging out that presentation', 'gets nods' and 'on the right foot', again reinforcing the sense of friendly, sympathetic advice. Towards the end of the passage, some statements are very short and truncated, for example, 'Most important' followed by an imperative 'Don't stop...'. This gives the impression of short, sharp advice that needs to be listened to. It gives the message authority and conveys the message simply and clearly.

- 2 Look again at the paragraph beginning, '[P]eople need to stop thinking about one task...'.
a How formal is the register of language used here? Support your answer with reference to the text.

The writing becomes more impersonal and more formal as this paragraph makes some important statements which are at the root of the whole argument. The use of the word 'people' shows that the advice is relevant to all people, not just one individual. It is a global statement of fact and sounds authoritative.

b Does the informality of the language in the rest of the text influence your response to the idea presented? Explain why.

The informal language helps to catch and retain the reader's attention but the more formal parts present most of the facts, issues and advice. The combination of informal and formal language makes the reader respond to the blog positively, aware that the advice is valuable to them as an individual, as well as to people generally.

- 3 How does the structure of the blog post help Tanya Basu to present and explore the concept of 'attention residue' and how this can be overcome? Copy and complete the table to identify the focus of each paragraph.

Paragraph	Focus
1	Gives examples of some of the distractions found in a modern-day workplace, addressed directly to the reader.
2	Introduces the concept of 'attention residue' and mentions the book in which it is explained.
3	Explains the problem people have, needing to switch between tasks, but being less productive as a result.
4	States the fact that for peak productivity, people need to focus on just one task at a time.
5	Explains why 'attention residue' is counterproductive and wastes time.
6	Core advice to finish one task before starting another to work most effectively.

- 4 Tanya Basu creates links between paragraphs to help develop the ideas she presents and improve the coherence of the text. Find more examples of the links the writer creates between paragraphs and explore how these links help her to develop ideas and improve the coherence of the text.

Sample answer

The second paragraph ends with the phrase 'attention residue' and the third paragraph opens by picking up on this phrase with a question about what it is. This third paragraph ends with a colon to introduce the third paragraph which goes into more detail about the theory. In the fourth paragraph, the writer explains more fully the practical implications of the theory, explaining how it works in real life. The paragraph finishes with the statement 'it's actually a time-waster.'

The fifth paragraph picks up on this final idea, saying 'Here's where...,' and goes on to explain the solution. Near the end of the final paragraph the writer refers again to the situation when you have a presentation due the next day. This links back to the situation described in the opening paragraph, so completes the logical circular shape of the text.

2.2 The Young Woman's Book: A Useful Manual for Everyday Life by Laura Valentine, 1877

Basic reading skills

- 1a Look again at the first paragraph. What two adjectives does the writer use to describe a novel?

Foolish, wise

- 1b Pick out the quotation that you think best shows the writer's attitude to reading novels.

'absolutely wicked'

- 1c Summarize why the writer feels this way about reading novels.

The writer thinks that the lure of novels is evil because it distracts people from their responsibilities and duties.

- 2 List three pieces of evidence the writer gives that suggest the mother neglected her children.

They were dirty, had tatty clothes and weren't taught anything.

- 3 What happened to the woman's husband when he came home from sea?

He went to prison because the woman had run up debts that couldn't be paid.

- 4 What happened to the woman's son?

He ran away from school and disappeared in Australia.

- 5 Look again at the following sentence:

'The daughter, trained only in the unreal folly of novels, married secretly a man much below her father's station - he was also an hereditary madman!'

- a Rewrite this sentence in your own words.

Sample answer

The daughter, who only had the example of her mother constantly reading novels, married a man that was poorer and of a lower status than her father and who also had mental health problems.

- b Explain what the phrase 'unreal folly of novels' suggests about the writer's attitude to reading novels.

Sample answer

The phrase suggests that novels are not linked to reality - they are unreal or pure escapism. It also suggests that novels are a folly - something artificial and self-indulgent, created on a whim for no practical purpose. The writer obviously sees reading novels as a complete waste of time and a foolish way to indulge one's imagination.

- 6 Now look at the final paragraph. What does the writer compare reading a novel to? Explain whether you think this is an appropriate comparison.

The comparison is with an addiction such as alcohol or drugs, which gives the victim an artificial high but only temporarily, and does long-term damage.

Advanced reading skills

- 1 The writer uses hyperbole to present her view of the dangers of novel reading.

- a Pick out any examples of hyperbole you can find in the text.

Reading novels is 'absolutely wicked'; house is 'dirty beyond description'; son is 'utterly ruined'; 'misery on her and on two following generations'

- b How effective do you think the writer's use of hyperbole is? Give reasons for your answer.

Sample answer

The use of hyperbole is effective because it conjures up a very dramatic, startling picture of ruined lives, giving the message of the text a strong impact. However, it is so exaggerated that it rather undermines the value of the text because it seems too extreme to be true.

- 2 How does the writer use emotive language to present her view of the dangers of novel reading?

Sample answer

The writer chooses to use language that will stir up the reader's emotions, such as outrage, horror and pity. The choice of words such as 'wicked', 'waste', 'dishonesty' and 'neglected' convey a sense of moral corruption, persuading the reader to believe that reading novels can lead to terrible consequences. The emphasis is not only on the effect on the novel reader, but also on her family which makes her dereliction of duties seem even more selfish. The neglect of children, left 'dirty, ragged, untaught' and running wild, conjures up a disturbing image of feral children having to fend for themselves without support or comfort. The fate of the son 'utterly ruined' sounds bleak and catastrophic, and the idea that the daughter's husband is 'an hereditary madman' suggests that she becomes the victim of her partner's instability. The exclamation mark emphasizes the alarming nature of the relationship.

- 3a The writer lists consequences which she connects to the mother's reading of novels. Copy and complete the table below to record these consequences and give each one a danger rating (with 1 being the least dangerous and 5 the most dangerous).

Consequence	Danger rating
Not cleaning the house	1
Children neglected	2
Husband arrested	3
Son quits school and vanishes in Australia	4
Daughter marries a madman	5

- 3b How has the writer structured her presentation of these consequences? What effect does this create?

Sample answer

The consequences of reading novels are listed in escalating order, building up the picture to one of increasing alarm. This increases the tension and drama of the text, gripping the reader who wants to read on to find out how bad things can possibly get.

- 4a Look again at the opening and closing paragraphs of the extract. Explain any connections you can find between these.

Sample answer

Both the opening and closing paragraphs focus on the mother. The closing paragraph takes us further back in time to when the woman first married, when she was 'a lovely, clever girl', before she devoted 'herself to novel reading'. The idea that novel reading is 'wicked' in the opening paragraph is echoed in the final paragraph with the reference to 'intoxication' which implies that something else has taken over control of a life, something devilish and powerful.

- 4b How effective do you think the closing paragraph is? Give reasons for your answer.

Sample answer

I think that the closing paragraph is effective in completing the picture of utter devastation of a family, however, it is so extreme that one can't help question its accuracy. Maybe the daughter did marry someone with less money than her father, but perhaps he was a good man and his mental health issues could be resolved or managed in a way that enabled them to live happy lives. The comparison with intoxication is also questionable. Many forms of intoxication are temporary and can be recovered from. I think that most people seek some escapism from time to time, and in comparison to other options, reading novels seems relatively harmless. The writer of this extract is perhaps rather alarmist and overreacting. I don't think many people would see reading novels as dangerous nowadays.

2.3 'Would you like to sit on the floor?' by Roger Callan, 1999

Basic reading skills

- 1 The writer of this article compares the classroom in the school William Shakespeare attended 400 years ago with a modern-day classroom.

- a List three things that the writer says are similar.

Wooden desks; desks positioned in rows; teacher's desk at the front

- b List three things that the writer says are different.

Caning is forbidden; science labs; computers

- 2 What are the three main types of learner the writer identifies in the article?

Global, analytic, integrated

- 3 Look at the following learning techniques and decide whether they are most appropriate for an auditory, visual, tactile or kinesthetic learner.

Reading a textbook – visual

Conducting an experiment – tactile

Going to a museum – kinesthetic

Listening to a lecture – auditory

- 4 According to the writer, what type of school finds it easiest to adapt their classroom to accommodate students' different learning styles? Explain why this is.

Primary school classrooms are easiest to adapt to different learning styles because there is more choice about seating, different areas of the classroom and provision of personal stereos.

- 5 Using your own words, explain what happened when a school in South Carolina identified the individual learning styles of its students.

The school results increased so dramatically that officials had to go and check that students weren't cheating.

- 6 Look again at the final paragraph.

a Quote the mantra that the writer includes here.

'Teacher, if I don't learn the way you teach, why don't you teach the way I learn?'

b Why do you think the writer refers to this as a mantra? Explain your ideas.

Sample answer

I think the writer refers to this as a mantra because he believes that if it is repeated often enough it will help to embed the meaning and awareness into the minds of the reader (and people who run schools). A mantra is traditionally a chant used to help meditation.

Advanced reading skills

- 1 The lead paragraph of a newspaper article should give the reader information on what the article is about.

- a Look again at the lead paragraph. Using your own words, summarize what the article is about.

This article is about how the place where you learn and the style in which you learn can make a big difference to your results.

- b Do you think this is an effective opening paragraph? Give reasons for your answer.

Sample answer

This is an effective opening paragraph because most people are very interested in how to get the best exam results, for themselves, for their children, or for their students. Good exam results can open up a lot of opportunities in terms of training, jobs and higher education.

- 2a Pick out evidence from the text that supports the view that students learn in different ways.

It is backed up by 30 years of research, based on a project run by St John's University in New York City.

- 2b How does the writer make this evidence sound authoritative? You could comment on the following phrases:

- 'based on more than 30 years of research'
- '104-question learning style inventory'
- 'devised by academics'

Sample answer

The evidence sounds authoritative because of the length of time that has been invested in the project, 'thirty years of research', and the thorough evaluation of a student's preferences, using a '104-question learning style inventory'. Because the inventory is 'devised by academics', the implication is that these people must know what they are doing because they are pioneers in the field and have researched it thoroughly.

- 3a Find three quotations which suggest the negative effects of failing to accommodate different learning styles.

'school frequently offers only discomfort, misunderstanding and even failure'; 'school can be a source of boredom and misery'; 'some students' grades declined'

- 3b Choose one of your selected quotations and explain how it uses language to suggest these negative effects.

Sample answer

The first quotation uses a pattern of three (tricolon) to emphasize the negative effects. Its use of the word 'only' shows how limiting the outcome is. The word 'even' signifies the worst possible scenario, which adds weight to the point being made.

- 4 This article was included in the education section of *The Independent* newspaper. What changes would you make to the article to make it more interesting to a general reader?

Sample answer

To make this article more appealing to the general reader, it could use a direct address, including the terms 'you' and 'your'. It might also include some rhetorical questions and exclamations to retain the reader's attention. Shorter sentences and a summary of the research findings might mean general readers keep their focus on the article and don't get bored with the details. A slightly different layout might make the article more accessible, for example, the use of bullet points listing different types of learners and learning styles. Also, references to extremely successful people who might not have achieved academically would draw the readers' attention, and also appear to add weight to the argument for a more flexible approach to learning in schools.

7.1 'The discovery of X-rays' by R. A. Gregory, 1896

Basic reading skills

- 1 In the first paragraph, the writer names two other scientific advances apart from the discovery of X-rays. List both of these advances.

Galileo and his use of the telescope; the use of the microscope.

- 2 Are the following statements true or false?

- A. Professor Röntgen works at Marburg University. True
 B. He has been unable to take photographs using X-rays. False
 C. X-rays travel through flesh more easily than bone. True
 D. The writer thinks X-rays will help doctors and surgeons. True

- 3 The writer refers to 'shadowgraphs'. Based on your understanding of the text, write a definition for this term.

Shadowgraphs – pictures on a photographic plate that pick up objects that are impermeable to electric rays

- 4 Look again at the final paragraph.

- a Name one development that the writer predicts X-rays will helpfully be used for.

In surgery, these pictures will illustrate the nature of fractures.

- b Name one development that the writer does not expect X-rays to be used for.

Photographing people's skeletons as they walk along the street.

Advanced reading skills

- 1 Look again at the first sentence of the article: 'Science advances by bringing into view facts and phenomena previously unknown.' Explain why you think the writer has chosen to begin the article with this sentence. Do you think it is an effective opening? Give reasons for your answer.

Sample answer

I think the writer opens the article with this sentence because it is hinting that what is about to be revealed will advance scientific knowledge, thereby whetting the reader's appetite for more information. It is also an effective beginning because it opens up the concepts of viewing and seeing, which are fitting for an article about the development of visual images.

- 2 Look again at the opening paragraph.

- a Pick out three quotations that refer to sight or seeing.

'bringing into view'; 'unaided vision'; 'an unseen universe'

- b Explain why you think the writer has chosen to include these references.

Sample answer

I think the writer includes these references because they are all linked to sight and what we can see. This introduces the concept of vision, which is exactly what the new invention of 'shadowgraphs' focuses on, although it is a vision of internal objects rather than external ones.

- 3 In the first paragraph, the journalist writes: 'It has been discovered that a kind of light-rays – if the term be not a misnomer – can be produced which will pass through opaque substances...'. Explain why the choice of the word 'misnomer' is an appropriate one.

'Misnomer' is an appropriate word because it means 'unsuitable name'. In fact these electric 'light rays' actually form a picture by producing shadows of opaque materials, and shadows are usually dark, rather than light.

- 4 Read the following student's comment on the text:

The writer is impressed by Professor Röntgen's discovery.

Explain whether you agree or disagree with this statement. Refer to evidence from the text to support your view.

Sample answer

I think the writer is impressed by this discovery because he can foresee the huge advantages that this type of imaging can bring, for example, detecting fractures or deformities in bones and in metal objects. He knows that this imaging has already been used to see 'destroyed parts in a diseased thigh-bone' and 'a stone in the bladder of a living person'. He is confident that 'full advantage' can be taken of this new method of seeing things.

- 5 Look at the first and final paragraphs of the article. What links can you find between these two paragraphs, and what effect do these create?

The first and paragraphs are linked because the first paragraph explains that science moves forward by revealing new facts and things, and the final paragraphs explains how this new invention will literally reveal new things, such as internal structures that are invisible to the naked eye. This brings the structure of the article full circle, proving that this new discovery is a scientific advance.

- 6 If you were writing this article for a magazine today, how would you make the text more interesting for a modern-day reader? Think about:

- the information presented and the language used to convey this
- your choice of sentence forms and the way you could structure the article.

Rewrite the article in a shorter, more direct way.

Answers will vary.

7.2 'Testing the first atomic bomb' by Richard Feynman, 1985

Basic reading skills

- 1 How far away was Richard Feynman from the test site when the atomic bomb was tested?
20 miles
- 2 How close does Richard Feynman say other people were to the test site?
6 miles

- 3 Why does Richard Feynman decide not to wear dark glasses to watch the test?

He thinks he won't be able to see anything.

- 4 What does Richard Feynman do to protect his eyes?

He gets behind a vehicle's windshield because he thinks the glass will protect him from the ultraviolet light.

- 5 'I'm probably the only guy who saw it with the human eye.' List two facts that Richard Feynman gives to support this statement.

Everyone else wore dark glasses; those who were closest were told to lie on the floor.

- 6 Which of the following events seems to prompt the people watching the test to start talking?

The sound of the bang

- 7 Summarize how Bob Wilson appears to feel about the atomic bomb.

The writer describes Bob Wilson as 'moping' which implies he was unhappy and dwelling on something. He believes they have made something 'terrible'. He appears to feel regret, maybe guilt and a sense of foreboding.

Advanced reading skills

- 1 Which of these words best summarizes how Richard Feynman feels during the events of the extract? Write a sentence explaining your choice.

Sample answer

I think Richard Feynman feels 'excited' during the events because he mentions parties, running around and beating drums.

- 2 What do you learn about Richard Feynman? Use a spider diagram to record any clues about his personality and character from the extract.

Information presented might include:

- independent (didn't do as he was advised)
- clever (he was part of a top science team)
- thinks for himself (decided the screen would give him enough protection)
- curious (wanted to see the explosion directly)
- proud (pleased with the success of the bomb)
- likes a challenge (got caught up in the excitement of the development; didn't think too much about the consequences).

- 3 Read the section from the paragraph beginning, 'Time comes...' to the paragraph ending '... the solidity of sound at that distance meant that it had really worked'. Create a timeline to chart the progress of the test explosion. Pick out any quotations that you think are particularly effective in helping you to understand the different stages of the explosion and record these on your timeline.

Quotations for timeline might include:

- 'tremendous flash'
- 'white light changing'
- 'clouds form and disappear'
- 'big ball of orange'
- 'big ball of smoke with flashes'
- 'tremendous noise - BANG'

- 4 Richard Feynman was known as a great communicator, helping non-scientists to understand scientific theories and achievements. How effectively do you think he explains the test explosion of the first atomic bomb?

Sample answer

I think Feynman is effective in explaining the test explosion because he uses an informal, conversational style of language, which puts the non-scientific reader at ease and conveys a sense of friendliness. His use of phrases such as 'you know', 'you see' and 'and so on', add to the colloquial style of writing, and the contractions such as 'you're' and 'it's' make the writing feel very informal.

The use of direct speech gives the account an immediacy and sense of reality. The reader imagines they are actually there, mingling with the other witnesses, who make very believable, straightforward comments. The use of the present tense in recounting the explosion also helps to add drama to the events and sustain the excitement. If it were all told in the past tense, the reader wouldn't have the same sense of expectation and wonder as events were recounted.

The use of the simile describing the noise of the explosion 'like thunder' is very down to earth and accessible. Although the explosion is unique, he describes it in terms that the reader can

understand easily. The image of the orange ball of fire, rising, billowing, blackening and so on is very vivid, giving an extremely clear picture for the reader. Feynman also uses metaphor effectively. He says that the sound of the explosion 'released' everyone, meaning their silence and tension is broken, rather than any sort of literal release. This metaphor is effective in conveying the impression of the spectators being entranced and fascinated by what they are witnessing - almost frozen into silence and completely awestruck.

7.3 'Questioning the universe' by Stephen Hawking, 2008

Basic reading skills

- 1 One of the questions Professor Stephen Hawking says he wants to talk about is, 'How did the universe come into being?'

a List four more questions Professor Stephen Hawking says he wants to talk about.

Where did we come from? Are we alone in the universe? Is there alien life? What is the future of the human race?

b Which of these questions interests you the most? Give a reason for your answer.

Sample answer

I think the most interesting question is what is the future of the human race, because that concerns all of us, including our descendants.

- 2 How long ago does Professor Stephen Hawking say the universe began?

15 billion years ago

- 3 Pick out two pieces of evidence Professor Stephen Hawking gives to support his statement that we don't seem to have been visited by aliens.

He says it's odd that aliens would only appear to 'crank and weirdos'. The SETI project has not identified any aliens.

- 4 List two reasons Professor Stephen Hawking gives to support his claim that we are entering an increasingly dangerous period in our history.

He says population growth and our use of finite resources threatens life on Earth, but also our aggressive, selfish genetic code means we are a danger to ourselves.

- 5 What does Professor Stephen Hawking suggest is the best way to ensure the long-term survival of the human race?

To look outwards and spread into space.

Advanced reading skills

- 1 Why do you think Professor Stephen Hawking includes so many questions in his talk? Support your explanation with examples of questions from the text.

Sample answer

I think Hawking includes questions in order to help structure his talk. His questions act like headings, which he then goes on to answer in paragraphs. For example, 'where did we come from? How did the universe come into being? Are we alone?' These questions are big ones that most people consider at some point in their lives and by voicing these at the start of his speech, Hawking will engage a lot of people's curiosity.

- 2 Look at the structure of the talk. In the opening paragraph Professor Stephen Hawking sets out the five questions he wants to talk about. Copy and complete a table like the one below to record which questions he explores in each paragraph.

Paragraph	Question explored
2	Where are we from? How did the universe come into being?
3	Are we alone?
4	Are we alone?
5	Is there alien life out there?
6	What is the future of the human race?
7	What is the future of the human race?

- 3 Professor Stephen Hawking's talk includes some big ideas. How effectively do you think he explains these for his audience?

Sample answer

I think Hawking explains his ideas very effectively. His use of questions focuses the audience on each topic he wants to talk about, and he then explores them in more detail. This gives the talk a clear structure which is easy to follow and remember.

The language that he uses to present his ideas is accessible and clear. He tries to give balanced viewpoints so that all aspects of an issue are considered. This is shown by his use of linking phrases and words such as 'on the other hand', 'furthermore', 'but' and 'if'. He refers to possibilities and draws conclusions logically, using terms such as 'this probably indicates' and 'it seems to have been', which reinforces the sense that all his views have been very carefully thought out.

The paragraphs of the talk are linked with words that connect with previous ideas and topics. He opens his paragraphs stating the next step in a sequence of ideas, for example, 'I now turn to the second big question' and 'This brings me to the last of the big questions'. He sometimes opens a new paragraph in order to present another side to an argument, for example, 'On the other hand', 'But we don't know'. These links between the paragraphs glue the ideas together into a logical sequence, making the flow of the ideas coherent and easy to understand.

- 4 Read the following student's comment on the text:

Professor Hawking sounds so clever and this helps to convince you that what he's saying is right.

Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Refer to evidence from the text to support your view.

Sample answer

I agree that Professor Hawking is convincing in his ideas, but I don't think that he makes a conscious effort to 'sound so clever', because he doesn't use particularly complicated vocabulary or sentence structures; in fact the language he uses to explain his thought processes is remarkably clear and accessible, so will appeal to a wide audience, whether they are scientifically trained or not. Maybe this in itself is a sign of 'cleverness' – being able to communicate with a diverse spectrum of people.

- 5 If you were asking Professor Stephen Hawking to give this same talk to an audience of primary school children, what changes would you advise him to make to appeal to this younger audience? Rewrite paragraph two as a guide.

Changes might include:

- simpler vocabulary
- shorter, simpler sentences
- fewer paragraphs
- fewer main questions
- more direct address to the audience
- perhaps more interactive questions (rather than rhetorical ones).