



Rationale of English Texts

At Newquay Junior Academy, we know that reading is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success. We understand that engaging every pupil in every classroom can be challenging, but we are readers who teach and teachers who read and this enables us to carefully select texts which will challenge and inspire, but also that they will enjoy. We pride ourselves on creating an English curriculum, rich in a range of texts and picture books, which feature a wide range of ethnicity and diversity as well as PSHE links: this could be through the story or the authors and illustrators. Through a mixture of classic and contemporary, where possible, we link our core text to the curriculum topic, however there are no tenuous links, we will simply choose to link the text to PSHE or a subject that is relevant for the pupils at the time of learning.

Our rationale is clear, the high quality texts the pupils are immersed in need to be 'Mirrors, Windows and Sliding Doors.'



Mirrors: Pupils need to **see** themselves, whatever their background, ability or faith reflected in the stories, characters, and authors that they read.



Windows: Pupils need to be able to '**look**' into the lives of others whose backgrounds are different from their own, or who have differences and/or protected characteristics, so that they can learn tolerance and respect for others within their own academy, town, country, and the world they are growing up in. When the conditions are right, a window can also be a mirror: literature transforms our experience and reflects it back to us.

Sliding Doors: Pupils need **sliding doors** into other lives, countries and even worlds! They need to be able to use their imagination and paint their own version of these places and characters in their mind and lose themselves in the story.



We also use a range of Non-Fiction texts/extracts as well as a weekly 'Fluent in 5' to support fluency within our whole class guided reading sessions and all classes have a RfP session in the library. Reading books are matched to ability, using Accelerated Reader but pupils are also allowed to choose another book to share with an adult or read for pleasure too. Reading ages are included for VIPERS texts, it is important to note that any type of 'banding' varies between publishers and should only be used as a guide, however our writing curriculum uses a variety of picture books which can be accessed at any age.

As educators, we know that curriculums are infinite, they change and evolve as the children who are in our academy do, therefore, these texts are subject to change and are updated accordingly.

Tania Findlay MBE.

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Kernow English Hub Reading for Pleasure Literacy Specialist.

Whole School Text for Writing Rationale (Autumn 1)



Flooded-Mariajo Illustrajo

Flooded centres on the idea that when problems are ignored, they worsen and become harder to manage. The story of how a small problem, when left unchecked, grows into a major crisis that can only be solved by the whole community working together provides an excellent platform to explore the importance of teamwork, accountability, and collaboration. These are critical life skills for children to develop, especially in the context of reintegrating into their new classes and building strong relationships within their peer groups. The themes in *Flooded* align seamlessly with key elements of the PSHE curriculum. It encourages children to recognize the impact of their actions (or inactions) on others and reinforces the value of collective responsibility. As students return to school and adapt to their new environments, this story helps them reflect on the importance of addressing concerns openly, seeking help when needed, and working together to overcome challenges. It also emphasises emotional awareness—acknowledging problems rather than letting them “fester”—which can spark meaningful discussions about mental health, empathy, and resilience. The universal nature of the story allows for differentiation, ensuring that each year group can engage with the text at an appropriate level while still contributing to a cohesive, school-wide project.

Yr.3 Text Rationale

Texts for Writing:



Dinosaurs and all that Rubbish-Michael Foreman

Using *Dinosaurs and All That Rubbish* as a Year 3 writing unit offers a rich opportunity to engage students in developing their descriptive writing, particularly through the focus on setting descriptions. The book's vivid portrayal of a world transformed by human neglect and later restored by the dinosaurs provides an excellent platform for imaginative writing, allowing students to explore contrasting environments—polluted versus lush, ruined versus restored. This ties in well with the cross-curricular themes of environmental awareness and sustainability, which can be linked to both the Opening Worlds curriculum and PSHE discussions around responsibility and the impact of human actions. Through descriptive writing tasks, students can practice using rich vocabulary, sensory details, and figurative language to bring these contrasting settings to life, while reflecting on broader themes of care for the planet and community.



The First Drawing-Mordicai Gerstein

This book is set in the Stone Age with a narrative which expresses the power of art through focussing on cave paintings. The story makes strong historical links, as well as exploring the awe and wonder – and sometimes fear and apprehension – around first-time discoveries. *The First Drawing* will inspire pupils to become artists themselves, through their curriculum cave painting trip, and provides a wonderful context for discussing dreams and desires to do something new and different.



The Polar Express-Chris van Allsburg

Pupils are immersed in all things Christmas with *The Polar Express*, the film of the same name and *The Night Before Christmas* by Clement C. Moore. Ending their unit by climbing aboard *The Polar Express*. Late on Christmas Eve, after the town has gone to sleep, a boy boards a mysterious train that waits for him: the *Polar Express* bound for the North Pole. When he arrives there, Santa offers him any gift he desires. The boy modestly asks for one bell from the reindeer's harness. It turns out to be an incredibly special gift, for only believers in Santa can hear it ring.



Leon and the Place Between-Angela McCallister/Grahame Baker-Smith

This extraordinary book by significant author-illustrator duo Angela McAllister and Grahame Baker-Smith was selected for the quality of the language alongside captivating illustrations, cut-out sections, fonts and fold-out pages which immerse pupils in a magical space to explore the power of imagination and curiosity. Pupils will recognise the enchanting styles of the famous names through their other titles such as *Winter's Child* (studied in Yr.5) and *FARThER*.



Tell me Dragon-Jackie Morris

Tell Me a Dragon by Jackie Morris invites students to explore their creativity and imagination through vivid descriptions of fantastical dragons, making it a perfect springboard for writing their own poems. The book's rich, lyrical language and detailed illustrations provide excellent models for students to experiment with imagery, alliteration, and metaphor, enhancing their use of descriptive language in poetry. The key theme of individuality—each dragon reflecting a unique personality or environment—encourages personal expression, which can tie into PSHE lessons on identity and self-awareness. Additionally, the mythological and artistic themes offer cross-curricular links to Art and our Opening Worlds curriculum, making this a well-rounded, creative project that develops both literacy and wider world knowledge.



The Last Garden-Rachel Ip

Inspired by true events in Syria, this touching story opens conversations around the impact of war and migration. Mirroring themes in the book, the story opens up a safe space to explore how people deal with conflict and what happens when people are forced to leave. This is a story of hope and healing which pairs well with aspects of the science and art curriculums as pupils explore the cyclical nature of life and the appreciation of beauty, even in times of hardship.



Cloud Tea Monkeys-Mal Peet

This is a legend set in another culture in the centuries-old past but with close links to fair-trade and the food industry. The strong female protagonist fights to overcome traditional ideals in the name of family and eventual triumph. The text has clever use of language and a powerful narrative which carry important messages about loyalty and respect.



Cinderella of the Nile-Beverley Naidoo:

Re-told by award winning and influential children's author Beverley Naidoo, this version of *Cinderella* supports learning around traditional tales. With clear links to ancient Greece and ancient Egypt, pupils will discover how one story can have many iterations around the world and throughout history.

Alongside historical themes, the book could be used as a platform for discussions around human rights, enslavement, and justice.



The Pied Piper of Hamelin-Michael Morpurgo version of classic tale:

We chose the Michael Morpurgo version of this folklore classic for the richness of the language which brings this classic historical tale to life. Pupils will be able to expand their knowledge of one of Britain's most celebrated children's authors. Covering social and environmental themes, the story creates links with the PSHE and geography curriculums and will provide a platform for discussions around fairness, equality, and the consequences of our actions.

Texts for VIPERS:



Dinosaurs and all that Rubbish-Michael Foreman

Reading Age 6+

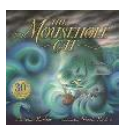
After humans leave the barren Earth for a distant star, the dinosaurs come back to life and tidy up the mess that the humans have left behind. The dinosaurs will only then allow the humans to come back to Earth once they have agreed that the planet should be shared and enjoyed by everyone. This kicks off the Time Travellers topic with links to Personal Development, PSHE and history. This text has a strong moral about greed, looking after things and sharing the planet. The text provides a solid platform to discuss with children issues around environmentalism, conservation, and recycling. Michael Foreman OBE is a significant author and illustrator who has written and illustrated many well-known titles, who also spends a large part of his time in St. Ives, Cornwall.



Stone Age Boy-Satoshi Kitamura

Reading Age 7+

This 'time slip' book is packed with fascinating facts about the Stone Age, presented in an accessible and interesting way. Added features include a timeline and cave painting style endpapers which fits perfectly with the Yr3 cave painting trip.

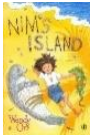


The Mousehole Cat-Antonia Barber & Nicola Bayley

Reading Age 7+

A beautifully illustrated book, which mingles history and legend to tell a stirring story of heroism and storms at sea and an incredibly special cat. Set in Mousehole in Cornwall, this is a perfect book for a sense of place for

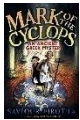
pupils and, as Tom Bawcock's Eve is the day before Christmas Eve, the story compliments the other Festivals of Light studied in the 'Shining Bright' curriculum topic.



Nim's Island-Wendy Orr

Reading Age 8+

We have chosen this text because it fits the topic of Exploring Earth so perfectly, and, as a chapter book, it moves the children on to the next level of comprehension. An epic adventure, packed with high-level vocabulary which is supported by an adventure story with a strong female protagonist. An iguana. An island. And e-mail. Nim is a modern-day Robinson Crusoe! Links to science, computing and PSHE and also has a unique style of illustration which the pupils are engaged by.



Mark of the Cyclops-Saviour Pirotta

Reading Age 8+

Set in Ancient Greece, 'Mark of the Cyclops' follows the adventures of Nico and Thrax. A freeborn apprentice, Nico is a scribe who works for Master Lykos and when new slave, Thrax, joins the household, the two are sent with his son, Ariston, a poet, to an important wedding in Corinth. We chose this because the historical content is not incidental, but woven seamlessly into the fabric of the story, making it rich in detail about the period. The historical and geographical links are obvious, but there are also science links which could be made, particularly around changes of state. The book is full of atmospheric, black, and white illustrations which, as well as adding to the story, supports the continuing transition from picture to chapter books.

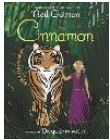
Yr.4 Text Rationale:

Texts for Writing:



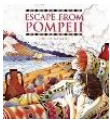
The Selfish Giant-Oscar Wilde

This beloved tale by Oscar Wilde has stood the test of time. Including themes of love, forgiveness and redemption, the story will help pupils build compassion towards the characters and develop empathy for those who find themselves in difficult emotional situations. Following the cycle of the seasons as the giant's emotions gradually change, there are strong links to the science and geography curriculums.



Cinnamon-Neil Gaiman and Divya Srinivasan

Cinnamon is a modern fable, set somewhere in the Indian subcontinent and features a blind and initially mute protagonist. It is primarily the story of a girl who overcomes adversity and finds strength in an unusual friendship but is told with a huge amount of wit and humour. The colourful illustrations, by Divya Srinivasan, are stunningly vivid and bring Neil Gaiman's words to life. It is a terrific book to spark learning about India, disability and believing in yourself whatever your starting point.



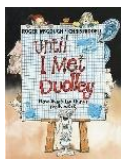
Escape from Pompeii-Christina Balit

This text engages pupils with the genre of historical fiction and links with topics of ancient Rome and natural disasters. Set against the backdrop of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79, it helps bring the topic to life and provides pupils with a rich background knowledge of a significant historical period.



Jabberwocky-Lewis Carroll:

This nonsense poem by Lewis Carroll has been a firm favourite since its inclusion in the novel *Through the Looking Glass* in 1871. The poem presents an opening for pupils to explore the fantastical world of Alice and her adventures in Wonderland. Including weird and wonderful characters and a host of completely nonsense vocabulary there are fun opportunities for language acquisition and comprehension, as well for performance poetry.



Until I Met Dudley=Roger McGough

Roger McGough is one of Britain's best loved poets and his lyrical creativity shines through in this humorous techno-guide. Chris Riddell's distinctive illustrations bring the text to life and let pupils in on the secret of how things work – real and imagined. Providing obvious links to the DT curriculum, pupils will be engaged by the opportunity to design their own inventions, and the text will fire up their imaginations for writing explanations for how they work.



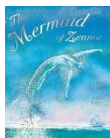
Soar-Short Animated Film

Using the short, animated film *Soar* for a Year 4 writing unit provides an inspiring and imaginative basis for students to create their own innovated stories. The film's themes of perseverance, problem-solving, and unlikely friendship offer rich narrative material that encourages students to explore character development and plot structure in their writing. The visual storytelling, with its focus on a young girl helping a small pilot achieve his dream, allows for cross-curricular links to PSHE, where students can discuss empathy, resilience, and teamwork, as well as to design and technology, where they can explore basic concepts of flight and invention. The film's strong emotional core and fantastical setting provide an excellent opportunity for students to practice using descriptive language and dialogue to build tension and create engaging stories of their own, while also reflecting on broader themes of determination and helping others.



The Iron Man-Ted Hughes

This is a complex text that explores issues around outsiders and fear of change. Former poet laureate Ted Hughes is a significant author who wrote for both adults and children. The narrative lends itself to discussion around standing up for what is right and not judging a book by its cover. The themes raised in the book are linked to curriculum learning and help pupils with developing empathy.



The Mermaid of Zennor-Charles Causley & Michael Foreman

This is a fantastical tale about mermaids covering themes of escapism and freedom. It is a classic popular Cornish folk tale, so it represents a wonderful way to learn about the history of Cornwall and diverse ways of life within it. It is written in a poetic style, and the retelling is by the poet Charles Causley, contains a wealth of archaic vocabulary that lends itself to literary language. It has been illustrated by the celebrated illustrator (and author in his own right) Michael Foreman. This story is old-fashioned in its style and narrative, it contains some gender stereotypes that are addressed & discussed with pupils within the context of the story.



Kensuke's Kingdom-Michael Morpurgo

Using *Kensuke's Kingdom* for a Year 4 writing unit, culminating in a retelling of the story through haikus, offers a powerful way for students to engage with both narrative and poetry. The book's key themes of survival, friendship, and understanding between different cultures provide rich material for reflection and interpretation. By distilling the story into the concise, structured form of haikus, students are challenged to express these complex themes with precision and creativity, sharpening their language skills. The cross-curricular links are significant: students can explore the island setting and oceanic journey through our Opening Worlds curriculum; in PSHE, they can discuss resilience, loneliness, and cross-cultural respect; and in Art, they can create visual representations of key scenes to accompany their haikus. This approach deepens their appreciation for both storytelling and poetry while encouraging them to synthesize and express ideas in an engaging, concise form.



Beowulf-Michael Morpurgo

Using *Beowulf*, both the book and visual/audio adaptation, for a Year 4 writing unit provides an exciting opportunity for students to engage with one of the oldest and most thrilling epic narratives. The main themes of bravery, heroism, and the battle between good and evil offer rich ground for students to explore character motivation and plot structure in their own narrative writing. This unit supports cross-curricular links, as students can learn about the Anglo-Saxon period and its cultural significance, and with PSHE, where discussions around courage, leadership, and facing fears can take place. The vivid action and descriptive language in *Beowulf* provide an excellent model for students to develop their own adventurous stories, focusing on building suspense, creating heroic characters, and crafting detailed battle scenes, fostering their creative writing and storytelling skills.

Texts for VIPERS:



Kensuke's Kingdom-Michael Morpurgo

Reading Age 8+

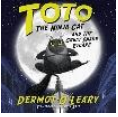
This classic text embraces the themes of realism and adventure combining the two by Michael and his parents, sailing around the world, and added adventurous elements, such as surviving on a desert island. It further explores the friendship between Michael and Kensuke, who are from diverse cultures and backgrounds, but learn to trust and help each other. It shows how Michael and Kensuke adapt to living in harmony with nature, and how they appreciate its beauty and resources. The timeless story also portrays Michael's growth and maturity as he faces challenges and dangers and learns to respect Kensuke's wisdom and experience.



Beowulf-Michael Morpurgo and various other adaptations.

Reading Age 8+

This is a key text in Anglo-Saxon literature, which delves into the historical period with detail and provides children with a rich background knowledge of the time. Re-told by significant children's author Michael Morpurgo, this is the oldest surviving epic in British literature and includes examples of old-English language which will inspire children's own writing. This links to the pupils' curriculum learning.



Toto the Ninja Cat-Dermot O'Leary

Reading Age 9+

Toto the cat and her brother Silver live footloose and fancy-free in a townhouse in London. Toto is almost totally blind and learned to trust her senses from a ninja cat-master who taught her back in Italy where they were born. By day, Toto and Silver seem to be ordinary cats, but by night, they love to have adventures!

This text is chosen as an introduction to Year 4, with a more complex plot, high level vocabulary, in this instance the book has been selected as a reading for pleasure text and the writing is matched to the topic. PSHE links are relevant throughout.



The Girl who Stole an Elephant-Nizrana Farook

Reading Age 9+

Set in Serendib (a fictional island akin to Sri Lanka) The female protagonist, Chaya, a no-nonsense, outspoken hero, leads her friends and a gorgeous elephant on a noisy, fraught, joyous adventure through the jungle where revolution is stirring, and leeches lurk. Pupils explore the characterisation and rich language that this story has whilst the pupils are introduced to and compare their own lives with children their age in South Asia.



An Alien in the Jam Factory-Chrissie Sains

Reading Age 8+

After an author visit from Chrissie Sains, the pupils wanted to use this text in their guided reading sessions, teachers agreed because the vocabulary rich story also has a main character, Scooter McLay, living with cerebral palsy. This helps the pupils understand how the disease affects how quickly he can move his body, but also that it does not inhibit him: his hyper-creative brain is a constant fizz of brilliant ideas. He spends every day inventing top secret recipes and machines for his family's jam factory. A PSHE linked text.



The Iron Man-Ted Hughes

Reading age 8+

Using *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes as a VIPERS reading unit in a Year 4 classroom offers a powerful way to engage students with themes of friendship, resilience, and acceptance. Through VIPERS, students can delve into Hughes' rich language and explore the deeper meanings of the text, while also building key reading comprehension skills. *The Iron Man's* themes of overcoming fear and conflict through understanding provide valuable opportunities for all students to reflect on their own experiences and the importance of inclusion.



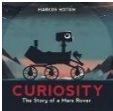
Viking Boy-Tony Bradman

Reading Age 10+

Selected to complement the curriculum learning on Vikings, Gunnar is the son of a Viking chieftain, living peacefully on his family steading with his mother, father, and their people – until they are raided by Skuli and his Wolf Men, who raze his home to the ground and take his father's life. We use Viking Boy: the real story by the same author to add the non-fiction element to this topic. Pupils take a real-life tour of the everyday world of Gunnar, a teenage Viking boy: find out how the Vikings lived, what they believed, how they travelled and fought, and gained their legendary reputation as warriors. Gunnar tells them the real story of growing up as a Viking in an exciting first-hand account, introducing them to family and friends, famous warriors, sea-raiders and even a Norse god!

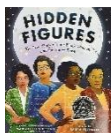
Year 5 Text Rationales

Texts for writing:



Curiosity: The Story of a Mars Rover: Markus Rotum

This eye-catching picture book teaches pupils about a significant moment in the history of space exploration and provides obvious links to the science and DT curriculums. Told from the perspective of the beloved little spacecraft, the fact-filled and richly illustrated text help pupils understand the power of imagination and what it means to be curious. Diagrams, timelines, and technical vocabulary are woven throughout, expanding pupils' ability to engage with the non-fiction genre.



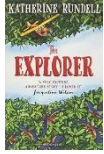
Hidden Figures-Margaret Lee Shetterly and Laura Freeman

This important text by Margot Lee Shetterly is the previously untold story of four African American women, all with exceptional maths skills, who helped America win the Space Race. This book is important for black representation and themes of empowerment and feminism are strongly woven throughout. Other curriculum links can also be made to history, DT, geography, and science.



Winter's Child: Angela McAllister and Grahame Baker-Smith

Winter's Child is an enchanting story filled with rich language and dilemmas to ponder. The magical, wintry illustrations pique pupils' imaginations and generate many questions around the influences of natural vs. human nature. The cyclical nature of the story provides the perfect opportunity to think beyond the ending and also creates links with the science, geography, and art curriculums.



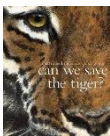
The Explorer-Katharine Rundell

Using *The Explorer* by Katherine Rundell for a Year 5 writing unit offers a rich foundation for developing narrative writing skills, with a focus on characterisation and vocabulary. The book's key themes of survival, adventure, and teamwork as a group of children navigate the Amazon jungle provide an exciting backdrop for students to craft their own adventure stories. Rundell's vivid descriptions, dynamic character development, and immersive vocabulary serve as an excellent model for students, helping them learn how to build tension, create multi-dimensional characters, and use rich, descriptive language. Cross-curricular links to Geography (exploring the Amazon rainforest) and Science (learning about habitats and ecosystems) further deepen the students' understanding of the natural world, while PSHE connections around resilience, collaboration, and leadership enhance their personal development. This combination makes *The Explorer* a versatile and inspiring text for narrative writing.



The Island-Armin Greder

This gritty text is a social commentary on issues such as 'closed'-communities, racism, refugees, and 'othering.' Told through powerfully stark imagery, the story provides an important opportunity for pupils to discuss difficult social themes and to think critically in order to understand the experiences of others.



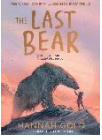
Can We Save the Tiger? Martin Jenkins and Vicky White

The plight of tigers and many other critically endangered animals are highlighted in this visually stunning picture book. As a starting point for discussing conservation and protection, pupils will learn important environmental messages and understand the need to raise awareness of how to look after what we have left. Compelling illustrations by Vicky White accompany powerful text by Martin Jenkins and the book may act as a springboard into other non-fiction texts on the same theme.



Alte Zachen-Ziggy Hanaor and Benjamin Phillips

This unique graphic novel is a multigenerational tale of division, identity, and the impacts of history on the present. References to Jewish culture and language are woven throughout as the story explores the relationship between grandmother and grandson and the complex differences in outlook that exist between the two. Benjamin Phillips' atmospheric illustrations and clever use of colour provide wordless moments of profound storytelling that pupils can interpret on their own. There is also a glossary of Yiddish terms to support language development.



The Last Bear Hannah Gold

This text links previous learning with a gripping story with important social issues relating to the environment and climate change. Pupils are able to explore these important topics through the eyes of the main character while also considering the experiences and prospects of the animals affected. Themes of kindness and adventure are explored, as well as the importance of fighting for what you believe in.



The Man Who Walked Between the Towers-Mordcai Gerstein

This tale of daring, written in lyrical prose by Mordecai Gerstein (who pupils are first introduced to in Year 3 with his book 'The First Drawing'), is based on the true exploits of daredevil Philippe Petit. Pupils will be enthralled by the poetic language used to portray this magical feat, as well as by the detailed illustrations – including two foldout spreads of the New York skyline. Links can be made to the history and DT curriculums and used as a starting point to discuss themes of justice, recognition and following your dreams.



Pig Heart Boy-Malorie Blackman

Pig Heart Boy by Malorie Blackman for a Year 5 writing unit offers a profound opportunity for students to engage with futuristic and ethical concepts, helping them craft thoughtful written pieces. The book's key themes—medical science, identity, and the moral dilemmas of organ transplants—allow students to explore character emotions, difficult choices, and personal growth in their own writing. Cross-curricular links to science (the human body, organ transplants) and PSHE (empathy, ethical decision-making) enhance understanding of these complex issues, while connections to current affairs around medical advances make the story relevant and thought-provoking. Set at the end of the school year, this unit provides a challenging and rewarding project that encourages students to fully flourish, showcasing their writing skills and deep thinking before moving into Year 6, helping them reflect on the themes of change, growth, and courage.

Texts for VIPERS:



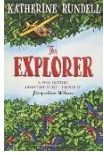
The Kid who Came from Space-Ross Welford

Reading Age 9-12

A small village is rocked by the disappearance of 12-year-old Tammy. Only her twin brother, Ethan, knows she is safe – and the extraordinary truth of where she is. It is a secret he must keep, or risk never seeing her again.

But that does not mean he is going to give up. Together with his friend Iggy and the mysterious (and very hairy) Hellyann, Ethan embarks on a nail-biting chase to get his sister back...that will take him further than anyone has

ever been before. Selected as a link text to the non-fiction Curiosity: the story of the Mars Rover, this tense, rip-roaring, witty adventure is underpinned by a moving examination of love and loyalty.



The Explorer-Katharine Rundell

Reading Age 8-10

We have selected this text to complement the Yr.5 geography learning. This is the completely absorbing story of four children whose plane crashes in the Amazon jungle, they are utterly alone and learn to survive using common sense and good luck. The pace is clear, the things that happen to the children all seem to fit with the situation even though they seem completely alien to the everyday lives of our pupils. They decide to try to get home using a map they have found, strapping a raft together using their intuition and set off to try and escape their situation. The river carries them to meet The Explorer, a man with no name and a mysterious past. He is vastly irritated to have these children turn up in his space but ends up being their saviour. Perfect characterisation, and description depicts vivid images of the food that they children survive on tarantula eggs and other jungle treats which springboards the pupils reading and writing outcomes.



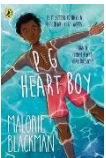
Asha and the Spirit Bird-Jasbinder Bilan

Reading Age 9-14

Asha lives on the family farm with her mother in rural India.

Her father is away working in the city, and when the money he sends stops suddenly, a wicked aunt arrives. She is determined to seize the property – and the treasure rumoured to be hidden on the land. Guided by a majestic bird which Asha believes to be the spirit of her grandmother, she and her best friend Jeevan embark on a journey to the city, across the Himalayas, to find her father and save her home. Again, set in a culture different to most pupils, they learn about places, people, and situations they would normally not experience themselves. There is a glossary of Hindi and Punjabi words, some of which we use in everyday vocabulary, which pupils are delighted to learn have origins in Asia. Wonderfully descriptive, pupils are immersed in the vivid description describing the sights, sounds and smell of the food that surround Asha's and Jeevan's journey.

This book has been chosen to accompany the topic to fit the spiritual journey that Asha goes on and how it changes her as well as the actual journey across India.



Pig Heart Boy-Malorie Blackman

Reading Age 11+

Pig-Heart Boy is a children's novel by Malorie Blackman, it shows the life of a teenage boy who undergoes a heart transplant. This links in with the pupils' science learning. Friendship, betrayal, and forgiveness are all explored through Cameron's story. His operation must be kept secret, as Doctor Bryce has had serious problems with animal rights activists in the past. However, Cameron does tell his closest friend, Marlon. He swears him to secrecy but is devastated when he realises that Marlon has not kept his word. In fact, Marlon's father sells the 'pig-heart boy' story to the newspapers for a considerable sum of money. Malorie Blackman adds a moral twist to this fact, too, when the reader realises that Marlon's Dad has only done this to stop the family home from being repossessed.

Prejudice is also explored through the reactions of a girl Cameron really likes in school. She rejects him because she is afraid, he might have 'germs' from having a pig's heart. Problematic decisions are explored throughout the book and the reader becomes fully absorbed in Cameron's struggles. There are relevant and engaging issues to explore with pupils in the classroom: the nature of friendship and trust, betrayal, decisions, and morality.

Year 6 Text Rationale

Texts for writing:



Another Twist in the Tale-Catherine Bruton

Using *Another Twist in the Tale* by Catherine Bruton for a Year 6 writing unit offers a dynamic exploration of narrative writing, blending Dickensian characterisation with modern themes, particularly feminism. This inventive reimagining of *Oliver Twist* gives a fresh perspective on the classic, focusing on a strong female protagonist navigating the hardships of Victorian London. The book's themes of resilience, empowerment, and challenging societal expectations provide rich material for students to explore in their own narrative writing, particularly through the lens of gender equality and historical context. Cross-curricular links to History (Victorian England, child labour, and social justice) and literature (understanding Dickens' original works and the art of characterisation) offer students a deeper appreciation for how characters are shaped by their environments. This unit encourages students to create their own richly developed characters and narratives, while critically engaging with themes of feminism and societal change.



A Christmas Carol-Charles Dickens.

Using the abridged version of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens in the classroom provides an excellent opportunity for Year 6 students to engage with classic literature while still being accessible. This version maintains the rich, descriptive style and vocabulary of Dickens, allowing students to explore and experiment with depth of language and various writing styles. As they delve into the themes of redemption, generosity, and transformation, students will be encouraged to bring characters to life in their own narrative pieces, learning how to create vivid characterisation and settings inspired by Dickens' original prose. This unit not only enhances their understanding of historical context and literary techniques but also fosters creativity as they craft their own unique stories, celebrating the enduring relevance of Dickens' work.



Suffragette-David Roberts

This narrative non-fiction book by David Roberts offers fascinating insights into the complex history of the Suffragette movement, looking beyond the stereotypes to include working-class women and

diverse stories from around the world. With strong historical links, pupils will develop analytical skills and explore ideas around comradeship, courage, and protest.



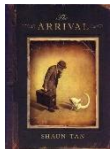
Night Mail-WH Auden

We chose this poem by prolific British American poet WH Auden to highlight to pupils the connection between poetry, film, music, and history. Pupils will enjoy the performance aspect of poetry, especially how the rhythm fits with the movement of the train, and how the visuals from the film bring the words to life. The poem acts as inspiration for their own poetry writing, which can also be performed to an audience.



When the Sky Falls-Phil Earle

As the Second World War escalates and bombs start to fall, Joseph is charged with protecting Adonis the gorilla in this tense thriller. Inspired by a true story. It is 1940, and Joseph has been packed off to stay with Mrs F, a gruff woman with no great fondness for children. To Joseph's amazement, she owns the rundown city zoo where Joseph meets Adonis, a huge silverback gorilla. Adonis is ferociously strong and dangerous, but Joseph finds he has an affinity with the lonely beast. Exploring themes of love, loss, healing hope, and the extraordinary bonds that can form between humans and animals. Phil Earle's writing captures the harsh realities of wartime but also the moments of beauty and compassion that can emerge in the darkest of times.



The Arrival-Shaun Tan

This wordless picture book is a silent tribute to every displaced person, migrant or refugee who has made a journey. Pupils develop empathy for those facing difficult, life-changing circumstances and explore themes such as migration, relationships, community and belonging. Shaun Tan is a beloved, award-winning author-illustrator who brings difficult concepts into sharp focus, and this is a clever text to examine displacement in WW2 and in more recent times.



Holes-Louis Sachar

Using *Holes* by Louis Sachar for a Year 6 writing unit offers an engaging and multifaceted narrative foundation that resonates strongly with students, making it a firm favourite at this level. The book's key themes of justice, friendship, and the importance of history provide rich material for exploration, allowing students to reflect on moral dilemmas and the consequences of actions. As they create their own written pieces, they can draw inspiration from Sachar's intertwining storylines and character development. Placing this unit at the end of the year provides an excellent opportunity for students to express themselves creatively and prepare for their transition to secondary school, fostering a sense of accomplishment and enthusiasm for storytelling as they move forward.

Texts for VIPERS



Another Twist in the Tale-Catherine Bruton

Using *Another Twist in the Tale* by Catherine Bruton for a Year 6 VIPERS unit provides an engaging platform for exploring key themes of resilience, empowerment, and social justice, all through the lens of a strong female protagonist in a reimagined Victorian setting. The book's inclusive narrative invites discussions around gender equality and the challenges faced by marginalized groups, promoting empathy and understanding among students. Its depth of language and quirky writing style, reminiscent of Lemony Snicket, encourages students to appreciate rich vocabulary and playful narrative techniques, fostering their ability to analyze and interpret text. Through the VIPERS framework, students will enhance their comprehension skills while delving into character development and thematic exploration, making this unit both enjoyable and educationally enriching.



A Christmas Carol-Charles Dickens.

Reading Age 11+

Using the abridged version of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens for a Year 6 VIPERS unit provides students with a rich literary experience. The key themes of redemption, compassion, and the spirit of Christmas allow for deep discussions and reflections on moral values. The use of Dickensian language and vocabulary offers students the opportunity to engage with rich, descriptive prose while developing their understanding of literary techniques. Through the VIPERS framework, students can effectively unpick the events of the story, analysing character motivations and the impact of Scrooge's transformation. This engaging unit not only enhances comprehension skills but also fosters an appreciation for classic literature, making it a meaningful addition to their reading curriculum.



When the Sky Falls-Phil Earle

Reading Age 11+

As the Second World War escalates and bombs start to fall, Joseph is charged with protecting Adonis the gorilla in this tense thriller. Inspired by a true story. It is 1940, and Joseph has been packed off to stay with Mrs F, a gruff woman with no great fondness for children. To Joseph's amazement, she owns the rundown city zoo where Joseph meets Adonis, a huge silverback gorilla. Adonis is ferociously strong and dangerous, but Joseph finds he has an affinity with the lonely beast. Exploring themes of love, loss, healing hope, and the extraordinary bonds that can form between humans and animals. Phil Earle's writing captures the harsh realities of wartime but also the moments of beauty and compassion that can emerge in the darkest of times.



Holes-Louis Sachar.

Reading Age-10-11+

A firm Year 6 favourite, Louis Sachar's 1998 children's novel, *Holes*, tells the story of a boy accused of stealing. A judge sentences him to 18 months in a camp where a tyrannical warden has the boys' digging holes that appear random. This text explores the themes of friendship, family relationships, the consequences of choices resulting from fate and destiny, cruelty versus kindness as well as justice in the formal sense and on a personal level too.