# COMPREHENSION NINJA FOR AGES 7–8: FICTION & POETRY

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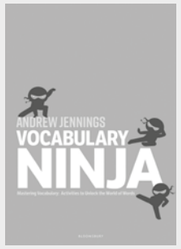
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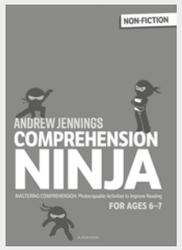

# OTHER NINJA RESOURCES

## FOR TEACHERS




### VOCABULARY NINJA

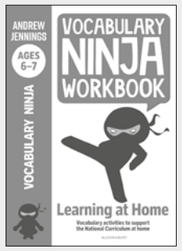
A practical guide containing strategies and photocopiable activities to help transform pupils into vocabulary ninjas. Featuring theory and teaching approaches, as well as key topic vocabulary, etymology and phrases, this book will bring the primary curriculum to life.

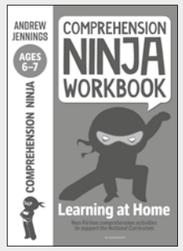



### COMPREHENSION NINJA NON-FICTION

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.

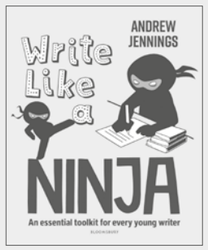
## FOR CHILDREN




### 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

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 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

### 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.**

### 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 as you read. Model to pupils how you can begin to predict what the questions are likely to be.**

### 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.**

### SUMMARISE

Summary questions require pupils to understand the main idea or main piece of action in a section of text. For some questions, pupils will have to select the correct summary statement from multiple options, while for other questions they will need to write a short summary.

**Refer to the concept of summarising as 'What is the main idea of this section of text?'. Try to find opportunities for pupils to summarise information during reading sessions and in other subjects such as history or science.**

### DRAW AND LABEL

**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. Alternatively, use draw and label as part of your literacy lessons.**



### 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.**

### 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…'.*

**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.**

### CIRCLE A WORD

This skill requires pupils to locate words based on an explicit definition of the word. Pupils may be required to circle words from a single sentence or from a paragraph of the text.

**Regularly discuss definitions via Vocabulary Ninja's Word of the Day. Ensure that you explore definitions, play matching games where pupils match words and definitions, and apply the 'best guess' strategy where pupils answer with their own logic without necessarily knowing the answer for certain.**

# 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.



# SUMMARISE DRAW AND LABEL



## SUMMARISE

**1 Look at the paragraph beginning 'As he pushed his foot…'. Tick the statement which best summarises this paragraph.**

Amir falls into a hole as the floor crumbled away. ☐

Axe heads fly above Amir's head. ☐

The floor crumbles and a hole appears in the path, but Amir avoids it. ☐

Amir falls into the hole and ducks down as the hieroglyphs told him to do. ☐

**2 Look at the paragraph beginning 'The path turned a corner.'. Write one sentence to summarise what's happening in this paragraph.**

_____

_____

## DRAW AND LABEL

**Draw the statements in the boxes. Add your own labels to your drawings.**

| | |
|---|---|
| | |
| One wrong step could send you tumbling into pits of lava or spikes. | A whole nest of cobra snakes had been tipped from above. |



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# 123 SEQUENCING



**1 Look at the sentences below. Write the numbers 1 to 4 to show the order the words occur in the sentences.**

He stepped away with eyes wide and heart thumping.
When he looked up, he realised that he was in the centre of the pyramid.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| pyramid | thumping | realised | wide |

**2 Look at the paragraph beginning 'The path turned a corner.'. Number the sentences from 1 to 5 to show the order they occur in the text.**

A whole nest of cobra snakes had been tipped from above. ☐

There were more hieroglyphs; this time showing hooded snakes. ☐

His eyes scanned the floor and walls again. ☐

Amir realised that one was coiled across his shoulders, others were sliding over his legs. ☐

Amir shrugged his shoulders gently and the cobra fell to the floor. ☐

**3 Look at *The Lost Tomb*. Number the sentences from 1 to 5 to show the order they occur in the whole text. Look at the last line of each paragraph to help you.**

This would be his greatest adventure. ☐

They landed with heavy thuds thankfully far from Amir's head. ☐

You had to be careful. ☐

He had made it! ☐

He stepped away with eyes wide and heart thumping. ☐

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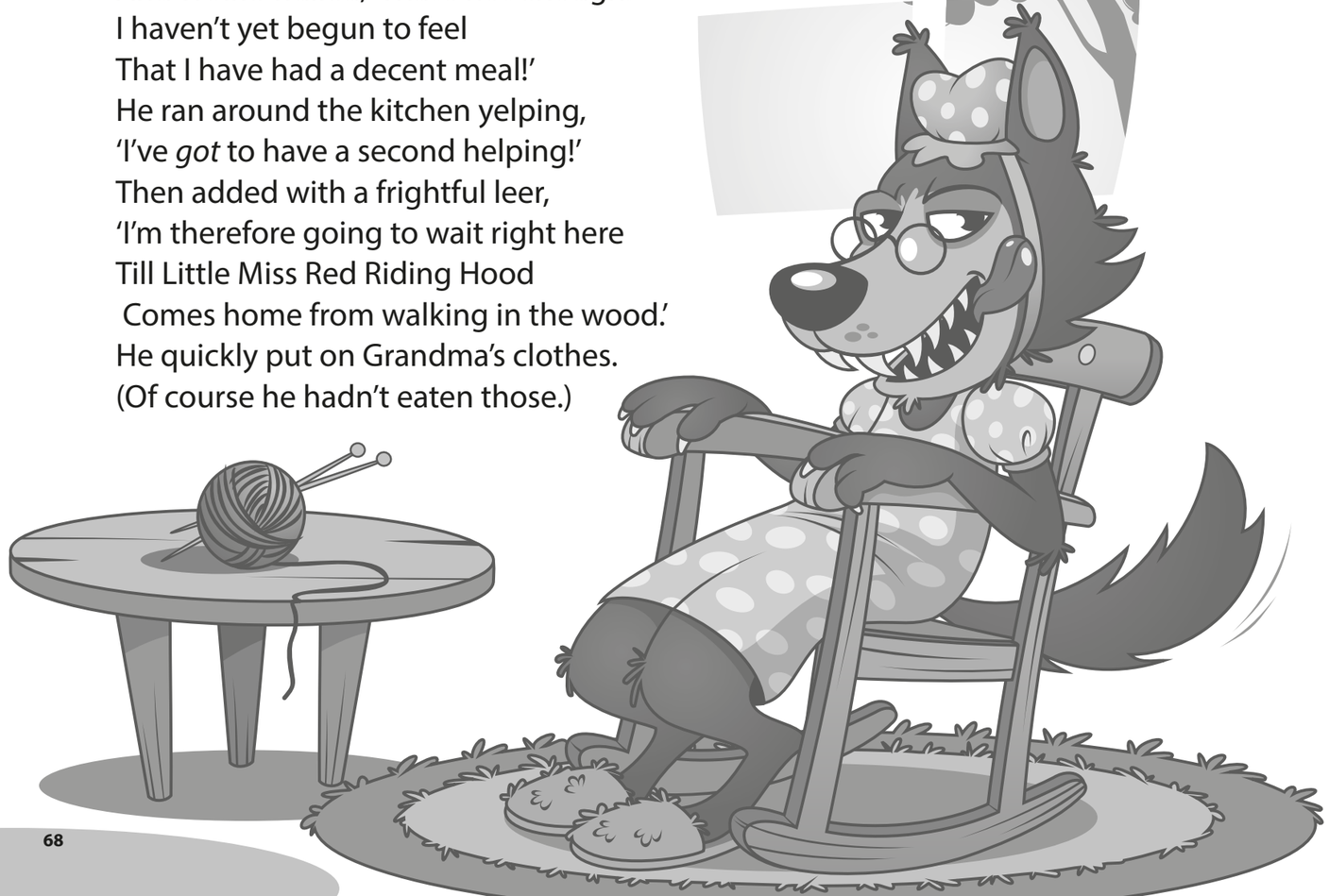
*Little Red Riding Hood from Revolting Rhymes* by Roald Dahl.
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# LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD



As soon as Wolf began to feel
That he would like a decent meal,
He went and knocked on Grandma's door.
When Grandma opened it, she saw
The sharp white teeth, the horrid grin,
And Wolfie said, 'May I come in?'
Poor Grandmamma was terrified,
'He's going to eat me up!' she cried.
And she was absolutely right.
He ate her up in one big bite.
But Grandmamma was small and tough,
And Wolfie wailed, 'That's not enough!
I haven't yet begun to feel
That I have had a decent meal!'
He ran around the kitchen yelping,
'I've *got* to have a second helping!'
Then added with a frightful leer,
'I'm therefore going to wait right here
Till Little Miss Red Riding Hood
Comes home from walking in the wood.'
He quickly put on Grandma's clothes.
(Of course he hadn't eaten those.)







*Little Red Riding Hood from Revolting Rhymes* by Roald Dahl.
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He dressed himself in coat and hat.
He put on shoes and after that
He even brushed and curled his hair,
Then sat himself in Grandma's chair.
In came the little girl in red.
She stopped. She stared. And then she said,
*'What great big ears you have, Grandma.'*
*'All the better to hear you with,'* the Wolf replied.
*'What great big eyes you have, Grandma,'* said Little Red Riding Hood.
*'All the better to see you with,'* the Wolf replied.
He sat there watching her and smiled.
He thought, I'm going to eat this child.
Compared with her old Grandmamma
She's going to taste like caviare.

Then Little Red Riding Hood said,
*'But Grandma, what a lovely great big furry coat you have on.'*

'That's wrong!' cried Wolf. 'Have you forgot
To tell me what BIG TEETH I've got?
Ah well, no matter what you say,
I'm going to eat you anyway.'
The small girl smiles. One eyelid flickers.
She whips a pistol from her knickers.
She aims it at the creature's head
And *bang bang bang*, she shoots him dead.
A few weeks later, in the wood,
I came across Miss Riding Hood.
But what a change! No cloak of red,
No silly hood upon her head.
She said, 'Hello, and do please note
My lovely furry WOLFSKIN COAT.'



# AGENT ZAIBA INVESTIGATES: THE MISSING DIAMONDS

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ANNABELLE SAMI



This party definitely had the three main ingredients for a successful Mehndi party in abundance – food, music and dancing! At the top of the room on a little stage was Sam. As the bride-to-be, she sat on a gilded white lounge chair, wearing a sari in deep red, orange and yellow. Zaiba saw her cousin stifle a yawn as she continued to sit patiently while her hands were decorated with the henna. Meanwhile her fiancé, Tanvir, had been cornered next to the punchbowl by some eager aunties who wanted to know *everything* about the upcoming wedding. It seemed at the moment that this party was fun for everyone *but* the young couple.

Zaiba felt a stab of sadness. Sam was her favourite cousin and Zaiba wanted this evening to be everything she'd hoped it would be. She glanced around the room, taking a mental note of as many details as possible. As the linen curtains swelled in the breeze, she noticed that the patio doors opened *out* on to the garden, rather than *in* to the room. That could be useful information if they were involved in a high-stakes chase! There was a main entrance leading out on to the drive too. She eased a little gold pencil that the receptionist had given her out of her bag and added extra details to the hotel map she'd drawn that morning. The receptionist – "Liza with a 'z'!" – had taken Zaiba and some of the other children round the hotel while their parents were busy unpacking. She'd pointed out the twenty-six bedrooms, the library with its leather-bound books and the extensive hotel grounds and separate buildings.

Zaiba opened the phone's voice recorder again and put it to her lips. "Observations: number of guests one, two, three, four, five… uhhhh, at least fifty people. Sofas and soft seating at ninety degrees to my right. Most people are on the dance floor. Bad – no *really* bad – music from the DJ booth close to the north-east window. No suspicious activity so far–"

"Apart from the girl hiding under the dining table!"

The tablecloth whipped up and a hand reached for Zaiba, pulling her swiftly out from her observation point.

"Aunt Fouzia!" Zaiba groaned, annoyed that she'd been discovered.



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# PUGLY SOLVES A CRIME

## PAMELA BUTCHART

We watched as Glitterpuff tiptoed down the driveway.

She was wearing a long, dark coat with a hood that completely covered her head. But we knew it was her because we recognised her feet and her PAINTED TOENAILS.

We followed Glitterpuff for AGES. And we had to sometimes DIVE behind bins and trees because she kept stopping and looking behind her.

All of a sudden, Glitterpuff changed direction and darted straight into the dark park.

"Clem!" I hissed. "I can't go in there. It's COMPLETELY BLACK!"

Clem sighed. Then she grabbed my collar and pulled me into the park anyway.

It was HORRIBLE. I couldn't see a thing and the ground was wet and something felt yucky under my paws, like SLIME or CAT POO.

I kept really close to Clem because she can see much better in the dark than me. But then she stopped suddenly and I crashed into her and yelped with fright.

Then someone started laughing.

And I COMPLETELY FROZE.



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"Well, well. Fancy seeing you two here," said a voice.

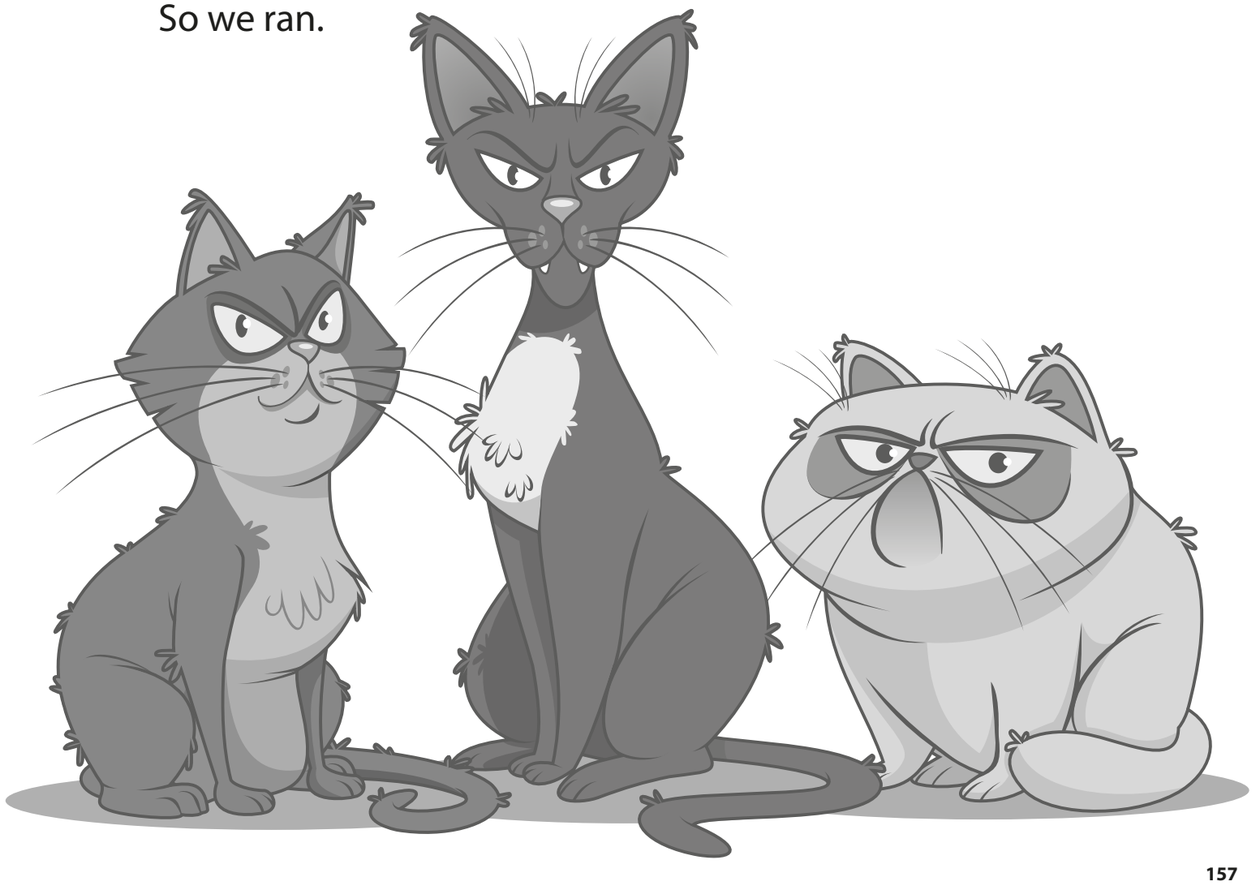
"CLEM!" I yelled. "There are GHOSTS IN THIS PARK!"

And THAT'S when I looked up and saw two things shining in the nearest tree! GHOST EYES! And then LOADS of GHOST EYES appeared ALL AROUND US!

I heard Clem gulp. "Those aren't ghost eyes, Pugly."

As soon as Clem said that, the WAILING started and I realised that the shining eyes were CAT EYES and that it was CARLOS and his STRAY CAT GANG!

So we ran.



*Go and Get a Haircut* by Andrew McWhirter from I *Bet I Can Make you Laugh: Poems by Joshua Seigal and Friends*,
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# GO AND GET A HAIRCUT

ANDREW McWHIRTER

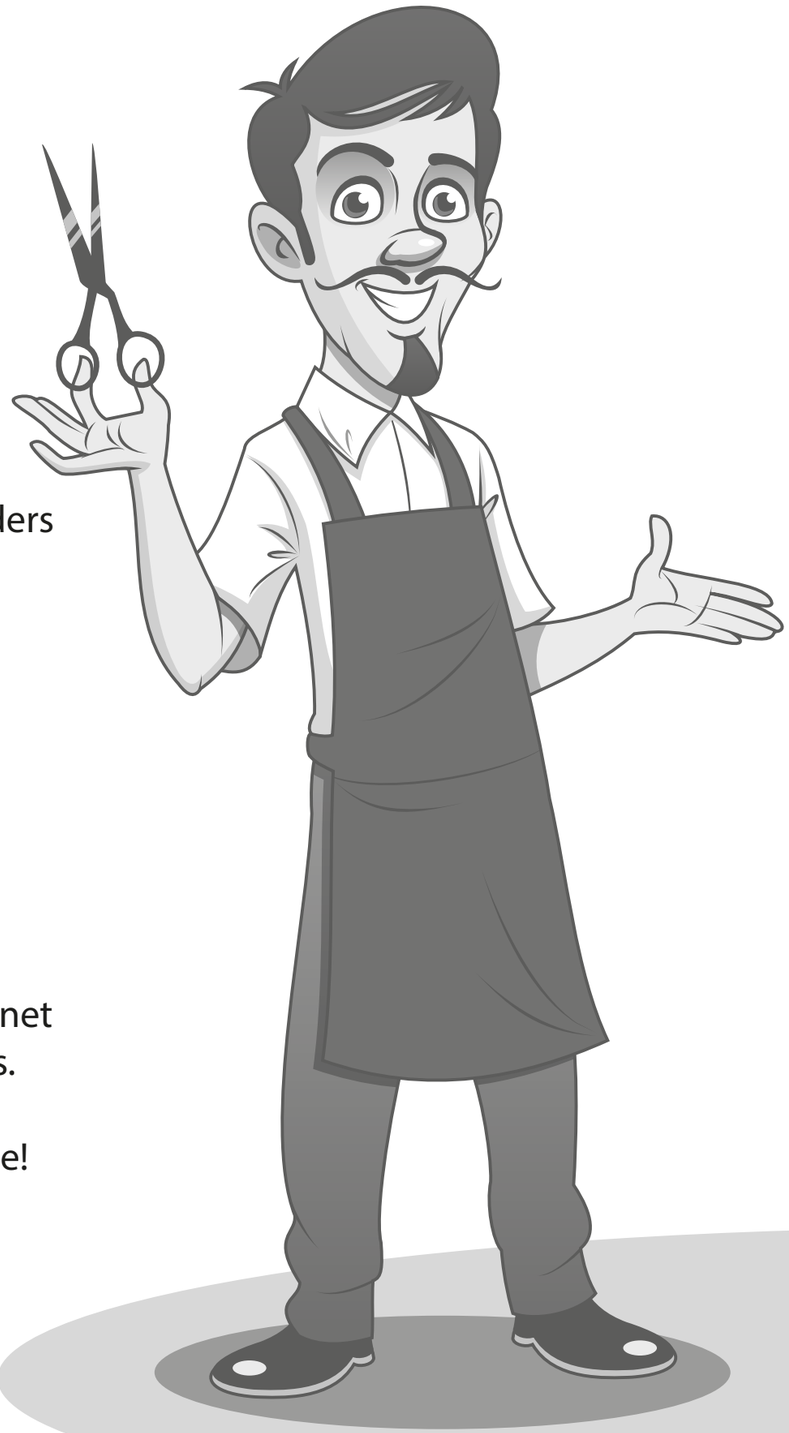
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Go and get a haircut,
It's looking rather long,
Go and ask the barber
He'll tell you I'm not wrong.
It's just that I prefer it
Not covering your face,
Go and get a haircut
And I'll be off your case.

Go and get a haircut.
Go and make it neat.
It's grown beyond your shoulders
It's grown beyond your feet.
You can measure it in metres
You can measure it in miles
Go and get a haircut,
Try out other styles.

Go and get a haircut!
It's getting out of hand!
It's spread across the county
It's spread across the land.
You're mentioned on the internet
You're mentioned on the news.
Go and get it cut,
I've got a chainsaw you can use!



Go and get a haircut,
The army's mobilized!
Reports suggest there's many dead,
By that I'm not surprised!
The Prime Minister's requested,
That you have a little trim;
that you go and get a haircut
And I agree with him!

Go and get a haircut,
Evacuations have begun.
We're abandoning the planet
We're off to find another one.
I'm off to catch a spaceship
But in case you do decide
To go and get a haircut,
I've left a tenner on the side.

