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# INTRODUCTION

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## About this series

Developed from the popular Reading Explorers series, **THE CLASSICS – A Voyage of Discovery** is a guided, skills-based resource created to enhance the teaching and learning of guided reading.

This new series provides teachers with a wide variety of narratives, including poetry, which will aid the development and continuity of guided reading throughout the school. Moreover, the programme actively promotes the teaching and learning of specific reading and research skills that will enable children to become more independent thinkers and learners.

Fulfilling the needs of the developing learner, **THE CLASSICS** will help children to become aware of the specific reading skills each of us require to access, interpret and understand a given text, and develop these through the use of wipe board and kinaesthetic activities.

Learners will be taught how to analyse the question being asked of them before attempting to look for an answer; an approach that affords teachers the opportunity to support children as they become independent learners in a structured and progressive manner.

The five thinking and reasoning skills contained in this programme are:

- **Literal thinking**
- **Deductive reasoning**
- **Inferential skills**
- **Evaluative assessment**
- **Research skills, which promote wider independent study**

**THE CLASSICS** comprises of four books, each with an accompanying CD, and is available for:

- Year 3 [Ages 7-8]
- Year 5 [Ages 8-9]
- Year 5 [Ages 9-10]
- Year 6 [Ages 10-11]

Each book and CD aims to:

- Provide children with the opportunity to access a range of different narratives and poetry by well-known authors
- Develop children's comprehension skills through purposeful and stimulating activities
- Reduce teachers' preparation time through the provision of differentiated activities and resources

## About this book

This book is for teachers of children in Year 6 and includes the following:

- Twelve detailed lesson plans accompanied by an original text from a well-known author
- A biography of each author, together with an accompanying activity
- A Research Skills section that supports and encourages independent research skills
- A Reflect & Review section that provides a variety of methods and approaches for use when considering individual texts and authors
- A CD for easy use on an Interactive Whiteboard.

## The CD

The CD contains supporting resource materials which will prove useful when delivering each lesson.

It provides an activity based on the biography of each well-known author used within the book. Each biography is **differentiated to a higher and lower ability level** to cater for the range of abilities found within the classroom.

The CD also contains a number of differentiated activities to help encourage children to reflect and comment upon each classic text they have read.

These differentiated activities will aid children as they research a well-known author of their choice and will allow all, both in the classroom setting and beyond, to practise and develop these thinking and reasoning skills.

# The Lesson Plan

A unique feature of this book is how the various reading skills are layered on each page.

Structured in a way that highlights how these skills develop on from one another, each lesson plan gives the teacher the opportunity to assess which of the key reading skills a particular reading group or individual is strong in and which skills may need more attention.

Such an assessment tool is useful in that it helps guide the teacher when planning their next steps forward, and offers the flexibility to adapt each individual lesson to suit the needs of their learners.

The lesson plans are therefore divided purposefully into four distinct question types, together with an additional section that promotes the exploration of new vocabulary.

To show how this works, read the extract in the box below and consider the different question types that follow:

Her navy blue dress clung to her skin,  
a gentle breeze whistling through the  
empty branches like an angry banshee,  
her frosted breath drifting away in the  
moonlight. She was alone but knew  
what she had to do. Staggering to her  
feet, she steadied herself and, looking  
straight ahead, walked deeper into the  
shadows beyond.

## Literal Questions

This initial section examines an individual's literal understanding of a text.

An example of a literal question could be:

*What colour was the girl's dress?*

The answer to this literal question would be highlighted in the text as being navy blue.

## Deductive Questions

The next set of questions explores a child's ability to use clues on the page in order to deduce an answer.

An example of a deductive question could be:

*What season do you think this part of the story is set in: spring, summer, autumn or winter?*

The answer to this deductive question is winter, evidence highlighted in the text being the 'empty branches' of the trees and the 'frosted breath' of the girl. These clues, either together or in isolation, indicate a cold and wintry scene.

## Inferential Questions

The following set of questions looks at whether a child can 'read between the lines' in order to gain a deeper understanding of the text's implicit messages.

An example of an inferential question could be:

*Do you think the girl carried on with her journey because a) she was brave and determined or b) scared but had no other choice?*

Questions such as these allow different interpretations of the text to be made and personal opinions to be formed and discussed. As such, answers to these question types are often less quantifiable and not always provable by highlighting the text itself. Nevertheless, discussion within the group as to reasons behind an individual's choice of answer is valid and will facilitate a greater awareness of the fact that a text can be, and often is, open to interpretation.

## Evaluative Questions

These questions do more than simply help the teacher to round off the lesson. They allow children to speculate on the tone and purpose of the text, as well as to consider the text's audience. They also enable teachers to ask further questions on the social relevance a text may have in today's society.

Examples of evaluative questions could be:

*Who do you think would be more likely to read this text: boys or girls? Why do you think this?*

*Do you believe writers of books and films should be encouraged to include more strong girls as leading characters in their stories? What effect might this have on a) girls and b) boys?*

## Essential Vocabulary

This section of the lesson plan increases the children's knowledge and understanding of words and helps promote an understanding of why certain words may have been chosen by an author.

For example, focusing on the word 'clung' the following series of questions and activities might be asked in order to explore its possible meaning within this narrative's context:

*Circle the word 'clung' in the first sentence. Copy it onto your wipe board.*

*Do you think this is a strong or weak word? Why?*

*Show your teacher how you might 'cling' to a) a rope b) hope. Why might you do this?*

*Do you think the girl's dress is wet or dry? Draw your answer.*

*What might the use of this word suggest has happened to the girl just prior to this event taking place? Why do you think this?*

## How to prepare and carry out the lessons

Each child will need:





- A wipe board and dry marker pen
- A copy of the reading text
- A highlighter pen

## Introducing the session to learners

It is important for the children to know which skills they will be developing while they are reading with their teacher. Learning objectives should be discussed at the beginning of each term and you can remind them of these at the start of each session. Which skills and objectives you wish to focus on while exploring a particular text will be dependant upon the reading ability and comprehension level of individual groups.

A broader, more inclusive, model is provided below:

*'Who can tell me some of the different question types we have been looking at recently?'*

Literal
<p>Skimming &amp; Scanning</p> 
<p>Key Words</p> 
Deductive
<p>Detective</p>  <p>Clues   Proof   Evidence</p>
Inference


*'Literal, deductive, inferential.'*

*'Good. And can anyone tell me what 'deductive' means? 'Deductive sounds like 'detective'. It means we have to look for clues/evidence/proof on the page rather than in our heads.'*

*'Well done, that's a great explanation, and we're going to look at some of these different question types, including deductive questions, when we are working in our guided reading session today.'*

It is important to write the children's answers up so they can be clearly seen throughout your lesson. This will act as a visual reminder to each child of what their learning intention is – not simply for this lesson but for the whole academic year.

Above are examples of the icons you may wish to use to represent each skill. Over time, the children will recognise and associate each icon with its relevant skill, especially if the same icons are used throughout the school. \*

\* Icons included on the CD

## Prior to reading the text

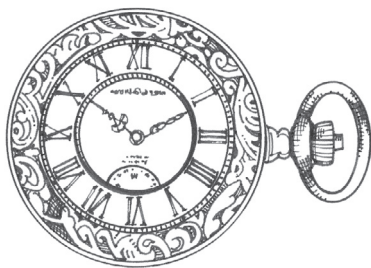
Provide each child with a copy of the text and ask them to scan the page to look for clues which tell them what genre of text it is. How can they tell this? Do they think they know which book this extract is from? Do they know who wrote this book and when?

What do they think the text might contain? Ask them to look at the illustrations, the title, the font used and the layout of the page to give clues. Can they predict what the text will be about? What do they already know about this particular genre?

Ask the children to quietly read through the text to familiarise themselves with it. They can circle any unfamiliar words they encounter. Any words circled can be discussed as a group and, later on, be put into the children's personal dictionaries. These can either be used to provide vocabulary extension work for particular groups or can provide extra words for their weekly spellings.

## Timings

The lesson should take between 25–30 minutes to complete.



However, how long you wish to spend on each question type will be wholly dependant upon the ability level of the group sitting in front of you. A group that has difficulty in comprehending a text may need a significant amount of time spent on the initial stage of questioning [the teacher adding their own literal questions as they deem appropriate] before leading into the more difficult deductive section. On the other hand, a higher level group may be able to skip through this stage at quite a pace in order to access and complete the more challenging deductive and inferential questions set before them.

It is also important to remember to give a weighty amount of time to looking at the question itself.

To determine that the group have understood the question and feel confident enough to start looking for the answer, the following approach can be taken:

## A 5-staged helping hand approach



1. Ask the children to turn over their text so that they cannot see it.
2. Write down the question you want to ask on your wipe board and show the children. Ask them to read it and write down the most important words or phrases onto their wipe boards. When the group has finished, ask them to show each other their answers.  
  
For example, you might write '*At what time did Alice discover the rabbit hole?*' The children would read this and write down key words such as 'time' and 'discover'.
3. Discuss how relevant the chosen key words are when searching for the answer and where they might find the answer in the text itself. As the children begin to understand that there may be more than one key word in a question, discussion may also take place as to which key word should take precedence over another.
4. Ask the children to turn over their text and begin looking for the answer. Once they have found it, they should highlight it and write down the answer on their wipe board, again turning over their sheet so that it is no longer visible.
5. When everyone has finished, ask individuals to reveal their answers by showing their wipe board to the group. Answers can then be discussed accordingly and additional evidence highlighted on the text itself.

# Street Child

Berlie Doherty



1993

## Literal Questions

- In which city is this story set? Find it on a map of Britain. [London]
- Where were runaway boys kept if they were caught?  
[In the shed in the yard]
- What creature does Jim imagine he is that would 'never be caught'?  
[A bird] Draw your answer.

## Deductive Questions

- Reread the first sentence. Highlight the word that tells us this story is not set in modern times. [Workhouse]
- Is this scene set during the day or at night? How do you know?  
[Night – 'the boys lay in their boxes pretending to be asleep', Old Marion needs a candle to light her path]
- On a scale of 1–10, how brutal a man do you think Mr Sissons is? [9–10]  
Why do you think this?  
[He beats defenceless children]

## Inferential Questions

- Is escape easy or difficult? Why do you think escapees who were caught were 'locked in the yard'? [Difficult – many were caught and placed in the shed as a public example and warning to others]
- The fact that Jim still dreams of escape and freedom tells us what about his character and the conditions he finds himself in?  
[He is determined enough to escape his terrible surroundings]
- How old do you think Old Marion is? Draw how you imagine her to look. Why have you drawn her like this?  
[Elderly – walks slowly and wheezes as she breathes]

## Essential Vocabulary

- Highlight the word 'fly' in paragraph one. Why do you think Berlie Doherty chose to use this verb here?  
[Suggests limitless freedom which is what Jim dreams of]
- Circle the fast word in paragraph two. [Pounced] What does the use of this word suggest about Mr Sissons?  
[He is like a cat preying on helpless mice-boys for fun, he is a dangerous man to be around]
- Find two words to describe how Old Marion walked 'her candle-path around the room' in paragraph 3. What do these two words suggest?  
[Crept – slow and quiet, wheezed – ill health, breathing problem]
- In the last paragraph, there are several words that are repeated. What are they?  
[run, run and long, long]  
Why do you think these words have been written twice?  
[To emphasise how desperate he is to escape]
- What word does Berlie Doherty choose to end this chapter with? [Home]  
Underline it and then draw your answer. Why do you think she did this?  
[Home is associated with warmth, love and security, all of which Jim dreams about and needs]

## Evaluative Questions

- How desperate do you think Jim is to escape the workhouse?
- Do you think he will escape? Why?
- Jim's story is a true one. Why do you think Berlie Doherty wanted to write about Jim's experiences in this way? Do you think this is a good thing or not? Why? Why not?



# Street Child

by Berlie Doherty

Jim had no idea how long he had been at the workhouse when he first thought of trying to escape. At first it seemed an impossible idea, as impossible as making the pump in the yard turn into a tree and blaze out with leaves and blossoms. He remembered the runaway boys locked up in the shed in the yard for everyone to see. Even so, he had to try. One day, he promised himself, he would go. He would watch out every moment, sharp as a bird, for a chance to fly. And when he did he would never be caught.

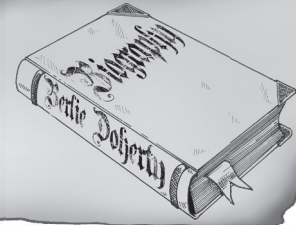
He was almost too afraid to allow himself to think about it, in case Mr Sissons pounced inside his thoughts and strapped him to a chair and beat him as he beat other reckless boys.

It was only at night that he let himself imagine escaping, and it was as though he was opening up a box of secret treasure in the dark. Old Marion crept and wheezed her candle-path around the room where the boys lay in their boxes pretending to sleep, and Jim let his thoughts wander then. He would escape. He would run and run through the streets of London until he was a long, long way from the workhouse. He would find a place that was safe. And he would call it home.



# BERLIE DOHERTY

[1943 – ]



## Learning Objective:

- To be able to use a range of reading strategies in order to answer a set of true or false questions

## Warm up Questions:

- How would you define what a biography is?
- Why might somebody want to write a biography?
- What sorts of things might a writer want to include in their biography?
- Why might they want to include these things?

## Answers:

- |   |                         |    |                         |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|----|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1 | <input type="radio"/> T | 2  | <input type="radio"/> T | 3 | <input type="radio"/> F |
| 4 | <input type="radio"/> T | 5  | <input type="radio"/> F | 6 | <input type="radio"/> F |
| 7 | <input type="radio"/> F | 8  | <input type="radio"/> T | 9 | <input type="radio"/> T |
|   |                         | 10 | <input type="radio"/> F |   |                         |

## Main Activity:

### Step 1: Preview the text

Read the biographical extract about the life of Berlie Doherty. Highlight any names, dates or events you think are important and might be asked about. Why do you think the writer has included this information? What questions do you think you will be asked? Why? Jot down some of your ideas on the back of your worksheet.



### Step 2: Do the activity

Read each of the statements regarding the extract you have just read. How do they compare to your own ideas? When you read each statement, underline the key words in the statement itself. Ask yourself: What is the statement really asking me? Where will I find this answer in the text? Are there any clues in the question that can help me find my answer more quickly? Should I skim or scan the text to find my answer? When you have done so, shade the correct True or False box on your worksheet. Use green if it is true and red if it is false.



### Step 3: Review the text

When you have finished compare your answers with a partner. Have they shaded in the same boxes as you? Why? Why not? Together, discuss why you agree or disagree with each other and find evidence in the text that supports your opinion. If you have time, write two more true or false questions of your own and give them to your partner to answer.

## Evaluative Questions:

*Reflect upon Berlie Doherty's life:*

- How influential do you think her father's encouragement to write to the *Liverpool Echo* as a child was when deciding to become a full-time writer as an adult in 1983?
- Why do you think the writer of this piece describes her decision to become a full time writer as 'brave'?
- Do you think the beautiful Peak District still influences her writing today? Why do you think this might be the case?

Website: [www.berliedoherty.com](http://www.berliedoherty.com)



# BERLIE DOHERTY

[1943 – ]



Encouraged from an early age to write for the children's page of the *Liverpool Echo*, Berlie Doherty has become one of Britain's most treasured children's authors, creating modern classics such as *Spellhorn* (1989) and *Street Child* (1993).

Like her father, himself an avid writer, Berlie would often be seen carrying a notebook around with her and spend many a day putting her ideas and imagination down on paper.

She loved reading too! However, popping down to a book shop to pick up the latest instalment from your favourite author was not an option for most children growing up in post-war Britain. Choice was limited, money was tight and there weren't really many authors who wrote specifically for children at this time.

Nevertheless, after flicking through the pages of Arthur Ransome's classic *Swallows and Amazons* (a book borrowed from her local library) it was as if the door to an exciting new world had been unlocked.

In 1983, having taught for two years in a large comprehensive and spent another two working for schools radio, Berlie made the brave decision to become a full-time writer. With three children to bring up alone it was not an easy decision to make, but make it she did and she has not looked back since.

She presently lives in Edale, Derbyshire, and the picturesque surroundings of the Peak District have, at times, influence her work. Two of the TV series she has written, *White Peak Farm* (1988) and *Children of Winter* (1994), are set in the countryside she loves. The fantasy picture book *Blue John* (2003) followed a captivating visit to the Blue John Cavern at Castleton. Even before moving there, "I used to find myself driving out into Derbyshire nearly every day, perhaps to walk or to find a lovely spot by a river to sit and write."

Let us hope that wherever she may be, she continues to bring children happiness through the pages of her books for many years to come.

Berlie Doherty was born in Liverpool.

True

False

She once worked as a teacher.

True

False

She decided to become a full time writer in 1993.

True

False

Her picture book *Blue John* was published in 2003.

True

False

Berlie Doherty wrote the book *Swallows and Amazons*.

True

False

As an adult, she has always lived in the Peak District in Derbyshire.

True

False

After WWII, there were lots of children's authors around.

True

False

She first borrowed *Swallows and Amazons* from a local library.

True

False