COMPREHENSION NINJA

FOR AGES 5–6: FICTION & POETRY

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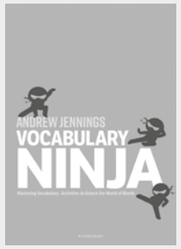
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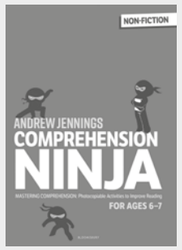
OTHER NINJA RESOURCES

FOR TEACHERS



VOCABULARY NINJA

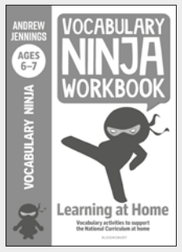
A practical guide containing strategies and photocopiable activities to help transform pupils into vocabulary ninjas. Featuring theory and teaching approaches, as well as key topic vocabulary, etymology and phrases, this book will bring the primary curriculum to life.

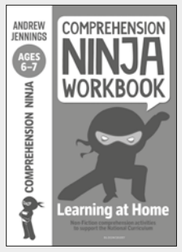


COMPREHENSION NINJA NON-FICTION

A set of six books for ages 5–11 that provide strategies and photocopiable resources to teach comprehension. Each book presents 24 high-quality non-fiction texts and photocopiable activities with strong links to the National Curriculum.

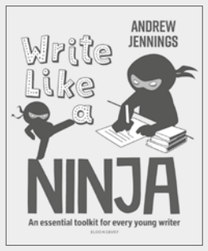
FOR CHILDREN





NINJA WORKBOOKS

Vocabulary and comprehension workbooks to support learning at home. Each workbook contains bespoke non-fiction texts and hundreds of questions that are linked to the National Curriculum. Perfect for developing literacy skills and boosting children's confidence in literacy and reading comprehension.



WRITE LIKE A NINJA

A pocket-sized book full of all the grammar, vocabulary and sentence structures that children need in order to improve and develop their writing skills. Fully aligned to the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum, this book is designed to be used independently by pupils both in the classroom and at home.

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN ONLINE

Head to www.vocabularyninja.co.uk and follow @VocabularyNinja on Twitter for more teaching and learning resources to support the teaching of vocabulary, reading, writing and the wider primary school curriculum.



INTRODUCTION

The Comprehension Ninja: Fiction & Poetry series has been designed to be an essential resource for teaching reading comprehension skills and building pupil confidence. The books focus on information retrieval, using core comprehension skills that underpin the reading domains set out by the National Curriculum.

Each of the six books in the series contains 24 awesome fiction and poetry texts, followed by comprehension activities. The texts have been curated to feature a range of authors, genres and text types from the world of children's literature and poetry.

Quite often, comprehension activities can bombard pupils with a range of question types that they have not yet had time to master – meaning they quickly encounter questions that they find extremely challenging. This series places the emphasis on teachers being able to teach and model each skill, while pupils develop their understanding of each question type individually.

PROGRESSION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS

The books in the Comprehension Ninja: Fiction & Poetry series grow in difficulty via the complexity and length of the texts. The vocabulary in the book for ages 7–8 is more challenging than the vocabulary in the book for ages 5–6, for example. The length of the reading texts falls in line with statutory assessments at Year 2 and Year 6, growing in increments each year, thus increasing the demands on pupils to accurately retrieve information from larger and more complex texts.

Approximate text length* in the Comprehension Ninja: Fiction & Poetry series:

Ages 5-6: 100-150 words
Ages 6-7: 200-250 words
Ages 7-8: 300-450 words
Ages 8-9: 500-600 words
Ages 9-10: 650-700 words
Ages 10-11: 700-800 words

*Within each age range, the poetry texts can vary from the word count ranges shown above. In these instances, the reduced word count is complemented by more complex vocabulary and sentence structures.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book contains 24 fiction and poetry texts for you to use in your classroom. Part 1 includes 12 texts that have eight subsequent pages of questions built around different comprehension skills. These texts and questions have been developed so that you can specifically target and teach each individual skill, and then have a plethora of questions for pupils to work on. In maths, you wouldn't jump from division one day into 3D shapes the next. The same must apply to reading – we should teach each skill and give pupils the opportunity to practise and master the skills before we move on. You now have in your hands 12 texts with eight associated questions to teach each skill – that's a minimum of 96 lessons from Part 1 of the book.

Part 2 includes texts 13 to 24 and these look more like traditional tests. Each text has a corresponding set of questions. Each set of questions requires pupils to use the comprehension skills mastered in Part 1. You could choose to use these texts formatively across the year to inform which skills require further attention, but here lies a fantastic opportunity for pupils to apply their new skills to each question type independently and with confidence.

It is important to note that this resource hasn't been designed to be a testing tool but rather a teaching and learning tool. A tool whereby teachers support pupils to access texts and to master core comprehension skills. However, because of the nature of testing in schools, it is important that children see and experience test-type texts and questions – as they will from Part 2.

This is a versatile resource: it's up to you how it is used. As pupils grow in confidence and skill level, they will relish completing these activities.

PRE-READING AND KEY INFORMATION TO IDENTIFY IN THE TEXT

Before they answer questions, teach pupils to pre-read a text and identify key information using a pencil or a highlighter.

Here are some examples of the key information pupils could be encouraged to look out for when they read fiction or poetry.

Who or which? Characters, people, animals, events, and so on.

When? Time periods, including times of the day, days, months, years, and so on.

Where? Locations or changes in location.

What or how? Actions that characters perform, linked to verb phrases.

Vocabulary: Key vocabulary that is relevant to understanding and words that pupils are unfamiliar with.

Dialogue: Conversations between characters.

We want to train pupils to underline or highlight pieces of key information as they read through the text. A good guideline is to underline or highlight three-to-six pieces per paragraph. Key information should be single words or small groups of words, not full sentences. Model this skill to pupils and discuss why you have underlined certain information. As well as physically marking the text, model your thought processes too, showing pupils how you make mental notes about locations, characters, actions, and so on.

KEYWORDS IN THE QUESTION

Once pupils have read the text and underlined key information, they can begin to answer questions about it. We now need to teach pupils to spot keywords or key phrases in a question. These are words or phrases that signpost where to look in the text to find the answer. Take a look at this question:

Why was the dinosaur near to tears?

Pupils should be taught to underline 'near to tears'. They would then need to skim through the text to find the section where the phrase 'near to tears' can be found, then scan that section to find the exact phrase. After this, pupils should be taught to read the sentences or lines before and after the one that contains the key phrase. This will help them find the answer. Pupils might understand that the word 'dinosaur' is not necessarily a helpful keyword, as it is likely to be repeated many times in the text.

Pupils might not understand what the keywords in the question mean. However, they can still answer the question by finding the keyword or key phrase and reading around it.

THE QUESTION TYPES

SKIM AND SCAN

To be a good retriever of information, pupils must be able to locate information quickly. By skimming and scanning a text efficiently and methodically, pupils will have a much higher chance of locating the information they require.

It's crucial to agree a shared language amongst staff as to what skimming and scanning is. You don't want to use the phrase 'skimming and scanning' without everyone, including pupils, being very clear on what this means.

Skimming is a whole-text process. Pupils skim across the text to locate a specific paragraph or area where the required information is likely to be. We won't necessarily find the answer when skimming, but we hope to locate the correct area of the text.

When asking pupils to skim the text to find the correct area, try asking them to remember first whether the information was in the beginning, the middle or the end of the text. These strategies can help guide pupils to the correct area of the text, thus increasing their chances of being successful in answering the question.

Scanning follows skimming. It involves looking at specific sentences with a greater level of scrutiny, possibly looking for a keyword or key phrase.

Introduce skimming and scanning with images, timetables, TV schedules, poems, lists, visual instructions and hidden word pictures. Ask pupils to locate specific items, objects and information – give a time limit to increase the fun factor.

LABEL / DRAW AND LABEL

Labelling asks pupils to look at an image and label parts of the image with words from a word bank.

Draw and label requires pupils to draw an image based on the information they have read and then to add their own labels.

Increase the difficulty of labelling by asking pupils to label more complex images using a short paragraph of text instead of a word bank. Alternatively, use draw and label as part of your literacy lessons.

FIVE Ws AND HOW

These are classic reading comprehension question stems: what, where, who, which, when and how. All of these require pupils to retrieve information from the text to demonstrate their understanding.

Constantly refer back to the pre-reading process and model this skill to pupils, demonstrating how, as a reader, you are constantly identifying the five Ws as you read. Say your thoughts as you read the text aloud, demonstrating how you make mental notes of the question words and hows as you read. Model to pupils how you can begin to predict what the questions are likely to be.

FILL IN THE GAP

Pupils are given sentences with missing words. They will need to locate the sentences in the text and identify the missing words. Refer pupils back to their pre-reading and marking of the text, which should increase their retrieval speed.

Practise this skill by giving pupils a page of their reading book and the same page with multiple words blanked out. Can they fill in the blanks? Prompt pupils to spot keywords in the rest of the sentence in order to locate the full sentences in the original text.





MULTIPLE CHOICE

These questions require pupils to choose an answer from a selection of four possible answers. Prompt pupils to locate the required information by spotting keywords in the question and locating them in the text, then reading around this information to find the correct answer.

Teach pupils to discount illogical answers using what they already know from their pre-read of the text. Also ensure that pupils don't answer questions using their own prior knowledge. Prompt pupils to 'prove it' by finding the exact information in the text.

TRUE OR FALSE

Pupils are given a statement and asked if it is true or false. Younger year groups will begin to learn this skill by answering yes or no, before progressing to true or false.

Ensure pupils are not guessing. Train pupils to spot the keywords in the questions and locate this information in the text. By reading around this information and pre-marking the text, pupils will be able to discover whether the statements are true or false.

FIND AND COPY

These questions require pupils to identify a word when provided with a contextual description rather than a contextless definition. Pupils will need to use keywords to locate the correct area of the text and then find and copy the correct word. For older pupils, questions may direct pupils to a certain part of the text at the beginning of the question, for example, *Look at the verse beginning 'Maggie just froze in amazement'.*

This skill is much more challenging than its name suggests. Teach pupils to follow the instructional part of the question to locate the correct area of the text efficiently. Although counterintuitive, teaching pupils to apply a 'best guess' approach if they are struggling to find the correct word is still a worthwhile strategy and more often than not will produce a correct answer.

SEQUENCING

These questions require pupils to sequence information in the order it occurs in the text, from first to last.

Teach pupils to allocate each word or statement (usually no more than five) a symbol – for example, a square, a triangle, a rectangle, a star or a cross. Pupils should then find these statements in the text and mark the corresponding symbol on the text. Once pupils have done this, it is easy to look at the text and see which symbol comes first, second, third and so on. This is a very effective strategy to help pupils sequence information.

READING AND EXPLOITING FICTION AND POETRY TEXTS WITH YOUR PUPILS

The Comprehension Ninja: Fiction & Poetry series offers so much more than information retrieval. The series offers an unrivalled and unique collection of texts and poetry from a range of poets and authors.

So, how else could you use this treasure trove of texts in your classroom or school?

- Use the high-quality texts to develop lessons focusing on other reading domains such as inference, prediction, comparison and explanation.
- Use the texts and question sets to complement your writing units based on the same text. If children have done lots of comprehension activities related to a text, they will have a better overall understanding of the characters, settings and events depicted in the text.
- Use the extracts as ways to hook children into reading new books and genres. If you're using a text that is an extract from a book, have a physical copy of the book available to give to children once they are hooked.
- Rather than reading a whole book, develop writing units based on the short extracts of books or poems so that children gain a greater understanding of a far smaller extract. This is great for interventions or time-sensitive writing opportunities.



SKIM AND SCAN

This question is about *Fireworks*.

Use your ninja reading eyes to spot these words in the text. Circle the words when you find them.

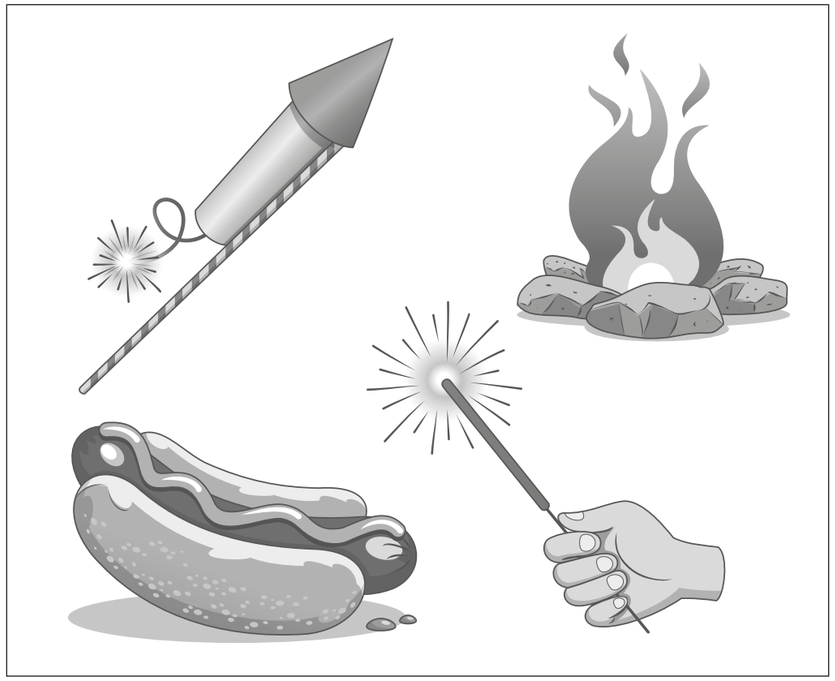
firework	sparkler	glowed
wood	bonfire	hotdog
show	park	friends
gold	yellow	directions
fountain	crowd	cheered

Comprehension Ninja 5-6 © Andrew Jennings, 2021

LABEL AN IMAGE

Look at the image below.

Label the image with words from the word bank.



Word bank

hotdog	firework	explosion
sparkler	fire	hand

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DRAW AND LABEL



Draw the statements in the boxes.

Add your own labels to your drawings.

a bonfire	a hotdog
friends in the park	red, green, gold, blue and purple fireworks

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FIVE Ws AND HOW



Answer the questions below. Look back at *Fireworks* to find the correct answer.

1 What was burning on the bonfire?

2 What type of food was eaten?

3 How many sparklers did the child have?

4 Where was the firework show?

5 Who did the child wave at?

6 Where were the friends sitting?

7 Which colour fireworks popped?

8 Which colour fireworks fizzed?

9 What did the green and yellow fireworks do?

10 What colour was the fountain?

11 What colour were the sparkles in the fountain?

12 Who cheered at the end of the story?

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ANANSI THE SPIDER

14

ADAM BUSHNELL

FICTION: TRADITIONAL TALE

Anansi was a spider. He was God's favourite animal. God liked Anansi so much that he gave him all of the wisdom of the world. Wisdom is when you learn to be clever.

God gave Anansi the wisdom in a large pot. Anansi wanted to keep all of the wisdom to himself. He didn't want to share it with the other animals. So, Anansi used his webs to tie the pot to his back. Then he climbed a tree to hide the pot.

But the climbing was hard with such a heavy pot. The web began to snap. Then the pot fell off Anansi's back and smashed on the floor.

The wisdom flew out and blew all around the world. Now all the animals each had some wisdom. They were all as clever as each other.



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OLIVER'S PIZZA

ADAM BUSHNELL

Where had Oliver's pizza gone? It was on his plate a moment ago. He had been thinking about Christmas. He knew what he would like as a gift. He had turned around to ask his mum if he could write a letter to Santa. She told him that they would do it together after dinner. When Oliver looked back, the pizza was gone. He turned again to ask his mum.

"Mum, where's my pizza?"

"Have you eaten it already?" his mum asked.



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"No," Oliver replied. "I haven't eaten it."

"You must have," his mum said.

Oliver knew that he hadn't eaten it. He looked around the room. Where was the pizza? Then he looked under the table. His dog Max was sitting there. Max was wagging his tail. There was cheese hanging from the dog's mouth.

The mystery was solved.





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PIRATE PETE

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JAMES CARTER

POETRY

Pirate Pete
had a ship on the sea
had a fish for his tea
had a peg for a knee

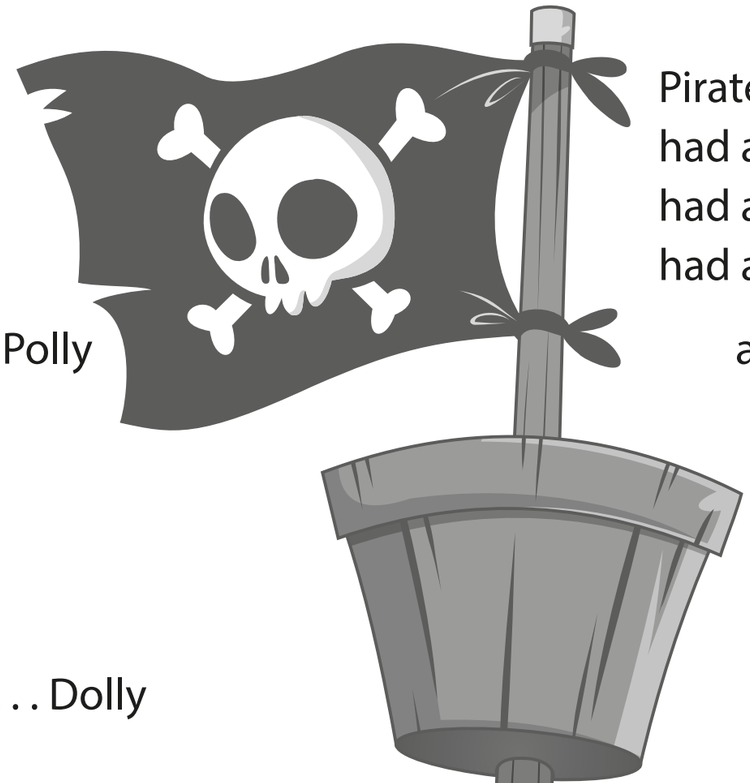
and a tiny little parrot called . . . Polly

Pirate Pete
had a book with a map
had a skull on his cap
had a cat on his lap

and another little parrot called . . . Dolly

Pirate Pete
had a trunk full of treasure
had a belt made of leather
had a cap with a feather

and another little parrot called . . . Jolly



Pirate Pete
had a patch on his eye
had a flag he would fly
had a plank way up high

and another little parrot called . . . Molly

So Pirate Pete
and the parrots four
they sailed the world
from shore to shore –
collecting gold
and gifts galore.
And that's their tale –
there is no more!

