

Building Strong Foundations: The Importance of Reading and Writing

Welcome!

Aston Rowant Church of England School
November 2025



What will we cover?

- Why Reading and Writing matter
- What we do at Aston Rowant
- What you can do support your child

Attend a sample lesson:

- Hedgehog & KS1
- KS2

6:20 – 6:45

6:55 – 7:20



Why Reading and Writing Matter

- Reading and writing are the foundation for all learning
- Develops communication, thinking, and creativity
- Impacts future academic success across all subjects





The survey of 71,400 children and young people by the National Literacy Trust early in 2023 has revealed that **fewer than one in three children (28%) aged eight to 18 read daily for enjoyment.** While this remains the same as for 2022, the figure stood at 38% when the survey began in 2005, marking a 26% fall in those who read daily.

- Just A Book by Joshua Seigal



Why is there a decline in reading for pleasure?

- Games and online distractions
- Rise in social media
- Find books boring
- Lack of time
- Not being read to from an early age by adults (at home and school)
- Seeing reading as a process for learning rather a pleasure activity
 - 'Reading for pleasure' is being confused with 'literacy' by many parents at home who commonly don't realise that the more it's pushed as a school subject, the less likely a child is to choose to do it. In the school environment, the national curriculum focuses on reading skills above reading pleasure. However, when pleasure drives reading, children achieve more.



Benefits of reading for pleasure:

- There is a growing body of evidence which illustrates the importance of reading for pleasure for both educational purposes as well as personal development (cited in Clark and Rumbold, 2006).
- Evidence suggests that there is a positive relationship between reading frequency, reading enjoyment and attainment (Clark 2011; Clark and Douglas 2011).
- Reading enjoyment has been reported as more important for children's educational success than their family's socio-economic status (OECD, 2002).
- There is a positive link between positive attitudes towards reading and scoring well on reading assessments (Twist et al, 2007).
- Regularly reading stories or novels outside of school is associated with higher scores in reading assessments (PIRLS, 2006; PISA, 2009).
- International evidence supports these findings; US research reports that independent reading is the best predictor of reading achievement (Anderson, Wilson and Fielding, 1988).
- Evidence suggests that reading for pleasure is an activity that has emotional and social consequences (Clark and Rumbold, 2006).
- Other benefits to reading for pleasure include: text comprehension and grammar, positive reading attitudes, pleasure in reading in later life, increased general knowledge (Clark and Rumbold, 2006).

A growing number of studies show that promoting reading can have a major impact on children and adults and their future. Upon reviewing the research literature, Clark and Rumbold (2006) identify several main areas of the benefits to reading for pleasure:

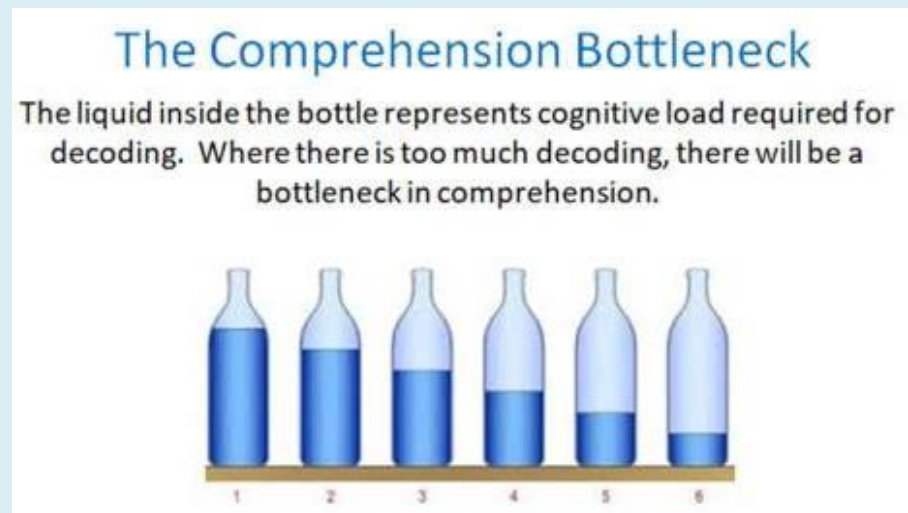
- Reading attainment and writing ability;
- Text comprehension and grammar;
- Breadth of vocabulary;
- Positive reading attitudes;
- Greater self-confidence as a reader;
- Pleasure in reading in later life;
- General knowledge;
- A better understanding of other cultures;
- Community participation; and
- A greater insight into human nature and decision-making.

Impact of reading

Amount of reading	20 mins	5 mins	1 min
Number of minutes per year	3600	900	180
Number of words per year	1.8 Million	282,000	8000
Hours read by the end of primary school	851	212	42
Performance on tests	90%	50%	10%

What is fluency and why is it important?

- For a child to be fluent, phonic knowledge is important.
- When a child is fluent, we can focus on understanding and comprehension.
- When comprehension is secure, the child will enjoy what they read.
- Secure phonics and fluency all reduce cognitive load.



Three ways you can help build fluency at home...

1. **Read and follow** – the adult reads the text and the child follows along with their finger. This helps the child with word recognition and models to them how they should read with fluency.
2. **My turn, your turn** – take turns reading a page or a paragraph. Here you are modelling how to read with fluency, flow and expression.
3. **Echo Reading** – as you read, the child copies. It is important here to pace yourself and read at a rate that your child can keep up with.

Let's have a go!



Chapter 1

The Garden of Mr Gum

Mr Gum was a fierce old man with a red beard and two bloodshot eyes that stared out at you like an octopus curled up in a bad cave. He was a complete horror who hated children, animals, fun and corn on the cob. What he liked was snoozing in bed all day, being lonely and scowling at things.

What makes a skilled reader?

SCARBOROUGH'S

READING ROPE

(2001)*

Language Comprehension

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
(facts, concepts, etc.)

VOCABULARY
(breadth, precision, links, etc.)

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE
(syntax, semantics, etc.)

VERBAL REASONING
(inference, metaphor, etc.)

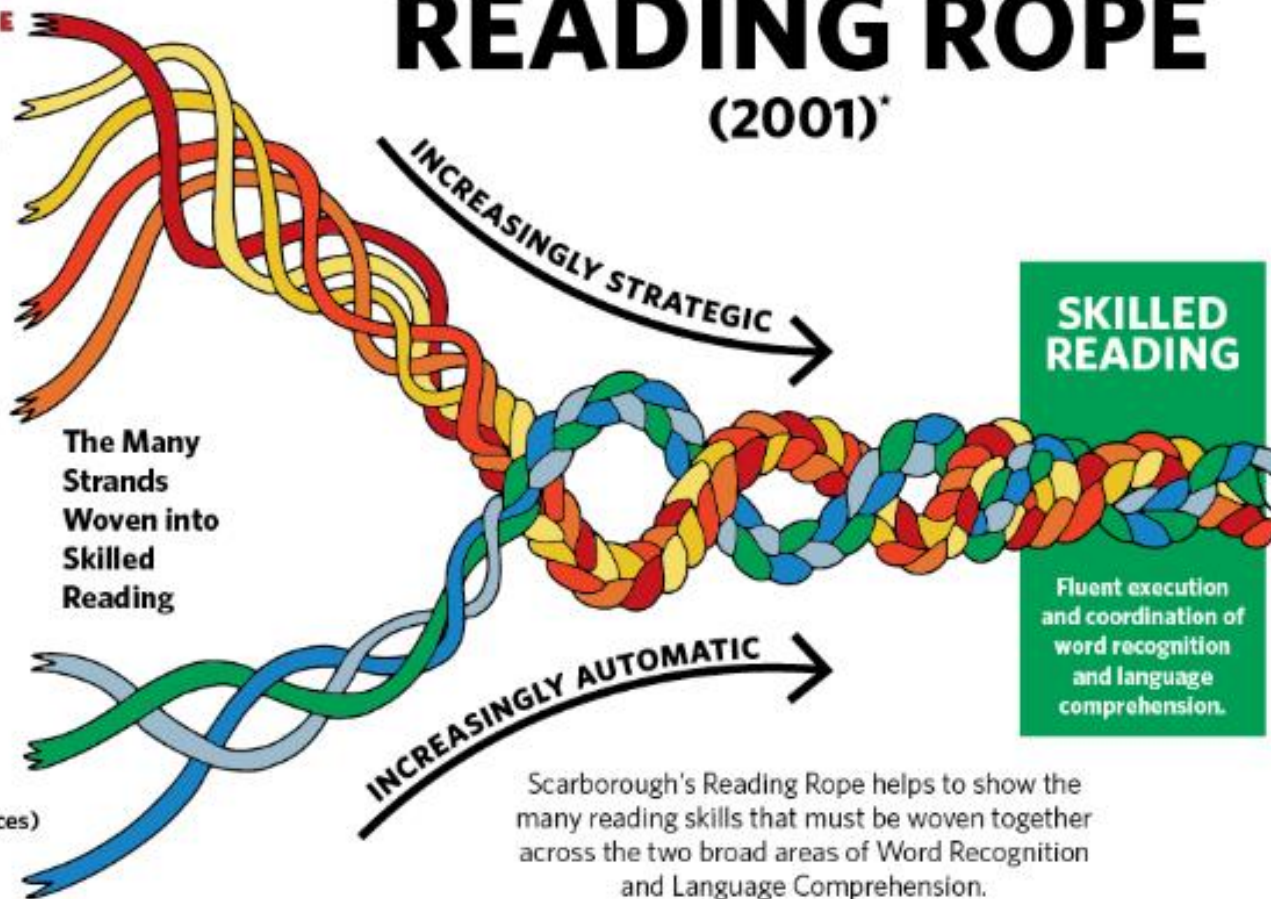
LITERACY KNOWLEDGE
(print concepts, genres, etc.)

Word Recognition

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS
(syllables, phonemes, etc.)

DECODING
(alphabetic principle, spelling—sound correspondences)

SIGHT RECOGNITION
(of familiar words)



The Many Strands Woven into Skilled Reading

SKILLED READING

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and language comprehension.

Scarborough's Reading Rope helps to show the many reading skills that must be woven together across the two broad areas of Word Recognition and Language Comprehension.

*What is the Reading Rope? (n.d.). *BrainTrust Tutors*. March 16, 2023. <https://braintrusttutors.com/what-is-the-reading-rope/>

To summarise:

- Expands vocabulary and comprehension
- Improves focus and imagination
- Encourages empathy through stories
- Builds background knowledge for other subjects

Make reading pleasurable!



How Parents Can Support Reading at Home

- Read together daily, even for 10–15 minutes
- Talk about stories – ask who, what, where, when, why
- Visit libraries and let children choose books
- Be a reading role model – let them see you read
- Not sure what books to read with them? Check out the class page website for recommendations.



The Connection Between Reading and Writing

- Reading feeds writing – children write better when they read more
- Writing deepens understanding of what they've read
- Both support language development and lifelong learning



Benefits of Writing

- Strengthens spelling, grammar, and expression
- Helps children organize thoughts and ideas
- Encourages creativity and self-confidence
- Improves communication and critical thinking



How Parents Can Support Writing at Home

- Encourage writing in fun ways: letters, journals, stories, shopping lists
- Praise effort, not just accuracy
- Provide materials: pencils, notebooks, coloured pens
- Celebrate and display their writing



What We Do at School

- Daily reading and writing activities
- Phonics, spelling, and grammar lessons
- Guided reading sessions
- Opportunities for creative and functional writing



How Home and School Work Together

- Regular communication between parents and teachers
- Reading Records and homework
- Reading challenges (Doodle Learning)
- Sharing progress and achievements



Writing and Reading in Fox Class



What does a writing lesson look like in Fox Class?

- We start with a starter!
- The intention is to retrieve past features to keep them fresh.

The parents sat on chairs

1. Rewrite it to include an expanded noun phrase.
2. Add an adverb.
3. All of the above but add in a subordinate clause!



We would use a text to support what we would be writing.

We will use a picture stimulus.



What can you see?

How would she be feeling?

Think about your senses?



On your whiteboards/scrap paper, I would like you to think about writing a description of what the girl sees.

What will we need to include when writing a description?



How can we make our piece of writing exciting for the reader?

Short sentences?

Great description?

Similes/Metaphors

Interesting sentence openers.





Reading

- Let's look at some text working on our fluency.
- We will echo read it so you can gain intonation.
- Who would like to read to the class?
- Will you agree in how they read it?
- Which words will they emphasise? Why?





The Lost Puppy

Once upon a time, in a small village, there was a lost puppy named Max. Max had wandered away from his home and couldn't find his way back.

He felt scared and lonely. As he walked through the village, he met a kind girl named Lily. Lily saw that Max was lost and decided to help him. She made posters with Max's picture and put them up all over the village. She also posted about Max on social media to spread the word. Soon, a family saw the poster and realised that Max was their missing puppy. They were overjoyed to be reunited with him. Max was grateful to Lily for her kindness and determination. From that day on, Max and Lily became best friends.



Reading

- Children in LKS2 should have a good understanding of phonics in order for them now to focus on the meaning of the text = comprehension.



What is comprehension?

COMPREHENSION SKILLS

DEFINITION

Comprehension skills are cognitive capabilities that allow individuals to process and understand written or spoken information. They encompass a range of abilities, from identifying main ideas and supporting details to making inferences and drawing conclusions. Mastery of these skills is essential for effective reading, listening, and overall communication.

EXAMPLES

- Summarizing
- Paraphrasing
- Drawing Conclusions
- Sequencing Events
- Ranking Information
- Recognizing Author Purpose
- Interpreting Figurative Language
- Identifying Cause and Effect

What you can do to help develop comprehension...

That's something lacking in a lot of modern-day families – just talking. It's almost a lost art form.

Ryan Kwanten

- Comprehension of the world will develop comprehension in reading...
- Ways you can develop comprehension –
 - Talking a lot at home... about everything
 - Develop cultural capital by going out (this does not have to cost money)
 - Reading together and discussing books together
 - Why do you like this book?
 - What do you think will happen next?
 - What do you think about this character?



Vocabulary -

Interpreting words in context and deciphering the meaning of words unknown based on the context they are written.

Mr Ali loathes wearing a tie as he finds it uncomfortable.

We may not know the meaning of the word 'loathe' here but based on the context and other evidence within the sentence, we can guess it means 'doesn't like'. How have I arrived at this conclusion?

Beowulf was incensed by Grendel's attack and vowed revenge.

We may not know the meaning of the word 'incensed' here but we can guess it means 'angered'. How have I arrived at this conclusion?



Inference: is an interpretation that goes beyond the literal information given and relies on the evidence within the text as well as background knowledge.

The police find a threatening letter addressed to the victim.

- We could **infer** that someone didn't like that person.

The bike lay on the floor next to her as she held her leg and cried.

- We could **infer** that the girl fell off her bike.

My stomach rumbled as the smell of dinner wafted from the kitchen.

- We could **infer** that this person is hungry.



Predict – what has or what will happen based on information stated or inferred (linked closely to inference). Again, background knowledge here is important.

Beowulf snatched his sword from the armoury and ran towards the mountains.

- What do predict Beowulf is going to do? What evidence have you used to make your prediction?

Mr Ali woke up with a terrible headache and severe cough. He picked up his mobile and began to dial.

- Who do you think Mr Ali is going to call? Why?

Predictions, like inferences are neither right or wrong, they may be strong (with secure evidence to back them up) or weak (with little or poor evidence to back them up).



Retrieve

- Retrieval of information is often the starting point for discussing a text. This means picking the exact (spelling and punctuation too) information out of the text that they have just read. E.g.
- What was the character's name?
- What did they eat for dinner?
- What colour was the car?
- What time did...

Summary -

- Summarise main ideas from more than one paragraph
 - What is the main point of the first paragraph?
 - What heading would be appropriate for this paragraph?



Questions you can ask at home...

Vocabulary

Find and explain the meaning of words in context

Example questions

- What do the words and suggest about the character, setting and mood?
- Which word tells you that....?
- Which keyword tells you about the character/setting/mood?
- Find one word in the text which means.....
- Find and highlight the word that is closest in meaning to.....
- Find a word or phrase which shows/suggests that.....

Infer

Make and justify inferences using evidence from the text.

Example questions

- Find and copy a group of words which show that...
- How do these words make the reader feel? How does this paragraph suggest this?
- How do the descriptions of show that they are
- How can you tell that.....
- What impression of do you get from these paragraphs?
- What voice might these characters use?
- What was thinking when.....
- Who is telling the story?

Predict

Predict what might happen from the details given and implied.

Example questions

- From the cover what do you think this text is going to be about?
- What is happening now? What happened before this? What will happen after?
- What does this paragraph suggest will happen next? What makes you think this?
- Do you think the choice of setting will influence how the plot develops?
- Do you think... will happen? Yes, no or maybe? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

Explain

- Explain how content is related and contributes to the meaning as a whole.
- Explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of language.
- Explain the themes and patterns that develop across the text.
- Explain how information contributes to the overall experience.

Example questions

- Why is the text arranged in this way?
- What structures has the author used?
- What is the purpose of this text feature?
- Is the use of effective?
- The mood of the character changes throughout the text. Find and copy the phrases which show this.
- What is the author's point of view?
- What affect does have on the audience?
- How does the author engage the reader here?
- Which words and phrases did effectively?
- Which section was the most interesting/exciting part?
- How are these sections linked?

Retrieve

Retrieve and record information and identify key details from fiction and non-fiction.

Example questions

- How would you describe this story/text? What genre is it? How do you know?
- How did...?
- How often...?
- Who had...? Who is...? Who did....?
- What happened to...?
- What does.... do?
- How is
- What can you learn from from this section?
- Give one example of.....
- The story is told from whose perspective?

Summarise

Summarise the main ideas from more than one paragraph

Example questions

- Can you number these events 1-5 in the order that they happened?
- What happened after
- What was the first thing that happened in the story?
- Can you summarise in a sentence the opening/middle/end of the story?
- In what order do these chapter headings come in the story?

Key Takeaways

- Reading and writing are essential lifelong skills
- Little and often makes a big difference
- Your involvement has a huge impact on your child's success



Thank You

Together, we can help every child love reading and writing.



Writing and Reading in Owl Class



What does a writing lesson look like in Owl Class?

- We start by recapping one of our skills from the previous lesson to keep our skills relevant and fresh!

So, parents...

Using the phrase

‘The parents wrote on their boards.’

Edit this to include a relative clause, and an adverb of your choice.



Using a text.

- Like Fox Class, we use a wide range of texts to get our minds thinking about how to write.
- We think about our audience: who will we be writing for? Are we
 - writing to inform?
 - writing to elicit an emotion?
 - writing to persuade or convince?



Our image to discuss



What could we use this image to write about?

Let's create a word bank to help us form sentences



Nouns:

Verbs:

Adjectives:

Prepositions:

Simile or
metaphor:

Relative
clause:

Using our word bank, let's create some evocative sentences that could be used to help describe the setting to the reader:

I do:

We do:

You do:

How did we find this?

Share your work with your elbow partner: be brave. Share two likes and a wish about their work

Upper KS2 writing expectations

- **Year 6- A**

I stepped into the forest. It was dark. The trees were big and the light was green. I felt a bit scared. I kept walking.

- **Year 6 – B**

I stepped into the forest and straight away noticed how dark it was. The trees were tall and covered in thick leaves that glowed green in the strange light. The air felt damp and cool around me. I could hear quiet rustling sounds, but I couldn't see what was making them. I walked forward slowly, trying to stay calm, even though the forest felt unusual and a bit scary.

- **Year 6 – C**

As I stepped beneath the arch of twisted branches, the forest swallowed the daylight behind me. A strange green glow shimmered through the leaves, making the shadows ripple like moving water. The air was heavy with the smell of earth and moss, and every sound seemed muffled, as if the forest were holding its breath. further, each footstep sinking into soft, silent ground, while something unseen rustled in the undergrowth. Although my heart beat faster, curiosity pulled me deeper into the weird, emerald-lit world.



Upper KS2- Always edit

- **Year 6- A**

I stepped into the forest. It was dark. The trees were big and the light was green. I felt a bit scared. I kept walking.

- **Year 6 – B**

- **Hesitantly**, I stepped into the forest and **immediately** noticed how dark it was. The trees were tall, **dark** and covered in thick leaves that glowed green in the strange, dusky light. The air felt damp and cool around me. From the trees, I could hear quiet rustling sounds, but I couldn't see what was making them. I walked forward slowly, trying to stay calm, even though the forest felt unusual and a bit scary.

- **Year 6 – C**

- As I stepped beneath the arch of twisted branches, the forest swallowed the daylight behind me. A strange green glow shimmered through the leaves, making the shadows ripple like moving water. The air was heavy with the smell of earth and moss, and every sound seemed muffled, as if the forest were holding its breath. **Carefully** I **moved**, each **probing** footstep sinking into soft, silent ground, while something unseen rustled in the undergrowth. **Would could it be? What creature might be watching?** Although my heart beat faster, curiosity pulled me deeper into the weird, emerald-lit world.



Comparison Guide Year 5&6

Feature	Working Towards ○	Expected ✓	Greater Depth ★
Vocabulary	Uses everyday words; some repetition (e.g., nice, dark, big).	Uses clear descriptive vocabulary (e.g., damp, glowing, tall).	Uses ambitious, precise and well-chosen vocabulary (e.g., emerald-lit, glimmering, twisted canopy).
Sentence Structure	Mostly simple sentences. May sound repetitive.	Simple and compound sentences used correctly.	Controlled mix of simple, compound and complex sentences to create flow and effect.
Detail	Gives basic information; limited detail.	Adds detail about what can be seen and heard.	Creates vivid atmosphere by describing senses, mood, and subtle environmental clues.
Punctuation	Capital letters and full stops sometimes inaccurate or inconsistent.	Mostly accurate punctuation; commas used in lists and phrases.	Confident punctuation used deliberately (commas, dashes, semi-colons) to guide the reader's pace.
Imagery	Simple adjectives only.	Some descriptive devices (expanded noun phrases, similes).	Effective, thoughtful figurative language (personification, metaphor, extended imagery).
Tone / Atmosphere	May not show a clear mood.	Shows the forest is mysterious or strange.	Builds a strong, sustained mood (tension, curiosity, wonder).
Reader Impact	Helps the reader understand the setting simply.	Helps the reader picture the scene clearly.	Immerses the reader so they can feel the environment and emotion.

Reading in KS2

There is a great emphasis on reading as much as possible :

“A reader lives a thousand lives... The man who never reads lives only one.”

This is so, so true: children who read lots are able to access so much more experiences, ideas, vocabulary and are far more able to draw from a greater range of arguments to argue an idea. This informs our *Critical Thinking* .

“Reading for pleasure isn’t just a hobby. It’s linked to a range of benefits including stronger writing skills, improved wellbeing and confidence, and even higher future earnings, with new data showing those proficient in reading and writing in primary school [earn £65,000 more over their lifetime.](#) “ *

* [Parents urged to read more to boost children’s life chances - GOV.UK](#)



Reading and Comprehension in KS2

The upper KS2 reading curriculum focuses on **comprehension, critical analysis, and performance**, moving beyond basic word reading. Key skills include-

- discussing and comparing themes and characters across texts,
- making inferences and predictions,
- summarizing main ideas,
- performing poems and plays aloud with appropriate intonation (prosody)

Students are expected to read a wide range of genres and formats and be able to justify their opinions on texts *with evidence*.



The 3 mark question

- The three-mark question will pop up twice in the SATs.
- It builds on the VIPERS skills that we develop over our Guided Reading workshops in class.
- The aim is to be able to accurately answer an inference question , providing two separate ‘acceptable points’ often called impressions , and prove them by linking to textual evidence.



My Example:

- How does the author suggest what mood Granny is in?
- I think the author suggest Granny is sad, because they describe her shoulders as being *'slumped'*.
- I think Granny is also tired out, because she *'sits down with a sigh'*.



Your turn:

- Look at 'Dodge and the Tornado' and answer to three mark question:

Using evidence from the text, give two examples of how the author builds a sense of danger surrounding the impending storm. [3 marks]

Possible answers

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

- The author builds a sense of danger by using powerful verbs, such as 'thundering' and 'tearing'. The author also shows that Dodge is already scared of the storm. [AP1 + evidence and AP3]
- The author makes the storm sound dangerous because they imply that it has turned everyday items into weapons. They do this by saying that the roof tiles land 'like missiles'. Dodge is already being hurt by the storm because it's 'whipping at his fur'. [AP2 + evidence and AP4 + evidence]

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

- The author makes the storm sound dangerous because they use powerful verbs to describe what it is doing, such as 'tearing up everything in its path'. [AP1 + evidence]
- The author uses powerful verbs to describe the storm's actions and they imply that Dodge is already being hurt by the storm. [AP1 + AP4]

Award 1 mark for one acceptable point, e.g.

- The author implies that Dodge is already scared of the storm. [AP3]
- The author uses powerful verbs to describe the storm. [AP1]



Key takeaways:

As with Fox Class, a little often does go a really long way:

-by talking about the world around us, we are analysing themes and exploring bias all the time.

Who is that advert for? Why is it on at this time, between these programmes? Who is this aimed at? Who is this channel for?

-Read with them, or to them, still. The power of an adult reading is still magic and brings up the chance to talk about ideas.

- *Read anything*- not everyone reads novels. Comics are a great way to get that 'win': they finished it, and will more likely reread it again. Blogs, biographies of sportspeople, factbooks about castles, viking or germs!



Thank you for your time