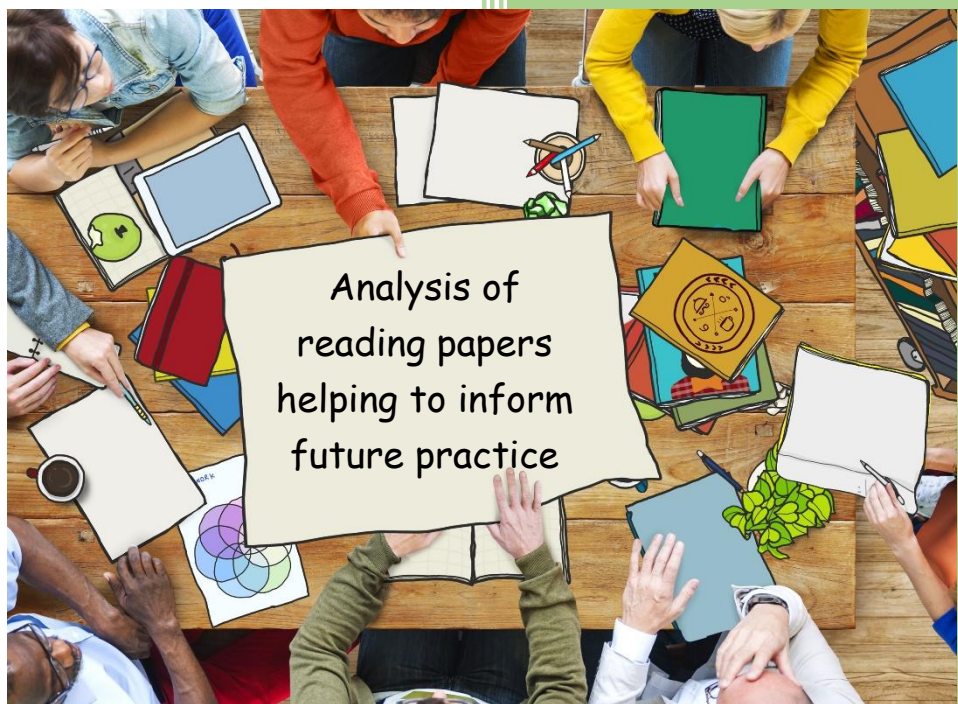


KS2 Reading SATs



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KS2 Reading test 2018

National curriculum reference	Number of marks	Percentage of total	Number of marks in 2016	Number of marks in 2017	Number of marks in 2018
2a give / explain the meaning of words in context	5-10	10-20%	10 (20%)	10 (20%)	10 (20%)
2b retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction	8-25	15-50%	15 (30%)	14 (28%)	13 (26%)
2c Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph	1-6	2-12%	1 (2%)	2 (4%)	3 (6%)
2d make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text	8-25	16-50%	18 (36%)	22 (44%)	22 (44%)
2e Predict what might happen from details stated and implied	0-3	0-6%	3 (6%)	0	0
2f Identify / explain how information / narrative content is related and contributes to meaning as a whole	0-3	0-6%	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	0
2g Identify / explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of words and phrases	0-3	0-6%	2 (4%)	1 (2%)	0
2h Make comparisons within the text	0-3	0-6%	0%	0	2 (4%)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-curriculum-assessments-test-frameworks>

The test specification can change, so keep an eye out for any developments, particularly since teacher assessment for reading at the end of KS2 is no longer submitted to DfE. However, making inferences is always likely to play a key part in examinations because it is critical to reading comprehension and the best indicator that pupils have understood the text. There will be variance between the tests, e.g. the percentage for inference can be anywhere from 15-50%, because the choice of texts goes some way to determine what questions it is possible to ask. The test developers will obviously be looking for texts that give them the best chance of testing the domains and being comparable over time.

It is worth noting that 'retrieval' is usually 'retrieval with interpretation'. (See examples later in on in this document and appendix for lists of typical question types.)

In the ASP system you will be able to compare how well your class performed on each question compared to the national average. This, alongside looking at specific answer papers, will be useful in tweaking lessons and teaching approaches.

2018 Paper

Text 1 : The Giant Panda Bear (non-fiction)

The first part of the reading test reinforces the need for non-fiction texts to be a central part of the curriculum, particularly 'reading to learn' in subjects such as science, history and geography. Those who are familiar with non-fiction texts are likely to find this part of the

paper relatively straight forward. It also reinforces the need to have a broad and rich curriculum. Animals and habitats are part of the science curriculum and we would therefore expect children to be familiar with similar types of text and have the appropriate background knowledge to be able to access the text. If the science curriculum is strong, then pupils should be familiar with much of the terminology.

habitat	appearance	diet
cubs	hibernate	territory
extinct	captivity	digest

Depending on wider knowledge and experience, pupils might have more difficulty with:

captivity	diminishing	densely populated
poaching	maturity	reserves

Non-fiction reading should be a regular part of reading comprehension lessons. Pupils should be taught how to approach texts with different layouts, and be instructed on typical ways of attacking the text.

For example, how many pupils completed the following steps before reading the first text:

- Scanned the whole piece first.
- Considered the images.
- Read the sub-headings.
- Considered what they already knew about Pandas.
- Thought about the type of question that might typically be asked.

When reading, how many pupils:

- Identified the main sentence in each paragraph.
- Underlined key supporting information.

Points teachers and pupils should be aware of:

- According to the text – is a very important phrase. Anywhere where it says ‘according to the text’ means picking out information from the text rather than using own background knowledge. For example, in question 6, pupils had to give similarities and differences stated in the text and were not credited for using own knowledge.

6

Look at page 4.

According to the text, give **one** way that giant pandas are...

(a) similar to other bears.

1 mark

(b) different from other bears.

1 mark

- Ordering events into a timeline is a standard question type in reading tests. Make sure pupils have had the opportunity to complete this type of question for non-fiction as well as fiction texts.
- It is important that pupils understand the vocabulary used in the question as well as in the text itself and should ensure they read the questions carefully. For example, in question 7 the test paper says 'Recent studies show that...' whereas the actual text said 'Until recently, scientists...'. The question says 'some giant pandas live in the same area' whereas in the text it uses the term 'territory'. This is an example of a retrieval question that also requires interpretation.

7

Look at the section headed: ***Other interesting facts.***

Complete the sentence below.

Recent studies show that...

Tick **one**.

giant pandas always spend most of their lives alone.

☐

most giant pandas live in captivity.

☐

giant pandas only live in the wild in China.

☐

some giant pandas live in the same area.

☐

1 mark

- There are a variety of question types for testing pupils' understanding of vocabulary. Two popular formats are:
 - 'Find and copy one word which...'
 - 'What does _____ mean in this sentence.'

8

Look at the section headed: ***Why are people concerned about the giant panda?***

Find and **copy one** word which shows that there are lots of things we do not yet know about giant pandas.

1 mark

9

... cutting off a **vital** food supply.What does the word *vital* mean in this sentence?Tick **one**.essential ☐available ☐useful ☐healthy ☐

1 mark

As vocabulary is as vital for writing as it is for reading, vocabulary questions and development should be a key feature of daily lessons.

- It is important for pupils to understand terminology associated with non-fiction texts, e.g.

summarise	gist	bullet points	fact/opinion
information	contrasting viewpoint	highlights	subheading

This was particularly important in the 2017 paper on non-fiction.

How many pupils are regularly asked about the gist? How many are asked to read pieces and decide for themselves what an appropriate title / subheading should be? How many use the above terms in answering questions in class?

14

Which statement is the **best** summary for the whole of page 5?Tick **one**.How the giant panda first got its name. ☐How charities raise money for giant pandas. ☐How people are working to save giant pandas. ☐How giant pandas' territory is changing. ☐

1 mark

As the non-fiction piece was the first text in the test, it was perhaps a little more straight forward than in previous years. Make sure you consider the full range of questions and provide opportunities for pupils to grapple with complex text layouts and content.

Grannie (Poem)

1. Pupils need exposure to plenty of poetry. This is for a number of reasons, e.g.
 - Pleasure and love of reading.
 - Great for vocabulary.
 - Superb for discussion & complex thinking on a topic.
 - Lend themselves well to visualisation exercises.
 - Less likely to be chosen by pupils to read outside of class time unless a love of poetry has been developed in class.
 - Links to the writing curriculum and it is part of the National Curriculum.
2. Pupils who have read texts (not just poems) from the past are more likely to make connections to the text and recognise elements within the poem. Children who have had limited exposure to anything other than modern day texts are more likely to struggle, particularly if they have a lack of experience related to family and/or lack of historical knowledge, e.g. understanding the implications of war.

Pupils need to read the poem more than once and ask themselves (in their heads) what the gist of the poem is and what they think it means. Are there any phrases or words that jump out at them? The trickiest element of the poem is understanding the overall meaning. Those who get this will obviously be in a stronger position to answer the questions and as a result some pupils will have found the questions very straight forward.

The vocabulary in the text is challenging (again, reinforcing the need to read widely, including texts from the past).

elsewhere	scold	enfold	shawl
lavishly	lame	realised	circumstances
frail	hobbled	hesitating	seized (the chance)
recall	effect	ward	

In the 2018 paper, as with previous papers, pupils who were comfortable with the use of metaphors, similes and personification were at an advantage. It is a key element of interpreting poems and therefore we might expect it to be something which is tested. For example:

- Her smile – enfolding ‘like a warm, protective shawl.’
- She would – ‘stand mountainous between me and my fear.’

Some pupils might struggle with writing their answer in an ‘examination style’ particularly questions 18, 19, 23 and 24.

Question 18 – this is a challenging inference question and a format that was seen in the 2016 and 2017 papers. It requires pupils to consider ‘the impression’ that is formed. This is usually in reference to the character/personality of someone in the text (although it can also be about objects and places).

18

The poet describes his grannie as standing *mountainous between me and my fear*. This makes her sound big and powerful.

What other impressions do you get of his grannie in the same verse?

Give **two** impressions.

1. _____

2. _____

2 marks

She is protective, kind, tolerant, and understanding. The pupil needs to identify two of these. They need to expand this into a sentence, perhaps using the word 'because' or giving an example. The pupils also need to stick to that specific verse.

Qu.	Requirement	Mark
18	<p>The poet describes his grannie as standing <i>mountainous between me and my fear</i>. This makes her sound big and powerful.</p> <p>What other impressions do you get of his grannie in the same verse?</p> <p>Give two impressions.</p> <p>Content domain: 2d – make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text</p> <p>Award 1 mark for reference to any of the following, up to a maximum of 2 marks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> she is gentle / kind, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>grannie is very caring to the poet.</i> she is protective, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>you're safe when you're near her.</i> she is understanding, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>she is thoughtful because she knows how he feels.</i> she is tolerant, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>she is lenient.</i> 	Up to 2m

Question 19 – the challenge is perhaps in understanding the question. Pupils have to understand what 'effect' refers to.

19

What was **one** effect of the poet getting injured in the war?

1 mark

Although not a particularly difficult question (with answers such as 'He became lame and therefore couldn't walk properly anymore' ; 'Because he couldn't fight anymore he was sent

home early from the war to a hospital near his where his grandma lived.’), the word ‘effect’ might throw pupils who are unfamiliar with this term in an examination question.

Question 23 is challenging inference question because it requires the pupil to make the link that how you view your grandma as a child is likely to change as you grow older and become an adult. This is a difficult concept as the pupils have not yet experienced being an adult and have less of their own lives to look back on!

23	Explain what the poet finds <i>weird</i> about his grannie in the last verse.
<div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>	
	2 marks

Qu.	Requirement	Mark
23	<p>Explain what the poet finds <i>weird</i> about his grannie in the last verse.</p> <p>Content domain: 2d – make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text</p> <p>Award 2 marks for either of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> how memory has changed his perception of his grannie, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>grannie seemed smaller than he remembered</i> <i>he thought she was small compared to his memory of her, but she wasn't really, it was him that had grown bigger</i> <i>he remembered her as strong and powerful like a mountain but now she looks frail and weak.</i> how time has changed his perception of his grannie, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>when he was a child she was huge and now she's tiny</i> <i>she was so small and tiny now that he was older.</i> <p>Award 1 mark for reference to the grannie being small / frail with no recognition that his perception of her has changed, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>that his grannie used to be big but now is small</i> <i>a tiny frail old lady.</i> <p>Do not accept reference to her age alone, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>she has got much older.</i> 	Up to 2m

Question 24 is a terminology and inference question combined. Pupils need to make sure they read the question carefully. It does not ask them to explain what hesitate means, it asks them to say **why** she hesitates.

24	<p><i>She hobbled through the ward to where I lay</i> <i>And drew quite close and, hesitating, peered.</i></p> <p>Why does she hesitate?</p> <div style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; height: 20px; margin-top: 10px;"></div>
	1 mark

Question 27 although not difficult may be in a question format that is unfamiliar to the pupil. It would be useful to build this type of questions into lessons.

27	The experience in the last line could best be described as...
Tick one .	
amusing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
shocking.	<input type="checkbox"/>
puzzling.	<input type="checkbox"/>
comforting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
1 mark	

When covering poetry in reading lessons, ask pupils to talk to each other about what the gist is of each verse as well as the whole poem.

The quality of classroom discussion, enjoying poems, looking at author technique (such as similes, metaphors and personification), building vocabulary and ensuring pupils experience a rich curriculum are the main drivers for poetry lessons. However, as pupils progress through the key stages, they will also need opportunities to practise answering questions on poetry to ensure pupils are familiar with:

- Question types
- Terminology in questions
- Answering style

Albion's Dream (fiction text)

When pupils are faced with an extract, it is important for them to read any notes that are presented before the main text. In this case, the initial blurb alerts us to the name of the main character (Edward), the story setting (an old farmhouse where his Uncle Jack lives), and a likely plot (a strange incident).

Vocabulary in this third piece of text is challenging.

fascination	ancestors	chamber pots	basins
flowerbeds	horse chestnut	intensity	poignant
bygone	spinster	guardian	remote
curiosity	recesses	inspect	precisely
ought	debris	plunged	grime

I think it is also worthy of note that it is not just individual words that teachers and pupils need to pay attention to when considering vocabulary, but also phrases. Consider the importance of understanding the following:

Smelt of the past	Held an extraordinary fascination	Old leather-lined bookcases
Left to my own devices	Great generosity of space	Glancing idly
Fashioned by hand	Sense of justice	What on earth...

Teachers should consider highlighting such phrases when reading whole class texts. It also reinforces the point about reading widely, including classic texts and texts written more than 50 years ago.

As long as you understand the vocabulary and the phrases, the first part of the test is relatively straight forward. Questions 36-40 are the most challenging for a number of reasons:

- They are multi-mark questions.
- The pupil has to give evidence from the text.
- They are all inference questions. Almost 50% of the inference marks were based on these 4 questions.
- They are at the end of the paper, therefore pupil concentration may be waning and/or pupils may feel rushed due to the time constraints of the paper.

Pupils need to have lots of practise answering inference questions, including seeing the teacher model answers. It is important for pupils to play 'fix the answer' as this will help them understand where marks are lost. They should also receive feedback on their own answers.

These four questions have similar question stems to those asked in previous papers.

- 'How do you know...'
- 'How can you tell...'
- 'What impressions...'
- 'Give two reasons why...' (usually interpretation of a feeling or an action)

Inference usually fits into three main categories:

Actions – *why* does a character do this action (motives / feelings / character traits) – *how do you know* – give examples?

Feelings – *how do you know* they feel like this – give examples?

Impression – *what type* of person / character / object / place do you think this is and what *clues/evidence* is there to support your impression?

Sometimes the inference might be about AN OBJECT – What does the character think it is? Is there anything unusual about the object? What clues are there as to what the object is? Does the characters interpretation/view of the object change?

Sometimes the inference might be about A PLACE – What type of place is it, e.g. spooky, dangerous, safe. What does it say in the text that gives you this impression or what makes the character think it is this type of place.

Sometimes the inference is about a PERSON – What are the motives and feelings? Why do they act in a certain way? What type of character are they?

Sometimes the inference is about an EVENT – What factors led to something happening / why do you think this happened.

"Edward. EDWARD!" she called. "What on Earth are you up to in there?"

The door opened.

It took her a few seconds to work out what I was doing; then she leapt towards me.



"Give me that immediately, Edward." I drew back cautiously. "That box is mine nothing to do with you. It belongs to me." She came forward with frightening intensity, her hand reaching out for the box. I hesitated. If it really was hers, I had no right... But a stronger sense of justice broke out in me. I had found it by my own efforts. For the time being, at least, it should be mine.

I think some of the hardest inference questions are about 'impressions' because they are the most open to interpretation.

For example:

In this 3 mark question, the pupils had to give their 'impression' of Em Sharp.

38

Look at page 10.

What impressions do you get of Em Sharp at this point in the extract?

Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Impression	Evidence

3 marks

The examiners were looking for one of:

- She was angry
- She was scary / mean
- She was bossy / demanding
- She was possessive
- She was hiding something / secretive
- She was defensive / concerned about the game
- She was quick

Once they had identified the impression of her character, they then had to provide appropriate evidence.

Acceptable points (impressions)	Acceptable evidence
1. she was angry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>give me that immediately, Edward</i> • <i>that box is mine / it's nothing to do with you / it belongs to me</i> • <i>she leapt towards me</i> • <i>she came forward with frightening intensity</i>
2. she was scary / mean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I drew back cautiously</i> • <i>she came forward with frightening intensity / her hand reaching out for the box</i> • <i>she leapt towards me</i> • <i>give me that immediately, Edward</i> • <i>that box is mine / it's nothing to do with you / it belongs to me</i>
3. she was bossy / demanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>give me that immediately, Edward</i>
4. she was possessive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>that box is mine / it's nothing to do with you / it belongs to me</i> • <i>give me that immediately, Edward</i>
5. she was hiding something / secretive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>that box is mine / it's nothing to do with you / it belongs to me</i>
6. she was defensive / concerned about the game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>give me that immediately, Edward</i> • <i>that box is mine / it's nothing to do with you / it belongs to me</i> • <i>she leapt towards me</i>
7. she was quick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>she leapt towards me</i>

Award 3 marks for **two** acceptable points, at least **one** with evidence.

Award 2 marks for either **two** acceptable points, **or one** acceptable point with evidence.

Award 1 mark for **one** acceptable point.

Question 36 (Inference)

36

How do you know that the bookcase had not been moved for a long time?

Give **two** ways.

1. _____

2. _____

1 mark

This question required pupils to look at a specific paragraph to carefully identify the evidence.

I looked behind every book and even used my hand to sweep out the shallow gap under the bottom shelf. There must have been ten years' worth of assorted debris under there. Finally I began to edge the entire bookcase away from the wall. It was extremely heavy and it took me some time to get it out far enough to look behind. There was a thick network of cobwebs and dust. I thought for a moment and plunged my hand in the gap.

There was something there, a flat box. It was covered with grime and falling apart. Opening it, I found a board, counters, cards, and a number of little figures. I wiped away the dirt from the lid and made out the title. *Albion's Dream* it said.

Step 1 : locate the appropriate paragraph(s) (as it is not stated).

Step 2 : Decide on the evidence.

Step 3 : Formulate the answer.

There were three main possibilities:

There was **ten years' worth of assorted debris** under the bookcase which showed it had not been moved in a long time.

There was a **network of cobwebs and dust** behind it showing that it had not been moved.

The **box behind the bookcase was grimy** suggesting it had been there a long time.

(Even though it was heavy, and this might be a reason for not moving the bookcase, this was not accepted as evidence that it had not been moved.)

Question 37

39

In the last paragraph, Edward does not want to give the game to Em Sharp.

Give **two** reasons why he does **not** want to part with it.

1. _____

2. _____

2 marks

This is a tricky question as the pupils must make sure their reasons relate to the text and not their own experiences of similar situations. Wording the answer might be a problem for some pupils.

- He worked hard to find it, including moving a heavy bookcase and therefore he thinks it should be his.
- Because he found it, he believes it belongs to him and that therefore he should have it.
- He is not sure that it does actually belong to Em Sharp and therefore he questions her right to claim it.

- He feels a sense of injustice because he found it and he thinks she is being mean to try and take it from him.

The pupils were not credited for speculative answers, such as 'he wants to find out more about it' or 'he wants to play the game.'

The last question is perhaps tricky because you have to use knowledge from several places in the text to come to a conclusion.

40

Edward found a game. How can you tell that there was something strange about the game?

Explain **two** ways, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

1. _____

2. _____

3 marks

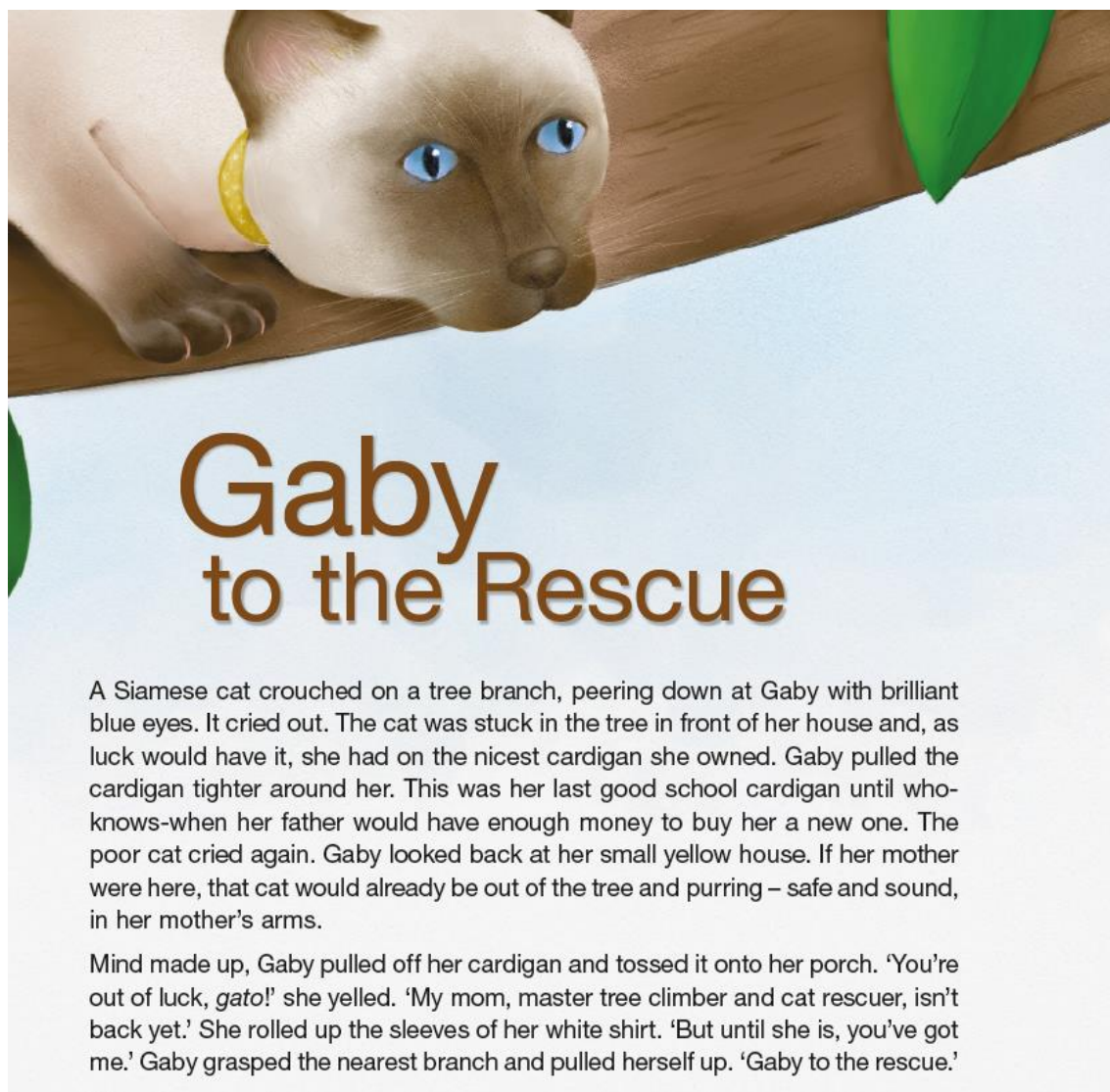
To get the three marks the pupils must give an acceptable reason and show evidence. For example: 'Because it was hidden behind the heavy bookcase which suggests that someone didn't want it to be found and it was clear that Em Sharp was angry and didn't want him to have it' ; 'The dice was unlike anything Edward had seen before. It was handmade and had odd symbols on it'. ; 'Em Sharps very negative reaction to him finding the game suggests that she is unhappy that he has discovered the game which is an unusual reaction to the situation.'

Key Stage 2 Reading Test 2017

22 marks come from domain: Make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text.

14 marks come from domain: Retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction.

10 marks come from domain: Give / explain the meaning of words in context.



Pupils are at an advantaged if they release that cats can be different breeds and that this one is a Siamese cat! I wonder how many pupils thought the name of the cat was ‘Siamese’. The Americanisms in the text do little to help the struggling reader or those with vocabulary issues, e.g. Mom, porch, guys. There are quite a lot of phrases that has established meanings which might make the text more challenging for pupils who do not read widely, e.g. ‘as luck would have it’, ‘until who-knows-when’, ‘minds made up’, ‘universal rule’, ‘simple as that’ and ‘sweet-talked’. There are also quite a lot of clauses in sentences which may make the text challenging for those readers who are only exposed to more simple sentence structures.

The question ‘Why does Gaby pull the cardigan more closely around her?’ requires pupils to use inference across a number of sentences.

There are some questions that are tricky for pupils to put into words, such as the meaning of ‘secure’ and the careful definition of the word ‘universal’.

Qu.	Requirement	Mark
8	<p>Look at the paragraph beginning: <i>She knew the universal rule...</i></p> <p>What does the word <i>universal</i> tell you about the rule?</p> <p>Content domain: 2a – give / explain the meaning of words in context</p> <p>Award 1 mark for reference to either of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> it is something everyone knows / agrees on, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>it is a rule that everybody should keep</i> <i>that this rule applies to everyone in the universe</i> <i>the rule is global because everyone knows that rule.</i> it is something that is known / agreed on everywhere, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>it is known all around the world.</i> <p>Also accept references to it being a rule that all climbers should know / agree on, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>it is known by all tree climbers.</i> <p>Do not accept reference to it being the only rule / the one rule.</p> <p>Do not accept answers which qualify everyone and everywhere, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>many people know it.</i> 	1m

The questions broadly feel into three categories: Inference questions, definition questions, straight forward retrieval questions.

Swimming the English Channel



Swimming the English Channel

from Dover in England to Calais in France

The first Channel swimmer


On a foggy August afternoon in 1875, a lone swimmer dived from Admiralty Pier in Dover into the cold waters of the English Channel. Nearly twenty-two hours later, the exhausted man staggered onto French soil at Calais and became an instant hero. Captain Matthew Webb had become the first person to swim across the English Channel.

Twenty-seven-year-old Webb was a merchant seaman from Shropshire. He had always been a powerful swimmer and, hearing of J.B. Thompson's failed attempt to swim the Channel in 1872, he was inspired to give up his job and train as a long-distance swimmer. Webb's first attempt had to be abandoned due to bad weather, but he returned to the icy Channel waters two weeks later.

Many of the hardships that Matthew Webb had to deal with during his pioneering swim are still faced by modern-day Channel swimmers. In fact, some



Captain Matthew Webb



Pupils were helped by a clear layout and visuals to support them. The text is reasonably straight forward for pupils who are regularly exposed to non-fiction texts. Those who have been swimming in the sea may have a slight advantage in understanding how/why currents and tides may mean you might have to swim further if you swim more slowly. Those with knowledge of the English Channel, e.g. know where it is geographically in relation to themselves, watched something on television, or have crossed in a ferry might also have an advantage in understanding the text.

Vocabulary demands:

exhausted	merchant seaman	inspired	attempt
abandoned	pioneering	hardships	beef tea
standard / non-standard	guarantee	pier	hazard
satisfaction	responsible	authorities	vessels
comparative	outlawed	Hypothermia (although it does give a definition)	

One of the demands of this text is the use of pronouns. Mathew Webb is referred to in many different ways such as 'a lone swimmer', 'the exhausted man', 'Captain Matthew Webb', 'Twenty-seven-year-old Webb', 'merchant seaman'. For those pupils who have difficulties with pronouns, this was a complex text.

The part about distance would be challenging for some readers to comprehend.

In their answers, pupils need to be quite specific. There are quite a few questions that relate to terminology. Pupils also needed to understand the terminology of non-fiction texts. What appears to be a straight forward question on the surface is only this if you know what 'summarising', 'contrasting view points', 'information' and 'highlighting' is!

28 Draw lines to match each section to its main content.

One has been done for you.

Section	Content
<i>The first Channel swimmer</i>	summarises key information about swimming the Channel
<i>Frequently asked questions</i>	shows contrasting viewpoints about swimming the Channel
<i>Safe to swim?</i>	gives information about the origins of swimming the Channel
<i>Celebrity swimmer</i>	highlights the continuing attractions of swimming the Channel

1 mark

Pupils should perform well on this type of text, as long as pupils are regularly exposed to non-fiction and are encouraged to work together to:

- Identify tricky words and work out their meaning.
- Discuss with each other the underlying meaning of a sentence.

- Are often asked to answer questions from a text as part of work in other subjects, e.g. geography and history.
- As a class are asked to work on tricky comprehension together, rather than the teacher pre-teaching all of the text.

The main thing that stands out is the need for teachers to give copies of texts to pupils and let them work out the meaning for themselves, stepping in to clarify rather than front loading the process by teaching them the text.

Encounter at Sea

An Encounter at Sea

It was hot. Really hot. There wasn't the slightest breeze to cool the skin or make even a baby-finger crease on the surface of the sea. The *Louisa May* floated like a toy sitting on a glass table.

For the first time in over a week, Michael hadn't seen a dolphin all day. He was two miles offshore now, motoring along his daily survey course. The *Louisa May* pulled the reflection of the sky and the island into pleats behind her, and the *putt-putt* of her engine was lost in the big, quiet stillness of the afternoon.

Michael shut off the outboard motor and stopped. He leaned over the side to scoop up a bucket of seawater to cool himself, and looked down. Long fingers of sunlight slanted into the clear water, shifting slightly in arcs of radiating lines, and were swallowed up at last into the perfect blueness of the depths.

He poured the water over himself, savouring the delicious coolness.



crease	offshore	survey	'daily survey course'
pleats	Outboard motor	scoop	Arcs of radiating light
clenched	astonished	sluicing	Blowhole
wreckage	submerged	supernovae	Caressed

The text contains quite challenging vocabulary. A lot of similes and personification are used:

- Baby-finger crease on the surface of the sea
- Floated like a toy sitting on a glass table
- Long fingers of sunlight slanted into the clear water

- The Louisa May pulled the reflection of the sky and island into pleats behind her
- It was like a polished rock
- Bigger than a man's two clenched fists
- Lay like a piece of huge, dark wreckage
- A kind of eyebrow
- Like a carved stone
- Like a window into a whole galaxy
- Like a sleep walker waking from a dream

This text may be more challenging for EAL learners and those who tend to have a more literal interpretation of texts. Pupils who have spent time looking at how authors create vivid pictures in the minds of their readers (the simile being one method) should find comprehending this text easier.

The questions in this section of the paper require pupils to construct their own answers and make reference to the text. This is quite challenging and needs regular practice with feedback – getting pupils to construct answers together, compare answers and rate answers would all be good activities for pupils to engage with.

Pupils also need to distinguish between 'character' from likes/dislikes. For example, they did not get marks for saying that he liked animals, but did for characteristics – such as brave, inquisitive, careful. I think quite a few children may have written about liking animals.

The true/false questions can be tricky because they require the interpretation of the text and answers cannot be found directly in the text.

Across all three papers:

- Pupils must be exposed to a wide range of different types of text.
- They must read texts as well as hear texts read aloud.
- They must use plenty of non-fiction in their wider studies.
- Focus on group work and pair work to aid discussion and the construction of high quality answers.
- Many children can explain verbally and then struggle constructing an answer. Therefore there must be plenty of opportunity for them to write.
- Lots of classroom talk, particularly about VISUALISATION and how clues in the text can be used to imagine the scene. There is a need for this visualisation sometimes to be very specific, depending on what the author has written.
- VOCABULARY – teach strategies for working out the meaning of vocabulary. Encourage independent reading to ensure pupils are exposed to a high volume of words in different contexts.
- EVIDENCEING – make sure pupils regularly are asked to pick out evidence from a text to support their answer.
- They need to consider the author's style and the techniques used.
- Link grammar to texts.
- Ensure teaching focuses on inference (including inference across a series of sentences).

Inferences, impressions and retrieving information – example questions from 2016 paper

Impressions

What impressions of the island do you get from these two paragraphs?

...they crossed the glassy surface of the lake. Give two impressions this gives you of the water.

Inferences

How can you tell that Maria was very keen to get to the island?

Why did Oliver find it hard to read the inscription on the monument?

How do you know that Martine wanted to keep this ride a secret?

What evidence is there of Martine being stubborn in the way she behaved with her grandmother?

What evidence is there of Martine being determined when she met the warthogs?

Explain what this description suggests about baby warthogs.

What evidence is there that warthogs can be dangerous? Give two examples.

Why was she so triumphant?

Do you think that Martine will change her behaviour on future giraffe rides? Explain your choice fully, using evidence from the text.

In what ways might Martine's character appeal to many readers? Explain fully, referring to the text in your answer.

According to the text, how did the discovery of the dodos' bones help to change the image of the dodo?

Retrieving and recording information from the text

What did he have to do to read the inscription?

What were Martine's grandmother's rules about riding the giraffe?

What helped Martine to get safely on Jemmy's back after the warthogs attacked?

Non-fiction:

Give two reasons why Mauritius was a paradise for animals before humans arrived.

Give two reasons why the dodo became extinct after humans arrived.

Why were artists' drawings from the time of the dodo not always accurate?

Question stems from 2017 paper

22 marks come from domain: *Make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text.*

14 marks come from domain: *Retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction.*

10 marks come from domain: *Give / explain the meaning of words in context.*

Vocabulary / definitions

- What does *secured her feet and hands* mean?
- Look at the paragraph beginning: *She knew the universal rule...* What does the word *universal* tell you about the rule?
- *She resettled on the branch, considering her options.* What does *considering her options* mean in this sentence?
- *Nearly twenty-two hours later, the exhausted man staggered onto French soil at Calais and became an instant hero.* **Find** and **copy two** different words from the sentence above that show how tired Matthew Webb was.
- Look at the paragraph beginning: *Twenty-seven-year-old Webb...* **Find** and **copy one** word from this paragraph that is closest in meaning to 'motivated'.
- **Find** and **copy** a group of words that tells you that the drinks of ale, brandy and beef tea given to Matthew Webb would be considered unusual today.
- **Find** and **copy one** word which shows that swimming the Channel is illegal in France
- *...like a toy sitting on a glass table.* What does this description suggest about the boat?
- **Find** and **copy two different** words that show Michael enjoyed the feeling of the cool water.

Inference / explaining

- Why does Gaby do this?
- In what way does Gaby think the cat is out of luck?
- What does Gaby think that the cat is trying to say when it meows?
- What are **three** ways the cat shows it does not enjoy Gaby trying to rescue it? (interpreting the meaning of actions)
- David Walliams was determined to be successful in his attempt to swim the English Channel. Give **one** piece of evidence from the text which shows this. (interpreting actions)
- What was unusual for Michael about this day?
- How is the whale made to seem mysterious? Explain **two** ways, giving evidence from the text to support your answer.
- When Michael touched the whale it felt smooth. (a) According to the text on page 9, why might he have expected it to feel smooth? (b) According to the text on page 10, why might he **not** have expected it to feel smooth?
- Where was the whale?
- Look at the paragraph beginning: *Carefully, Michael leaned...* What does this paragraph tell you about Michael's character?

- The whale did not seem to be alarmed by meeting Michael. How can you tell this from its actions? Give **two** ways.
- *Like a sleeper waking from a dream, he looked around, dazed.* This tells us that at the end of the story Michael felt that...

Retrieval questions / get detail from the text

- Why had Gaby climbed the tree the previous summer?
- Gaby thinks she makes two mistakes while trying to rescue the cat. What is the **first** mistake that Gaby makes while trying to rescue the cat?
- Look at the paragraph beginning: *Well, she'd just have to not fall... The cat was too shiny. Too chubby.* What conclusion does Gaby draw from this?
- Give **one** piece of advice that Gaby's mother gives her for dealing with cats.
- Gaby uses the Spanish word *gato* for cat. Who else in the story speaks Spanish?
- What event made Matthew Webb want to swim the English Channel?
- Name **two** of the hardships that Matthew Webb faced in swimming the English Channel and explain how he dealt with them.
- Why do slow Channel swimmers swim further than faster swimmers?
- How long did the fastest swim across the Channel take?
- In what year did the French authorities make it illegal for people to swim from France to England?

Question stems from 2018 paper

22 marks come from domain: *Make inferences from the text / explain and justify inferences with evidence from the text.*

13 marks come from domain: *Retrieve and record information / identify key details from fiction and non-fiction.*

10 marks come from domain: *Give / explain the meaning of words in context.*

Vocabulary / definitions

- Find and copy one word which shows there are lots of things we do not yet know about giant pandas. (Answer : puzzling)
- ...cutting off vital food supply. What does the word vital mean in this sentence? (options given)
- Look at the second headed: What about the future? Find and copy one word that shows that helping the giant panda is not easy. (Answer : challenging)
- Find and copy one word from the first verse that shows that the poet's grannie made him feel safe when he was a boy. (Answer : protective – although also could have had engulf, warm and smile)
- Find and copy a group of words that means the same as 'took the opportunity'. (Answer : seized the chance)
- She came. And I still vividly recall... What do the words vividly recall mean? (Answer: remembers clearly or strongly remembers or remembers as if it was happening now)
- Left to my own devices... This means Edward... (options provided).
- When Edward was exploring the bookcase, he noticed something in the dark recesses of the shelf. Which of the following words is closest in meaning to recesses (options provided).

Inference / explaining questions

- Pandas grow up to 1.5 metres and weigh up to 150 kilograms. What else in the text tells us that giant pandas could be dangerous animals. (Answer: razor-like claws and powerful jaws)
- The poet describes his grannie as standing mountainous between me and my fear. This makes her sound big and powerful. What other impressions do you get of his grannie in the same verse?
- Explain what the poet finds 'weird' about his grannie in the last verse.
- What is one thing that did not change about his grannie as he got older.
- Find and copy a group of words that shows that his grannie makes a difference to the poet during her visit.
- Tick the two verses that are mainly about the poet's adult life.
- What suggests that inside the old farmhouse was not very well looked after?
- Find and copy one word which shows that Em Sharp was in charge of the house.
- How can you tell that Edward was determined to find the game? Give one piece of evidence that shows his determination.
- What impression do you get of Em Sharp at this point in the extract? Give two impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.
- In the last paragraph, Edward does not want to give the game to Em Sharp. Give two reasons why he does not want to part with it.
- Edward found a game. How can you tell that there is something strange about the game. Explain two ways, using evidence from the text to support your answer.