COMPREHENSION NINJA FOR AGES 6–7: FICTION & POETRY

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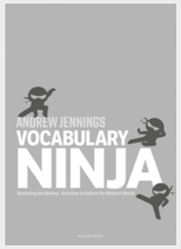
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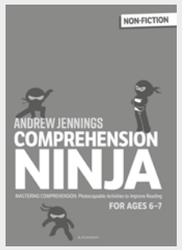
OTHER NINJA RESOURCES

FOR TEACHERS



VOCABULARY NINJA

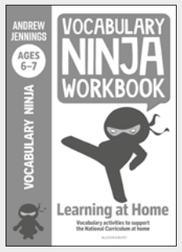
A practical guide containing strategies and photocopiable activities to help transform pupils into vocabulary ninjas. Featuring theory and teaching approaches, as well as key topic vocabulary, etymology and phrases, this book will bring the primary curriculum to life.

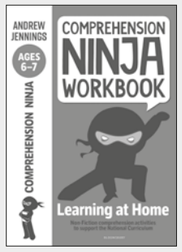


COMPREHENSION NINJA NON-FICTION

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.

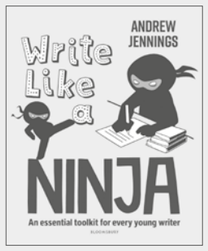
FOR CHILDREN





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 *The Great Fire of London*.

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

fire	destroyed	Thursday
Pudding Lane	houses	churches
blaze	bakery	buckets
winds	River Thames	King Charles II
gunpowder	extinguished	rebuilt

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LABEL AN IMAGE



Look at the image below.

Label the image with words from the word bank.



Word bank

fire	house	church
wind	gunpowder	river

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CARTOONS

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JOSHUA SEIGAL

One day I'll grow up
and I'll have to live life.
I might finish school
and I might find a wife.
It might happen later,
it might happen soon
but one thing's for sure:
I'll keep watching cartoons.

I might ditch my trainers
and wear a smart suit.
I might get a job
where I have to commute.
I might be a spaceman
and fly to the moon
but don't be in doubt:
I'll keep watching cartoons.

I might be a doctor,
curing disease.
I might be a lumberjack,
hacking down trees.
I might be a zookeeper
taming baboons
but never you fear:
I'll keep watching cartoons.

My hair might turn grey
and my joints might go creaky.
My mind might go blank
and my bladder go leaky.
I might lose my teeth
and eat mush with a spoon
but as I expire
I'll be watching cartoons.

With the WOWS!

and the POWS!

and the ZAPS!

and the ZOOMS!

no I'll never stop watching cartoons!



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FLY GIRL SAVES THE DAY

ADAM BUSHNELL

"I will use my teleporting powers to steal the diamonds!" laughed Mr Mover Man. "Nobody can stop me!"

"Not so fast!" cried Fly Girl who came zooming through an open window…

"How did you find me?" barked Mr Mover Man.

"My antennae could hear you a mile away!" answered Fly Girl, the brown, fuzzy antennae on her head moving wildly around.

"Well you're too late!" cackled Mr Mover Man as he teleported himself out of the building.

"I'll find him!" said Fly Girl, as she buzzed back out of the window.

Her antennae moved this way and that.

"Ah-ha!" she said at last, once her antennae had located where Mr Mover Man had teleported to.

"Now I know where your secret lair is, you won't get away!" Fly Girl called as she zoomed through the sky.

Mr Mover Man hid in the back of a removal truck counting his diamonds. Fly Girl burst through the doors.

"Got you!" she declared.

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"Not for long!" Mr Mover Man said with an evil grin on his face.

He teleported out of the removal truck and onto the street.

"You can't get away!" Fly Girl called as she flew straight at him.

"Gotcha!" she said and grabbed Mr Mover Man with her super sticky hands.

"No!" Mr Mover Man screamed, "Put me down!"

"Of course," Fly Girl laughed. "As soon as we get to the police station."



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BILLY McCOOL

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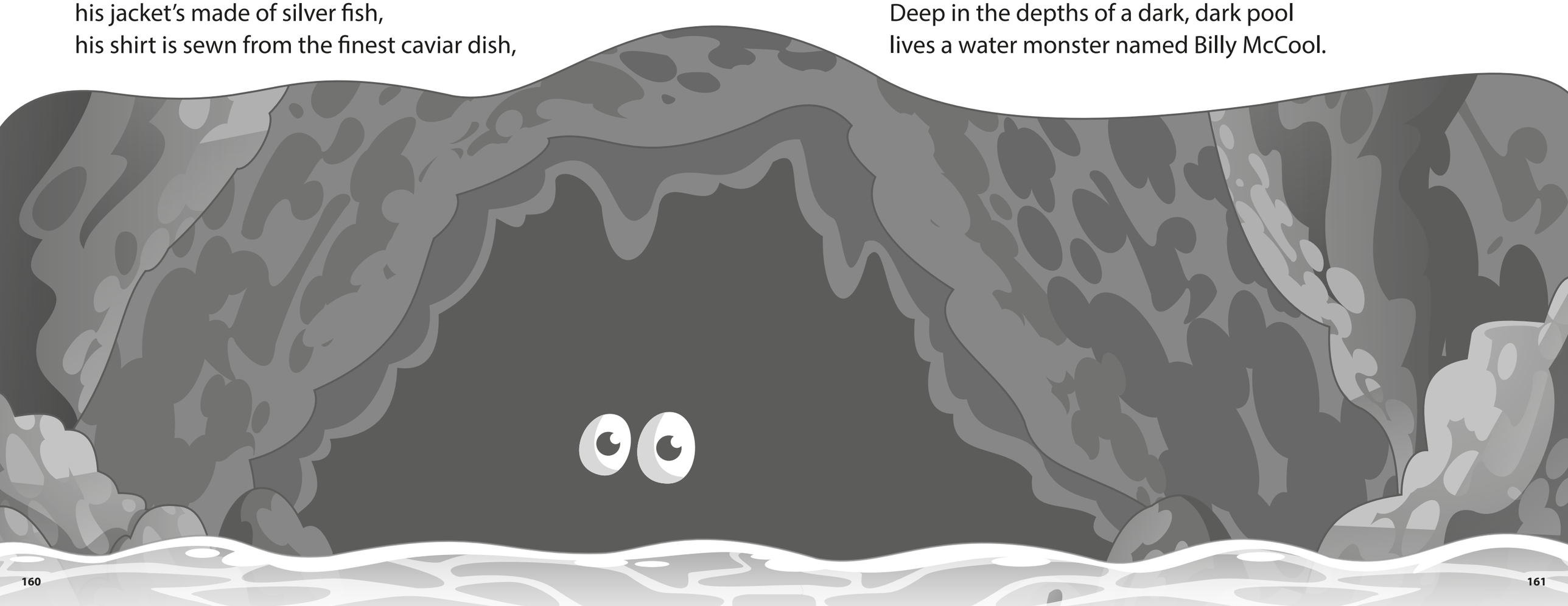
AOIFE MANNIX

POETRY

Deep in the depths of a dark, dark pool
lives a water monster named Billy McCool.
He's got shiny scales of pink candy ice
and octopusy arms that he thinks very nice.
His hat of a thousand umbrellas
makes him one of the handsome fellows.

His tie has stripes that glow in the dark,
he carries a cane of oyster pearls just for a lark,
his jacket's made of silver fish,
his shirt is sewn from the finest caviar dish,
his shoes are seaweed with slime tassel,
it takes him four hours to dress but it's all worth the hassle,
for when he swims out from his deep cave,
he knows all the girls will rave –
oh Billy McCool, you rule with your shark fin bling,
oh Billy McCool you're quite the thing with your frog spawn ring,
oh Billy McCool you're a monster with style,
please won't you stay with us a while.

Deep in the depths of a dark, dark pool
lives a water monster named Billy McCool.



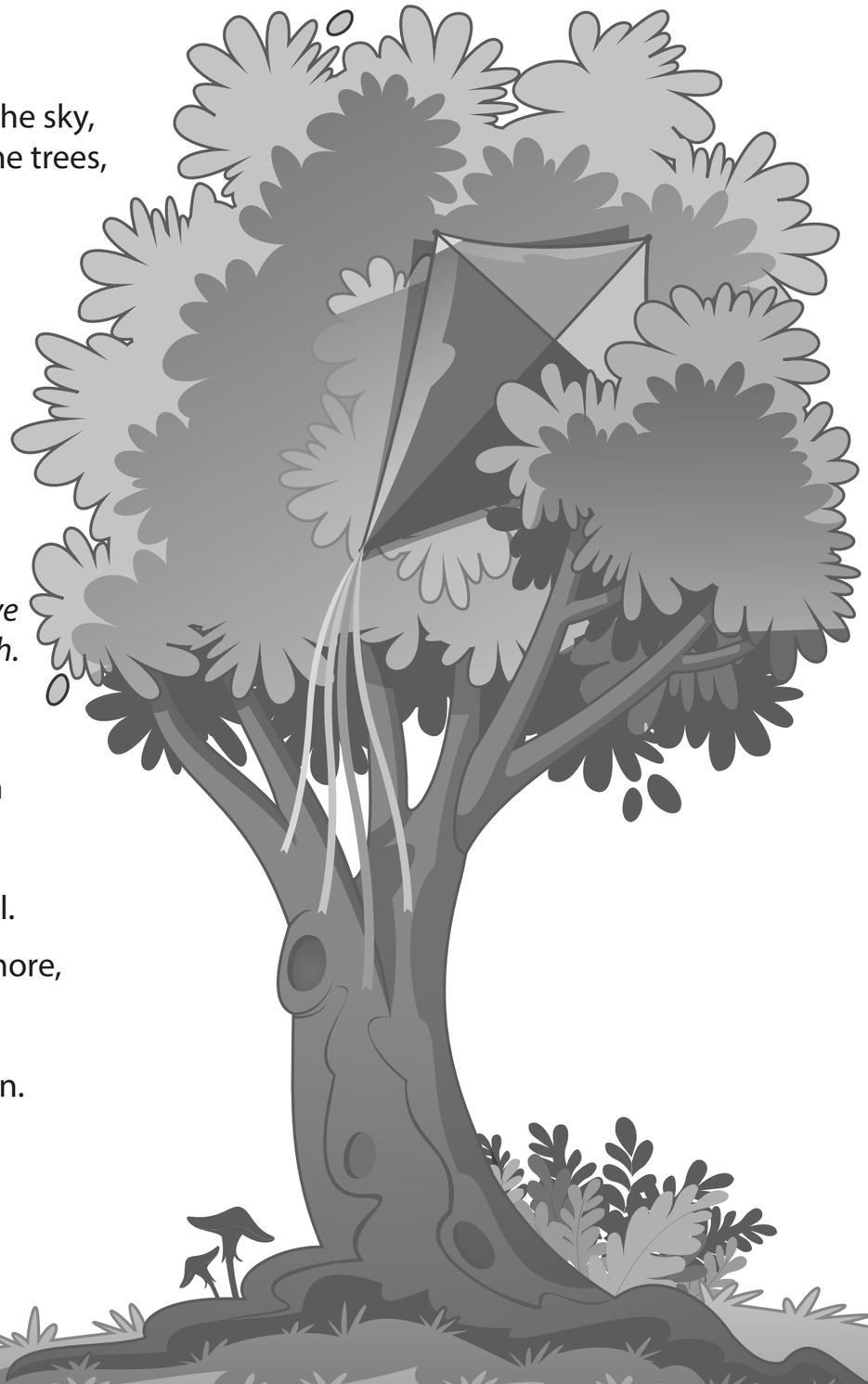
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LOST KITE

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BRIAN MOSES

POETRY



Our kite was a magic bird
and the wind took it into the sky,
above our heads, above the trees,
flying way up high.

But the wind was a thief
who wanted our kite,
it tugged and tugged
with all its might.

And the wind was a blade
that could cut anything,
it took our kite
and left us the string.

We watched it twist and dive
we heard it flutter and swish.
We felt it flap and fall
and wriggle like a fish.

Then it took our kite again
and raced it up a hill,
it tied the string around
the sails of an old windmill.

The kite broke free once more,
into the path of a plane.
It looked as if our kite
might be traveling to Spain.

Our kite was caught again
in the branches of a tree.
But the wind blew long and hard
until the kite broke free.

We watched it twist and dive
we heard it flutter and swish.
We felt it flap and fall
and wriggle like a fish.

Next it found a church
and twisted round the spire,
then flipped across the street
to hook on telephone wire.

Then the wind gave a mighty gust
and we lost sight of our kite,
we were looking for it everywhere
while the day was losing its light.

And as we stared from our window
to see the face of the moon,
we wondered if our kite
might be passing by there soon.

We watched it twist, we watched it dive,
we heard it flutter and swish.
We watched it flap and fall
and wriggle like a fish.

And we both remember that kite,
we know we always will.
In some distant magical place
it's sure to be flying still.