

Literacy



GEORGE
WATSON'S
— COLLEGE —

Topics

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Literacy Workshop

S1 Reading



Pupil Activity Booklet

S1 Reading Workshop: Warm-up Task

Opening Activity

One of the purposes for reading is for **finding and using information**. For this activity you should read the information in the following extracts which are all describing different tasks we do in our day to day lives. After each one, write down what you think the activity is and then write down the two pieces of information from the text that you feel helped you best understand the activity.



Activity 1

Learning's the hard bit, but once you know how, it's like riding a bike, except you can't do it when you're a kid. It's a great multi-tasking exercise so women should be better at it, but typically they aren't! 'Which way now?' 'Are we there yet?' Of course, it can be a risky business, even if you're very careful because, in the wrong hands, it's lethal!

Name of activity _____

Information 1 _____

Information 2 _____

Activity 2

First, you have to sort the big pile into different groups. One pile is sufficient for the task; it is important not to overdo things. Colour complications can easily arise and mistakes can be expensive. There is no end to the necessity for this task and it becomes just another fact of life. Of course, you've got to get the temperature just right. End result (after a bit of hanging around and flattening out): just like new!

Name of activity _____

Information 1 _____

Information 2 _____

Activity 3

Where to begin? So many choices! It's best to start at the back, then go to the front, then work your way inside: that's the best bit. Of course, there has to be something to hook you so first impressions are everything. But, as the old saying goes, you shouldn't judge a book by its cover, so reserve judgement until later. We all have our favourite place: chair, train, beach, bed - wherever suits really. It's very nourishing, whatever your favourite kind.

Name of activity _____

Information 1 _____

Information 2 _____

Activity 4

A newspaper is better than a magazine and for this activity, on a seashore is better than a street. At first it is better to run than to walk. Also, you may have to try several times. It takes some skill but it's easy to learn. Even young children can enjoy it. Once successful, complications are minimal. Birds seldom get too close. One needs lots of room. Rain soaks in very fast. Too many people doing the same thing can also cause problems. If there are no complications, it can be very peaceful. A rock will serve as an anchor. If things break loose from it, you will not get a second chance.

Name of activity _____

Information 1 _____

Information 2 _____

Task One: What's the purpose?

Read the following six extracts and in groups decide which extract fits which of the following purposes:

- Enjoyment
- Finding and using information
- Understanding, analysing and evaluating

Extract 1

'I know a place you can go.'

Robbie was quick to his feet, brushing the rain and tears from his face with the back of his hand. He'd not even known the other lad was there until he'd spoken. There was a flash of embarrassment at being caught in this state, in the dark, in the gutter, but his distrust was stronger. He put a couple of extra steps between them.

Purpose _____

Extract 2

The first Egyptian pyramid was built by Pharaoh Zoser in about 2650 BC. During the next ten centuries the rulers of Egypt built about 90 pyramids. The largest and most famous are those at Giza, which were built by Cheps, Chephren and Mycerinus. (Chephen's son)

The Great Pyramid of Cheops is the largest stone building in the world. The cathedrals of Florence, Milan, St. Peter's in Rome, and St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey in London could stand together in the area of its base. It was so strongly built that the first archaeologists were able to explore inside by blasting tunnels with gunpowder, without causing it to collapse.

A pyramid was a religious monument. To the Egyptians, its sloping sides represented the rays of the sun god, Re.

Purpose _____

Extract 3

Waste plant and animal matter is called organic waste. It includes unused food and most sewage. In time, organic waste is digested (broken down into simpler substances) by microscopic living things called microbes, which include bacteria and moulds. We say that waste 'rots away' but it does not really disappear. During rotting, it is changed into a liquid. If this seeps into soil, its vital elements can be reused in new plants.

If waste rots away naturally, it is said to be biodegradable. But not all waste is like this. For example, glass and plastics do not; they are not biodegradable. Non biodegradable rubbish can be a considerable nuisance. If cans, bottles and plastic cups are dropped in the streets, they stay as unsightly litter until someone picks them up.

Purpose _____

Extract 4

I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if go about to expound this dram. Methought I was - there is no man can tell what. Methought I was - and methought I had but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom.

Purpose _____

Extract 5

Steam engines had been used to drain the collieries since 1712, and after the 1780s they were used to wind men up and down the shafts in 'cages.' Each colliery employed an 'engine tender' to look after the the engines. These men began to experiment with moving steam engines using the power of the engine to drive the wheels. In 1821 George Stephenson, enginewright at Killingworth Colliery near Newcastle, was invited by local businessmen to build a railway between the South Durham coalfield and the port at Stockton.

At first the railways were opposed by farmers who claimed that the railways would destroy agriculture; cows would stop producing milk, hens would stop laying and grass would wither and die, they said. Country people thought the fiery trains were the devil. Stephenson steadfastly ignored all the criticism. On one occasion he was quizzed by a Member of Parliament who wanted to prove that the railways were unsafe: 'Suppose now...that a cow were to get in the way of the engine - would that not be an awkward circumstance?' Very awkward, Stephenson replied, "for the cow.'

Purpose _____

Extract 6

The sound came again, cutting through the night; a sharp, metallic tap that carried even to the first floor of the house where Sam lay sleeping. Ella stood over him and listened for it again, but all she heard was rain, spattering against the window. There was a storm coming - a fine start to the summer holidays - but that wasn't a problem.

Purpose _____

Task Two: Which Subject?

Read the following extracts which have been taken from the various subjects you study in either S1 or S2. In groups, decide which extract comes from which subject. The subjects are: Biology, Economics, Geography, History, Technology.

Extract 1:

Meanwhile, European explorers had been exploring Africa, South America, and Asia. They found lands rich in natural resources. Trading, and conflict, soon followed.



It usually started with friendly trading for things like gold, tobacco, timber, and spices. But as time went by, the Europeans grew greedier ...



... and took over their trading partners by force, as **colonies**. They took their raw materials, and sold them finished goods – and that made many Europeans very rich!



In time, the Europeans were forced out. They left behind countries in a low state of development – with little industry, or education, or skills, and often a great deal of unrest.

Between them, Britain, France, Spain, Portugal and some other European countries carved up Africa, South America and much of Asia, as colonies. Those ex-colonies are LEDCs today – and many are still unstable.

Subject: _____

Extract 2:

Our master came to inspect us once a day, but did not speak. He spoke only to the buyers, whom he told of our excellence, and our obedience and our hardiness. He said none of us had ever been known to steal from our masters or run away. Possible buyers always asked if we were willing to go with them. What could we do but agree? My hands and even my nails were inspected closely, to see whether I would be good at picking cotton. After we had been inspected by many people, we were allowed into the jail yard to rest, and were fed salt pork. At about ten in the morning the next day the sale began. Our master led us one by one into the street, mixing the ages and sexes. He gave glowing descriptions of our abilities and behaviour... At about five o'clock the rest of us were sold. We fetched better prices than the previous day. Not many of the bidders were sober by this time.

Subject: _____

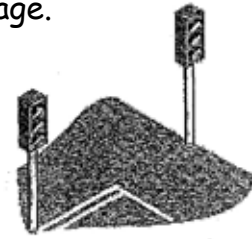
Extract 3:

Assignment 1.4

A set of temporary traffic lights is required for a system of road works. Draw a flowchart on the flow chart grid paper for the continuous lights sequence shown by one set of traffic lights.

Use the times shown in the table for each stage.

red	10s
red and amber	2s
green	10s
amber	2s



Subject: _____

Extract 4:

The Caledonian Forest originally covered much of the Highlands of Scotland, and takes its name from the Romans, who called Scotland 'Caledonia' meaning 'wooded heights'. The native pinewoods are estimated to have covered 1.5 million hectares as a vast primeval wilderness of Scots pines, birch, rowan, aspen, juniper and other trees. On the west coast, oak and birch trees predominated in a temperate rainforest ecosystem rich in ferns, mosses and lichens and rare orchids and other rare plants such as the twin flower. Many species of wildlife flourished in the forest, including the wolf, as well as several notable species of birds - the capercaillie, the crested tit, and the endemic Scottish crossbill, which occurs nowhere else in the world apart from the pinewoods.

However, there has been a long history of deforestation in Scotland, and clearance of the land began in Neolithic times. Over the centuries, the forest shrank...

Subject: _____

Extract 5:

You have just studied division of labour by process, an idea which is partly responsible for the standard of living enjoyed in developing countries today. Of course, an idea has no business value until someone spots a way of using it to make a profit. The first man to do this was Henry Ford, founder of the car company which bears his name.

Henry Ford made his first car in 1896, and attracted the backing of several Detroit businessmen, anxious to cash in on the new invention. Henry spent too much time over the designs for his first cars, and his first firm went bankrupt. The second firm's owners became impatient with Henry's desire for perfection and sacked him! Eventually, Henry produced a less complicated design for his car. He strongly believed that cars should be made in large numbers and sold not just to the rich. So he had to find a way of making cars on a large scale whilst keeping their prices low enough for the average man to be able to afford them.

Subject: _____

Task Three

Skimming and Scanning

Read the article "Fighter for Amazon Ecology Murdered" taken from **The Guardian** newspaper, published on 24 December 1988.

Discuss in groups what you think the writer's main point is and be ready to report back to the class with your ideas.

We think that the main point being made is

Finding and Using Information

Read paragraphs five and six from the same article.

Write your answer to the following question in the space below. You may discuss this with the other members of your group before writing down your answer.

Explain what ordinary Americans are doing to damage the South American rain forest and go on to explain exactly why what they are doing causes so much damage.

Task Three

Rubbertrappers' leader gunned down in his backyard

Fighter for Amazon ecology murdered

The leader of Brazil's rubbertrappers and internationally known defender of the Amazon rain forest, 44 year old Francisco Mendes, has been assassinated at his home in Xapuri, in the state of Acre.

He died instantly after being shot in the chest as he went out into his backyard. Two men were seen running away from an empty house next door, but local police failed to capture them.

Chico Mendes, as he was known, had received many death threats because of his fight to save the rain forest from destruction. He was president of the Rural Workers' Union in Xapuri, leader of the National Rubbertrappers' Association, and founder of the Union of Forest Peoples, an alliance of Indians and rubbertrappers.

Mendes led the rubbertrappers, whose existence depends on the survival of the forest, in **empates**, the physical blockade of machines sent in by land-owners to clear the trees for cattle farms.

In Washington last year, at a prize-giving ceremony, he denounced the involvement of large American companies like Xerox and Georigie Pacific, the Dutch company Bruynzeel and the Japanese Tyomenka in the rain forest devastation:

'By buying expensive mahogany furniture, you Americans are helping to finance the destruction of the last forest reserves on the planet,' he told his audience.

He successfully urged the World Bank and the Inter American Regional Bank not to finance the highway planned to link Acres's capital, Branco, to the rest of Brazil, until the serious environmental protection measures had been taken.

These activities earned him the hatred of those in Acre for whom roads, sawmills and cattle farms mean progress and above all profit. For them he was no more than an agitator.

Several attempts had already been made on Chico Mendes's life. A few months ago the military police warned him that a gunman had been hired to kill him and provided him with a bodyguard. He never announced his movements in advance.

Union leaders in Acre suspect two brothers, who are members of the right-wing landowners organisation UDR, of involvement in the killing.

The Guardian
24 December 1988

S1 Reading Workshop: Answers

Warm Up

Each of the pieces of text describes a day to day activity.

From your reading, write down what you think the activity is that is being described and two pieces of information that helped you come to that conclusion. (Use a stopwatch.)

Note to teachers: fun, non subject specific way of heightening awareness of reading for a purpose.

Answers...

- 1: Driving
- 2: Doing the laundry
- 3: Reading
- 4: Flying a kite

Why is Reading Important?

- finding and using information
- understanding, analysing and evaluating
- enjoyment

Task One

Work in groups, read the selection of texts provided and discuss what your purpose is in reading them. (Use a stopwatch.)

Note to teachers: building awareness of reading purposes.

Finding and Using Information

You read to find out information in almost every subject in school.

Task Two

Work in your group, read the five extracts and decide which subject each extract is taken from. Write the name of the subject down in the spaces provided.

Here are the subjects: Biology, Economics, Geography, History, Technology. (Use a stopwatch.)

Note to teachers: building awareness of reading as a life skill in all subjects.

Answers...

- Extract 1: Geography
Extract 2: History
Extract 3: Technology
Extract 4: Biology
Extract 5: Economics

Skimming and Scanning

Sometimes you need to work out what the main idea in a whole passage is, which means you need to read the whole passage swiftly, but with enough depth to be able to work out the main idea.

Task Three: Part One

Working individually, read the passage. Working in your group, discuss what the topic of the passage is and what the main point being made is. Write it down on the sheet provided and be ready to talk to the class. (Use a stopwatch.)

Note to teachers: building awareness of reading strategies - 'big picture'.

Finding Detailed Information

Sometimes you want to find out really detailed information about your topic itself, so that you can understand in more depth.

Task Three: Part Two

Go back and read paragraphs five and six of the article. Discuss your answer to the question, write it down and be ready to share with the class. (Use a stopwatch.)

Answer...

Main points:

Chico Mendes, who fought on a world stage for rain forest preservation, has been murdered.

Buying 'expensive mahogany furniture'.

'Finances the destruction of the last forest reserves'.

Reading for Enjoyment

We all like to read something for enjoyment, whether it be newspapers, magazines or books.

Task Four

Look at the sheet provided that shows you the book 'blurb' and the first page from four novels. Once you have read all four, write down on the sheet which one you would choose for enjoyment and why. Be ready to report back.

Note to teachers: not pertinent to all subjects, but important out of class purpose and support.

What Have We Learned?

- we use our reading skills in all subjects
- we read for different purposes
- we need to see 'the big picture', get the main idea
- we need to be able to find detailed information
- we read for enjoyment!