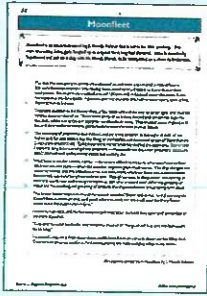# Moonfleet

Question Book:
Year 6, pages 22-23

Author / Source:
J. Meade Falkner (adapted)

Genre:
Classic fiction — novel extract

**Cross-curricular links:**
• Science (astronomy)

Introduction

John Meade Falkner was an English writer and poet, born in 1858. *Moonfleet* is one of Falkner's most famous works and is a classic children's adventure story about smuggling. The story has been the basis of several television and film adaptations, including a BBC version broadcast in 1964 called *Smuggler's Bay*. In this extract, the protagonist, John, is being transported as a prisoner to Java when the ship he's travelling in gets caught in a storm. Before giving pupils the text, explain that the transportation of prisoners to overseas colonies was common in the 18th century and that the journeys were often long and dangerous.

Answers

1. E.g. disgusting; nasty; dirty; vile

2. a. d. a metaphor
    b. E.g. To show that the conditions on the lowest deck are smelly and unpleasant, like a pigsty.

3. E.g. Being in prison. He says that prison "was a heaven" compared to "this night of hell" on the ship.

4. E.g. John is in a dangerous situation. It's about an exciting quest for a long-lost diamond.

5. E.g. There are lots of exciting verbs like "plunged" and "flung". The author also uses onomatopoeia like "groaning" and "creaking", which makes the action very vivid.

6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. I think the ship will sink, but the narrator and Elzevir will survive because they're sailors and would know how to escape from a sinking ship.
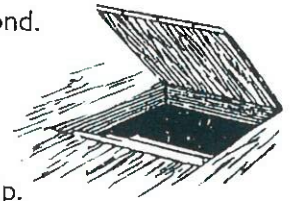
Extra Activities

• Remind pupils what onomatopoeia is. Ask them to underline all the onomatopoeic words in the extract, e.g. "roaring" (line 18). Get pupils to write a description of a ship as it anchors at a busy port. They should use onomatopoeia to make their descriptions as vivid as possible.

• Explain that adventure stories often involve a 'problem' that characters solve by having an adventure. Ask pupils to identify the problem that John faces (being trapped on a sinking ship) and discuss how he might escape. Make a list of other 'problems' that could form the basis of an adventure story.

• Ask pupils to choose one of the 'problems' from the previous activity and use it to write their own adventure story. Before pupils start to write, they should plan their story. Encourage them to think about who their main characters will be and how the problem will be resolved.

• Ask pupils what they think the word "fleet" means. Explain that this is an example of a collective noun. Challenge pupils to write down one collective noun for each letter of the alphabet, e.g. an army of soldiers, a bunch of flowers, a caravan of camels etc. Their work could be turned into a wall display.

• Explain that some sailors in the northern hemisphere used to navigate using the North Star (Polaris). The North Star would always show them which direction they were travelling in because it is situated above the North Pole. Ask pupils to research how to locate the North Star in the night sky. They should draw and label a diagram of the North Star and the Plough to explain their findings.

Beowulf the Warrior
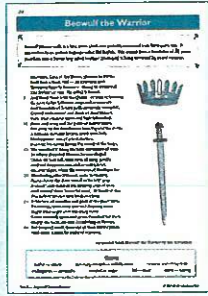
Question Book:
Year 6, pages 24-25

Author / Source:
Ian Serraillier

Genre:
Legend

Cross-curricular links:
- Drama (performance)
- History (Anglo-Saxons)
- Geography (Scandinavia)

Introduction

The legend of *Beowulf* is one of the oldest surviving poems written in Old English. It's an epic poem of over 3000 lines, which narrates the story of a heroic prince called Beowulf who saves King Hrothgar from an evil monster called Grendel and his mother. This extract will be engaging and exciting for pupils, as it sets the scene for a classic battle between good and evil. One of many modern translations, Ian Serraillier's version is more accessible for children, but it might be helpful to explain some background to the poem before you begin.

Answers

1. "huge hall" OR "high to heaven"

2. E.g. dangerous; unsafe; untrustworthy; unstable

3. E.g. One night when Hrothgar's men are sleeping, Grendel breaks into Heorot and kidnaps over twenty men. He takes them back to his home and eats them.

4. E.g. Very sad, because the hall rang with the "grief of the great King". He might also feel humiliated, as he hasn't been able to stop Grendel from terrorising his people.

5. E.g. The author's use of language makes Grendel sound evil. Descriptions like "fiend from hell" and "red ferocious eyes" create a threatening tone, which contrasts with the happiness at the start of the extract.

6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because I want to know what happens to Grendel. I don't think he'll get away with killing so many people. The poem is also very exciting so it makes me want to read more.

Extra Activities

- Ask pupils to underline all the alliteration in the extract. As a class, discuss what effect it has on the rhythm. Lines 16-21 don't have any alliteration at all — why do pupils think the author did this?

- Tell the class the features of epic poetry (e.g. a long narrative poem that is usually about heroes and adventures). Ask them to rewrite an extract from a legend of their choosing, for example Robin Hood or an Arthurian legend, as an epic poem. Encourage them to use alliteration where they can.

- As a class, write a short summary of what happens in the extract. Then split pupils into groups and ask them to perform it. Encourage them to think about different ways of presenting the story, e.g. with a narrator reading the extract, by creating dialogue for the characters or with sound effects but no speech.

- *Beowulf* was written during the Anglo-Saxon period. Introduce pupils to some Anglo-Saxon history — where the Anglo-Saxons came from, when they came to England and what sort of lives they lived. Ask pupils to research the Anglo-Saxon burial site at Sutton Hoo in East Anglia. They should use their findings to write a newspaper report about the 1939 discovery of the ship buried there.

- Explain to pupils that this poem is set in Scandinavia, which is a region of Europe. Ask pupils if they know which countries are in Scandinavia and see if they can identify the region on a map. Then ask pupils to research one Scandinavian country and come up with a list of 'top ten' facts about it.

Cyber-Bullying

Question Book:
Year 6, pages 26-27

Author / Source:
www.dailymail.co.uk

Genre:
Non-fiction — newspaper article

Cross-curricular links:
- PSHE (safety online; bullying)
- Drama (performance)

Introduction

The Internet plays an increasingly important role in the social lives of young people, and almost all young people in Britain have regular access to a computer or a smartphone. This article looks at how children are more vulnerable to cyber-bullying as a result. Whilst protective measures like installing filters do help to protect young Internet users, many parents feel ill-equipped to deal with cyber-bullying and its effects. Before reading the article, ask pupils how many hours a day they spend on the Internet.

Answers

1. E.g. Because the newspaper wants to emphasise how shocking this statistic is.

2. E.g. He wants the Government to make sure cyber-bullying is taught in schools.

3. E.g. That cyber-bullying often involves someone writing a nasty comment in an email, text message or on social media. Because these comments are written down, they don't "disappear" like verbal abuse.

4. E.g. Yes, because bullies are less likely to be punished if nobody knows who they are.

5. E.g. Because the Internet is such a huge part of young people's lives that there's no way a victim could truly "unplug". Also, switching off devices doesn't solve the problem, it just ignores it.

6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. No, because people should be allowed to express themselves freely on the Internet and there will always be people who bully others. OR E.g. Yes, because people are becoming more aware of cyber-bullying and introducing new ways to stop it.

Extra Activities

- Tell pupils that a lot of non-fiction writing includes facts and statistics. Explain the difference between them, then, as a class, identify examples of each from the extract. Discuss why writers might include facts and statistics in their writing. (E.g. to make their arguments more persuasive, to back up their claims.)

- As a class, discuss different strategies pupils can use to deal with cyber-bullying and how to stay safe online (telling a parent or teacher, blocking bullies on social media, not giving out personal details etc.). Using their ideas, ask pupils to make a leaflet aimed at younger students to help them stay safe online.

- Show pupils a short clip about cyber-bullying, e.g. 'Cyber Bullying Virus' made by the charity Cybersmile. Ask pupils whether they liked it or not, and whether they thought it was effective. Divide pupils into small groups and ask them to create their own piece of drama designed to raise awareness about the dangers of cyber-bullying. The performance should be no more than 5 minutes long.

- As a class, create a mind map of the different types of bullying behaviour. Ensure children are aware that bullying isn't just physical violence or name calling, it can also be isolating someone or a friend controlling your actions. Then ask pupils to create their own mind maps about the effects that bullying can have on someone, e.g. becoming withdrawn, having fewer friends, acting aggressively, skipping school. Then, as a class, make a list of the positive actions pupils can take to support someone who is being bullied, e.g. making them feel included, standing up for them, telling a teacher if they see bullying behaviour.

Romeo and Juliet

Question Book:
Year 6, pages 28-29

Author / Source:
William Shakespeare (adapted)

Genre:
Classic fiction — playscript

Cross-curricular links:
- Drama (performance)
- Art (wanted posters)
- History (Shakespeare)

Introduction

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's most well-known tragedies. The play explores the themes of love, family and fate, as two young lovers from rival families try to overcome the feud that divides their households. Although this extract has been rewritten into modern English, it retains some of the imagery used by Shakespeare in the original playscript. Some pupils may find the extract difficult to follow at first, but reading the extract several times or focussing on one character at a time may help to consolidate understanding.

Answers

1. "Will you draw out your sword by his ears?"

2. E.g. Enthusiastic, because he starts the fight with Tybalt. He also warns him to "Be quick" or else he'll begin to attack before Tybalt is ready.

3. E.g. Romeo tries to break up the fight between Tybalt and Mercutio, but Tybalt stabs Mercutio under Romeo's arm and then leaves.

4. a. Romeo and Tybalt b. E.g. That both of their families should be punished for Mercutio getting stabbed.

5. E.g. Guilty, because his friend was hurt when Romeo tried to break up the fight.

6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes. Mercutio thinks that he's going to die because he says that by tomorrow he will be "a grave man" and implies that the wound is "enough" to kill him. OR E.g. No, because I think Mercutio is overreacting. Romeo says "surely it cannot hurt too much".

Extra Activities

- As a class, rewrite this extract as part of a novel. Remind pupils that they'll need to add descriptions and consider how different characters might be feeling at different points in the extract.

- The story of Romeo and Juliet has been retold in many different formats. Give pupils a simple summary of the play, then show them an example of a modern written adaptation and its blurb, e.g. *Daz 4 Zoe* by Robert Swindells. Ask pupils to think of their own modern-day version and create a blurb for it.

- Shakespeare created and popularised many words that are still used in the English language today. Challenge pupils to research words that he invented and ask them to come up with amusing Shakespearean insults, e.g. 'You zany, frugal moonbeam!' Read the best ones out to the class.

- Split the class into groups of four. Ask each group to memorise the extract and perform it to the class. Pupils should then vote for their favourite performance, explaining the reasons for their choice.

- Explain that after this scene, Romeo kills Tybalt and flees. Ask pupils to design a wanted poster for Romeo. The poster should tell people what happened between Romeo and Tybalt and whether a reward is offered. It should also instruct the public on what to do if they see Romeo.

- As a class, make a list of the kinds of information usually included in a biography. Then ask pupils to use the list to research Shakespeare. Pupils should use their findings to create a short biography about him.

A Letter from a Former Slave
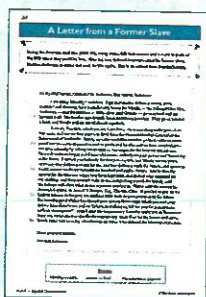
Question Book:
Year 6, pages 30-31

Author / Source:
Jourdon Anderson

Genre:
Non-fiction — letter

Cross-curricular links:
- History (slavery; abolitionism)
- PSHE (modern slavery; freedom)

Introduction

Between the 1500s and the early 1800s, Britain was heavily involved in the Atlantic slave trade. Britain abolished the slave trade in 1807 and outlawed slavery in most of the British Empire in 1833. In the USA, however, slavery remained central to the society and economy of many southern states. It was only at the end of the American Civil War in 1865, that slavery was abolished throughout the USA. This letter, written in August 1865, offers a fascinating insight into one freed slave's attitude towards his former master. Before pupils read the letter, make sure they understand the concept of slavery, and explain that in the USA slaves were forced to work in brutal conditions on sugar, cotton, tobacco and rice plantations.

Answers

1. E.g. To show that he doesn't need to go back to work for the Colonel because things are much better for him now than when he was a slave.

2. E.g. That he doesn't need the Colonel to give him his freedom because he's already officially free.

3. E.g. Because she's worried that he might treat them badly or force them to be slaves again.

4. a. E.g. To pay the money he owes Jourdon and Mandy for all the years they worked for him as unpaid slaves. b. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because it was unfair for the Colonel to benefit from Jourdon and Mandy's hard work when they didn't get anything in return.

5. E.g. People who don't pay their workers will be punished in the end.

6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. He feels angry about the way the Colonel treated him in the past — he says what the Colonel did was wrong and calls it fraud. He also feels that the Colonel isn't really trustworthy — he doesn't want to work for him because he doesn't think he will keep his promises.

Extra Activities

- Ask pupils to identify features of the text that show it is a letter. What other layout features are usually found in formal letters? Get them to create a labelled template explaining how to set out a formal letter.

- Get pupils to research the countries involved in the slave trade, and the movement of slaves and the goods they produced around the world. Ask them to produce a map labelling the countries involved and the different commodities that were traded, e.g. sugar, rum, tobacco, cotton and coffee. Are pupils shocked to learn that slavery played such a central role in the global economy?

- Explain to pupils about the abolition movement. Show them images designed by abolitionists to campaign against slavery, such as Josiah Wedgwood's 'Am I not a man and a brother?' Pupils should then produce their own poster to support the abolition movement.

- Explain to pupils that millions of adults and children are still treated as slaves today. Ask pupils to write a speech arguing for the abolition of modern slavery.

- Ask pupils to explain what freedom means to them. Are the pupils' ideas about freedom similar or different? Why is freedom important? How do they think it would feel to lose their freedom?