

A Grand Exploration

In 1869, Major John Wesley Powell became the first European to fully explore the Grand Canyon. This recount of his journal entries conveys the difficulties of the journey and the enormous size of the canyon.

Features of the text

- Retelling of a historical event using journal entries
- Writing tone, style and font that match the time period of the story
- Descriptive and emotive words
- Past and present tense
- Time markers
- Map

Purpose

'A Grand Exploration' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- making inferences;
- identifying tenses and time markers;
- describing the setting and sequence of events;
- using the text as a model for writing.

Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *What do you already know about the Grand Canyon?*
- *How do you think the Grand Canyon was discovered?*
- *Who has kept a diary or journal?*

Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- *How does the writer show us the passing of time? (dates, tense, words such as **then** and **later**)*
- *Look at page six. How do you think the men who left were feeling?*
- *Find the words that describe the scenery. How do they help us imagine what the writer saw?*

Following up

The students can:

- write a letter from Powell to his family describing the Grand Canyon
- write a newspaper report of the journey dated August 1869
- write a journal entry for one of the men who left the main party.

Hunting Dragons

When Blanca stays with Auntie Serena in the city, she hears strange noises. Is there a dragon in the apartment building?

Features of the text

- Narrative fiction
- Told from a child's point of view
- Theme of exploring a strange new place
- Family relationships
- Problem and solution are not explicit

Purpose

'Hunting Dragons' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- identifying the features of a narrative;
- recognising point of view;
- making personal connections with the text.

Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *Have you ever stayed in a place that was very different from your home?*
- *How could we chart the things that happen in a story?*
- *Has your imagination ever played tricks on you?*

Reading and discussing the text

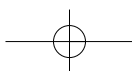
Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

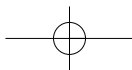
- *Use a story map to chart the features of characters, plot, setting and theme.*
- *Read to the end of page ten. Can you predict what will happen next?*
- *Use sticky notes to mark places in the text where you can make a personal connection or where you make a connection with another text.*

Following up

The students can:

- write about their experiences of visiting a new or strange place
- list some of the noises that they hear every day and imagine how Blanca might hear them
- retell the story from Auntie Serena's point of view.





The Hole Truth

Captain Haras and the crew of the starship *Rustbucket* discover what black holes are made from.

Features of the text

- Narrative
- Fictional news report
- Science fiction
- Humour
- Direct speech

Purpose

'The Hole Truth' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- making, confirming and revising predictions;
- drawing conclusions;
- forming opinions about events and characters.

Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *What do you know about science fiction?*
- *What do you know about black holes?*
- *What do you think life might be like a hundred years from now?*

Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- *Read the first two pages. What do you think the crew might discover about black holes?*
- *What science fiction elements have the author and illustrator included? (the screen, probe and robot)*
- *Read the rest of the story, including the news report. How does the report help you to feel satisfied with the ending?*

Following up

The students can:

- write a biography of one of the characters stating how they came to be on the starship
- draw a diagram of Doctor Sprocket's lab and describe the equipment
- record the story onto audiotape, adding sound effects.

Annie Peck – A Life of Adventure

Annie Peck was born in 1850 and spent most of her life climbing mountains. Annie faced many challenges in the wilderness as well as in daily life.

Features of the text

- Biography
- Map
- Timeline
- Photographs with captions
- Conclusion

Purpose

'Annie Peck – A Life of Adventure' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- identifying the main idea of a text;
- describing the sequence and setting of events;
- using the text as a model for writing.

Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *What do you think life was like for women in the nineteenth century?*
- *What characteristics would a person need to have to be a successful mountaineer?*

Reading and discussing the text

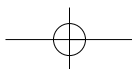
Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

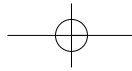
- *Read pages eighteen and nineteen. Do you want to revise or expand on your predictions about the characteristics needed for a mountaineer?*
- *What did Annie have to take with her to make sure that she reached the summit of Mount Huascarán?*
- *What might she do differently if she were climbing today?*

Following up

The students can:

- write a summary of the biography using dates as headings
- compare the clothing that Annie wore with that worn by climbers today
- write a list of questions that they would ask Annie Peck if she were alive today.





Platform to the Stars

This article explains the problems involved with spending months or even years in space. It focuses on the International Space Station and the research that scientists are doing there.

Features of the text

- Explanation
- Cause and effect
- Glossary words
- Statement or question followed by a description
- Precise, formal and objective language

Purpose

'Platform to the Stars' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- using context, glossaries and dictionaries to determine the meaning of unknown words;
- expanding ideas by formulating questions, developing hypotheses and drawing conclusions;
- using the text as a model for writing.

Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *When astronauts go into space, they have to take all the water they need with them. What problems could this cause?*
- *How do you think these problems can be solved?*
- *What would be the good and bad things about spending a long time in space?*

Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- *What do you think this article will be about?*
- *Read the rest of the article. What do you notice about the structure?*
- *Do you still have any questions that this article hasn't answered?*

Following up

The students can:

- find and record answers to their questions by researching space travel on the Internet or in the library
- present answers to their questions in chart or report form
- suggest solutions to the problems posed in the article.

Exploring the Small World

This short explanation examines the history of the microscope and includes images from an electron microscope.

Features of the text

- Explanation
- Precise and formal language
- Photographs and images from electron microscopes
- Historical illustration
- Design matching the theme of the report

Purpose

'Exploring the Small World' can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- identifying the author's point of view;
- understanding visual information;
- creating an organising structure for an explanation.

Introducing the text

Select one or more of these discussion starters:

- *How do scientists look at things the human eye can't see?*
- *Tell me about a time you looked at something really closely. What did you notice?*
- *How has the invention of the microscope helped us?*

Reading and discussing the text

Use some of the following suggestions to guide the students through the text:

- *Look at the photographs on the second page. Can you explain them?*
- *Read the article. How does the caption under the illustration of the microscope on page thirty add to the information in the article?*
- *What have you learned about microscopes from the article?*

Following up

The students can:

- organise a class debate to discuss whether science has had a good or bad effect on our lives
- draw a flow chart to show a leaf or another common object and examine it more closely in stages
- research the microscope, the telescope, spectacles, the magnifying glass, radar or sonar and write an explanation of how it works.

