

Today, more than ever, it is important that children can read and interpret text in many different forms. Traditional narrative is still important but, increasingly, vital information is now presented in a wide range of formats including graphs, flow charts, diagrams, timelines, pictures and illustrations. The overwhelming abundance of information available from internet sources places increasing demands on children to locate, sort, understand and interpret information more quickly than ever before. This series aims to help children develop strategies that will enable them to succeed in our information-overloaded world!

## About this series

**Comprehension** is a series of books aimed at developing key comprehension skills across Key Stage 2 and the first years of Key Stage 3.

The series aims to set the children thinking. It requires them not only to interpret what they read but to use the information they have gathered in a constructive way, by applying it to, for example, graphs, maps, diagrams, pictures and tables. Alternatively, many of the activities require the children to explain in words information that is contained in different visual representations, such as graphs, diagrams and illustrations. The **Comprehension** series aims to stimulate children so that they see things from a different perspective and respond in a variety of ways.

There are four books in the series. Each book is matched to the National Literacy Strategy's *Framework for Teaching* as set out below, but we are confident that the books are flexible enough to be used across the age ranges from Year 3 to Year 8.

- Book 1 – Year 3
- Book 2 – Year 4
- Book 3 – Year 5
- Book 4 – Year 6

Each book aims to:

- develop children's inferential skills, encouraging them to 'read between the lines' where they have to search for hidden clues or make a link between cause and effect;
- develop children's deductive skills, enabling them to relate information in the text to their own experiences and background knowledge;
- develop children's evaluative skills to encourage critical evaluation and expression of opinion;
- support teachers by providing a programme that can be matched term by term to the NLS *Framework for Teaching* or can be 'dipped into' as and when required;
- encourage enjoyment and curiosity as well as develop skills of interpretation and response.

Each book is divided into ten fiction and ten non-fiction activities per term. These are listed on page 3, which also contains a chart that shows the **Framework's** Text level objective/s that each activity addresses.

Many of the activities are cross-curricular, taking in aspects of science, history and geography, for example. Other activities are centred around the interests of children, and topics such as magic, Martians, wizards and dragons are included. All the activities are intended to be fun as well as purposeful!

## Using the activities

The activities are versatile enough to be used as part of whole-class lessons, group work or homework /reinforcement tasks. The teacher's role is to introduce the activity, carry out any revision of terms that may be necessary and put the task into a suitable context. Many of the activities would benefit from being discussed in pairs or small groups before commencing.

It is important to stress to the children that they read the complete text (including the required tasks) before they actually do anything. This helps to ensure they understand what they have to do before they begin. Their answers could be formulated in note form before reading through the activity again to make sure there has been no misunderstanding.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Jane Eyre - Chapter 6

The next day commenced as before, getting up and dressing by rushlight; but this morning we were obliged to dispense with the ceremony of washing; the water in the pitchers was frozen. A change had taken place in the weather the preceding evening, and a keen north-east wind, whistling through the crevices of our bedroom windows all night long, had made us shiver in our beds, and turned the contents of the ewers to ice.

Before the long hour and a half of prayers and Bible-reading was over, I felt ready to perish with cold. Breakfast-time came at last, and this morning the porridge was not burnt; the quality was eatable, the quantity small. How small my portion seemed! I wished it had been doubled.

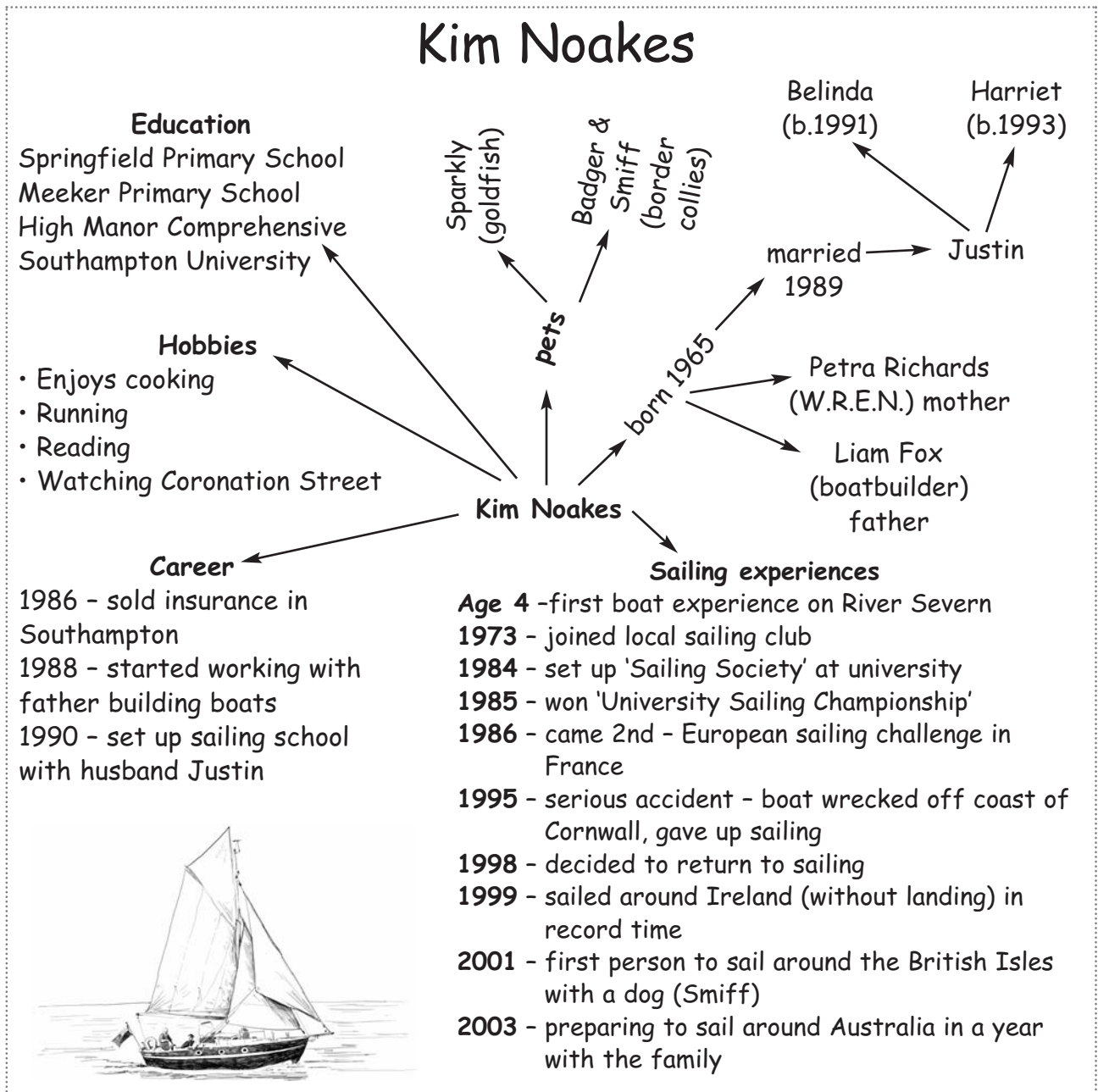
In the course of the day I was enrolled a member of the fourth class, and regular tasks and occupations were assigned me: hitherto, I had only been a spectator of the proceedings at Lowood; I was now to become an actor therein. At first, being little accustomed to learn by heart, the lessons appeared to me both long and difficult; the frequent change from task to task, too, bewildered me; and I was glad when, about three o'clock in the afternoon, Miss Smith put into my hands a border of muslin two yards long, together with needle, thimble, &c., and sent me to sit in a quiet corner of the schoolroom, with directions to hem the same. At that hour most of the others were sewing likewise; but one class still stood round Miss Scatcherd's chair reading, and as all was quiet, the subject of their lessons could be heard, together with the manner in which each girl acquitted herself, and the animadversions or commendations of Miss Scatcherd on the performance. It was English history: among the readers I observed my acquaintance of the verandah: at the commencement of the lesson, her place had been at the top of the class, but for some error of pronunciation, or some inattention to stops, she was suddenly sent to the very bottom. Even in that obscure position, Miss Scatcherd continued to make her an object of constant notice...

...I kept expecting that Miss Scatcherd would praise her attention; but, instead of that, she suddenly cried out -

"You dirty, disagreeable girl! You have never cleaned your nails this morning!"

1. At what time of year, do you think this part of the story is set?
2. Explain why Jane disliked her lessons.
3. If animadversions are criticisms, what do you think commendations are?
4. Which word tells us that Jane had met the girl before?
5. Why do you think the girl didn't explain why her nails weren't clean?

Name \_\_\_\_\_



1. What is the name of Kim's older daughter?
2. Name the people and pets in Kim's family who have connections to sea and boats.
3. How old was Kim when she sailed in the European challenge?
4. Why did Kim stop sailing and for how long?
5. At the age of 7 Kim and her parents moved house. What tells you this?
6. Write part of Kim's autobiography or biography. You could begin:

Some might say that my love of the sea started early; my mother, Petra, had been in the Royal Navy before meeting my father who was a boat builder...

or

You could say that Kim's love for the sea started early...

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Meeting at night

1. Fill in the missing words in this poem by Robert Browning.

**voice • slushy • scratch • hearts • lighted • grey • startled • sleep  
fields • half-moon**

The \_\_\_\_\_ sea and the long black land;  
And the yellow \_\_\_\_\_ large and low;  
And the \_\_\_\_\_ little waves that leap  
In fiery ringlets from their \_\_\_\_\_,  
As I gain the cove<sup>1</sup> with pushing prow<sup>2</sup>,  
And quench<sup>3</sup> its speed I' the \_\_\_\_\_ sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;  
Three \_\_\_\_\_ to cross till a farm appears;  
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp \_\_\_\_\_  
And blue spurt of a \_\_\_\_\_ match,  
And a \_\_\_\_\_ less loud, thro' its joys and fears  
Than the two \_\_\_\_\_ beating each to each!

Robert Browning

<sup>1</sup>a small bay      <sup>2</sup>the bow (front) of a boat      <sup>3</sup>slow



2. Find between 10 to 15 adjectives. Circle them.

3. Choose three images from the poem to illustrate below.

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4. Did you like the poem? Say why or why not.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## First days

The playground was a hive of activity. Robert steered his way across to 'his' bench - bag swinging on his arm, can of drink in one hand, flapjack in the other - to wait for Rachel who was helping Mrs Scott in the classroom. This would be his last year at Westfield. The thought of his new school was frightening; all those big lads and the rumours about being 'bog-washed' caused his stomach to sink. This would be his last September sitting on his bench, enjoying the autumn sunshine. What a difference from his first. Thank goodness I bumped into Rachel, he thought.

He surveyed the scene; a group of Year 6s were kicking the red leaves and skidding across the dusty playground in an attempt to control the football. A huddle of Year 4s shared crisps and compared small brightly coloured animal figurines. A mixture of children from Mr Marshall's class sprinted backwards and forwards across the playground, trying to avoid whoever was 'It'. Then something caught Robert's eye. Tucked away by the low school-garden wall was a small boy with red hair, the same colour exactly as Robert's. His uniform looked brand new, still freshly creased from where it had been folded in its packaging. He seemed shy and quite nervous - obviously new. A couple of older girls walked by and noticed the boy. One of them made a comment and they laughed, looking back at the boy, sneering as they passed.

The boy poked around in a bag he had, pretending to ignore the girls. He brought out a shabby looking book and proceeded to leaf through it. Just then the football, which was bouncing crazily from place to place, came hurtling down towards the boy. Startled by the collision he dropped his book and staggered backwards. Recovering himself, the boy picked up the football and smiled as another lad bounded towards him to retrieve it. The footballer however ignored the smile. "Give it here," he snarled as he snatched the ball. The sad expression reappeared on the boy's face and he turned around to find his book which had landed in the playground.

The dull thud in Robert's stomach returned. He thought about going over to see if the boy was alright. Just then Rachel came out, striding across the playground. Spotting the book she picked it up and handed it back to the boy. She smiled at him, a Rachel smile; the way she'd smiled on Robert's first day. Robert made his way across the crowded playground to speak to them both but when he reached Rachel he realised the boy had gone, completely vanished. He asked Rachel. "What boy?" she said.

1. Did Robert like his school?
2. How does Robert feel about starting a new school next year?
3. Find three words that tell the reader that the girls and the footballer were unfriendly towards the boy?
4. Who do you think the boy was?
5. How successful was the writer in making you feel sorry for the new boy? Use examples from the text to support your view.