

rewritten for the *Children's Encyclopaedia* by Arthur Mee. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading. Provide dictionaries for the children to use when answering the comprehension questions.

Answers 1. a hen 2. *seeing a fox* 3. *his other dreams had come true in the past* 4. *listed*
5. *indigestion* 6. *because he speaks nicely to the cockerel and earns his trust, then tricks him* 7a. 'spied' 7b. 'racket' 7c. 'deceived' 8. '(strutting around) as fierce as a lion'
9. a fox 10. b.

Further activities

- Explain that Geoffrey Chaucer lived over 600 years ago and his writing – much of it poetry – led him to be dubbed 'The father of English literature'. (Most poetry before his was written either in French or Latin but Chaucer chose to write his poems in English, making it more easily accessible for future generations.)
- Check that the children understand the vocabulary used (for example, 'deceived', 'cockerel', 'enumerated', 'mate', 'racket', 'widow').
- Point out typical story-telling devices in the organisation of the text: use of paragraphs, direct speech, time-phrases ('While', 'Some days later'). Highlight archaic phrases ('alas', 'Gentle sir').
- Discuss the fact that this tale is a 'fable' – a moral tale in which animals are used to communicate a special message about the way humans interact with one another. Ask the children if they know of other fables (by Aesop, for example). Read some of them in class, and compare them to this text – how does the 'moral' of each tale compare and what are the similarities and differences between the characters?
- Encourage the children to retell this story in their own words and research further Canterbury Tales.
- Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each character. Divide the children into groups of three and invite them to act out the story, improvising their own scripts and showing the characters' personalities in their performances.

Digging (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 2 (page 38)

Genre: Classic poem

Author: Edward Thomas

Introduction

Like his friend Robert Frost, Edward Thomas wrote simple traditional poems that often echo the patterns of natural speech. 'Digging' is a typical example, giving clear evidence of his ability to evoke the essence of the English countryside, capturing mood and feeling through images of nature. It draws particularly on the sense of smell. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading. Provide dictionaries for the children to use when answering the comprehension questions.

Answers 1. *the words sound alike* 2. *observing through the sense of smell* 3. 'odours', 'smell' 4. *to give up* 5. 'wounds' 6. *bonfire smoke* 7. *usually used of liquids* 8. *laughter; merriment*
9. *hearing* 10a. *mirth is the opposite of sadness* 10b. *he is both sad and happy (nostalgic?)*.

Further activities

- Ask if the children know what major world event happened during the poet's lifetime (World War 1 – known as 'The Great War', in which Thomas died).

- Briefly discuss how the countryside has changed since the time when Thomas was writing. (Many green areas have been built on – and are now industrial sites, housing estates, shopping malls.) Give specific examples in your local area if possible. Encourage the children to discuss the dilemmas and tensions between wanting to preserve green spaces and the beauty of the countryside and at the same time wanting to provide affordable housing for families. Focus on the details that will make this issue clearer for the children: for example, wild animals and plants are good for the environment, but families with children need houses to live in; farmers need open land on which to grow crops, but big shopping centres are cheap and convenient for doing all your shopping in one place.
- Ask what other senses, apart from the sense of smell, poets may use in description (hearing, sight, taste and touch).
- Invite the children to search anthologies for further poems by Edward Thomas.
- Ask the children what they notice about the organisation of lines 3 and 4 in the first three verses, pointing out the use of commas as a clue. (They are lists.)
- Challenge the children to write their own poem, focusing primarily on one of the senses and using a list technique.

BOOK 3

Jacky Daydream remembers (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 3 (page 4)

Genre: Autobiography

Source: *Jacky Daydream, The Story of her Childhood*

Author: Jacqueline Wilson

Introduction

In this extract by the ever-popular Jacqueline Wilson, children's Laureate 2005–2007, the author recalls childhood shopping trips in post-war Britain. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text. Provide dictionaries.

Answers

1a. *writing books; writing novels* 1b. 'autobiography' 2a. *mosaic-tiled walls* 2b. *the dressing room of a lady in the East* 3. *the butter was hard and the bread wasn't sliced, so it was the easiest way to do it; if you cut the bread first and then buttered it, you would need to cut thicker slices, or the bread would disintegrate when you spread it with hard butter* 4. *there were separate queues when you bought things in different parts of the shop; food was rationed as normal international trade had not fully resumed following the war* 5. *bananas and oranges* 6. *they argue over the price of goods to try and get a bargain* 7. *they have cash tills and electronic registers to do the arithmetic automatically* 8. *within a child's reach* 9. *she was an imaginary friend whom Jacky could blame for naughtiness*.

Further activities

- Explain to the children that ordinary people were struggling after the war to provide for their families. Money was short and food was still rationed. You will have touched on this when discussing the text 'The "ration-book" Olympics' (Key Stage 2 Comprehension Book 2, page 12).
- Draw attention to Jacqueline Wilson's use of the past conjunctive tense: 'We'd' (short for 'We would'). Discuss what she means when she says, 'You could ...' (meaning 'one could' or 'people generally could'). Help turn such sentences into the passive voice: for example, 'You could get oranges ...' becomes 'Oranges were available ...', etc. Ask the children which version makes it easier for the reader to identify with the writer's experience. (The author's conversational, informal voice using 'you' more readily involves the reader.)