Week 1 Comprehension  The Jungle Book (Classic fiction) by Rudyard Kipling

The Jungle Book, Kipling's collection of stories about Mowgli, is often considered a children's classic. It is one of Kipling's best-known works and was influenced by his experiences of living in India, the country of his birth. Kipling moved to England at the age of 5 but later returned to India to work as a journalist.

Questions to ask before reading the text with your reading group:
1) Are you familiar with the story and what do you know about it?
2) What do you want to find out about the story?
3) Look at the glossary. What are the key words and what do they mean?

As pupils read the text, focus their attention on how the key words are used in the extract. After reading the text, ask the pupils the first question from their group's section and discuss. They will then record this into their books and work independently, while you go around to the other pupils.

Section 1:
1a) Look at the summary. Who is the author of the story?
1b) Look at the summary. What is this extract about?
1c) Look at the events below. Write them in order of when it appears in the text:
   Mowgli left the wolf’s cave after the fight.
   The priest came to the gate.
   Mowgli threw back his long hair and frowned at the crowd.
   Cattle and buffaloes were grazing.
1d) Find and copy the question the priest asks. Use the correct punctuation.
1e) What does pariah mean? Use the glossary.

Section 2:
2a) Why has Mowgli fled from the jungle?
2b) What made the little boys in charge of the herds run away?
2c) How do you think the little boys feel when they see Mowgli (lines 11-12) and why? Explain your answer fully.
2d) Why were there marks on Mowgli’s arms and legs?
2e) What does ‘twilight’ mean? You can use a dictionary.

Section 3:
3a) Why did Mowgli not want to stop at the lands where the villagers lived?
3b) What does the word ‘barricade’ (line 15) mean? You can use a dictionary.
3c) Why do you think Mowgli points to his open mouth instead of asking directly for food?
3d) Why are the yellow pariah dogs a common sight in villages?
3e) Find and copy the phrase that tells the reader the man’s reaction after seeing Mowgli.
3f) How is the priest described in the extract?
3g) Explain how the villagers’ reaction to Mowgli changes from line 18 to the end of the extract.
3h) Did this extract make you want to read the rest of the book? Explain your answer with evidence from the text.
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**Extension activities:**
- Ask pupils to write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the villagers recounting Mowgli’s arrival.
- As a class, discuss what evidence Kipling gives that the villagers are afraid of the jungle and why they might be so afraid. Get pupils to write a short story explaining why the villagers feel this way.

**Answers**

**Section 1:**
1a) Rudyard Kipling
1b) It is about when Mowgli flees from the jungle and arrives at a village,
1c) Mowgli left the wolf’s cave after the fight. Cattle and buffaloes were grazing. The priest came to the gate. Mowgli threw back his long hair and frowned at the crowd.
1d) “What is there to be afraid of?”
1e) stray

**Section 2:**
2a) E.g. He was involved in a fight and made a ‘bad enemy’, so he fled from the jungle to get away from them.
2b) E.g. When they saw Mowgli coming.
2c) E.g. Scared and threatened because they call put and run away from him. Mowgli is a stranger and probably looks very different to them, so they might think he’s dangerous.
2d) E.g. Because the cubs had often nipped Mowgli when they were playing.
2e) E.g. The soft, glowing light when the sun is below the horizon.

**Section 3:**
3a) E.g. It was too near the jungle and he had one enemy there.
3b) E.g. obstacle; barrier; fence
3c) E.g. He can’t use language to speak to the man, so he uses actions that he thinks the man will understand.
3d) E.g. The stray dogs can be found in every Indian village.
3e) The man stared and ran back up the one street of the village shouting at the priest.
3f) E.g. He is described as a big, fat man dressed in white, with a red and yellow mark on his forehead.
3g) E.g. At firs the villagers are frightened and alarmed by Mowgli, but when they realise he is just a child who has been living with wolves, they become more understanding and feel sorry for him.
3h) Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes. I want to read more about Mowgli and find out if he was the boy who was taken by the tiger. I also want to know more about the fight at Council Rock.
The Jungle Book

The Jungle Book is a collection of stories by the British author Rudyard Kipling. Published in 1893-4, they tell the tale of a human boy called Mowgli who is raised by a pack of wolves in an Indian jungle. In this extract, Mowgli has fled from the jungle and arrives at a village.

When Mowgli left the wolf’s cave after the fight with the Pack at the Council Rock, he went down to the plowed lands where the villagers lived, but he would not stop there because it was too near the jungle, and he knew that he had made at least one bad enemy at the Council. So he hurried on, keeping to the rough road that ran down the valley, and followed it at a steady jog-trot for nearly twenty miles, till he came to a country that he did not know. The valley opened out into a great plain dotted over with rocks and cut up by ravines*. At one end stood a little village, and at the other the thick jungle came down in a sweep to the grazing-grounds, and stopped there as though it had been cut off with a hoe. All over the plain, cattle and buffaloes were grazing, and when the little boys in charge of the herds saw Mowgli they shouted and ran away, and the yellow pariah* dogs that hang about every Indian village barked. Mowgli walked on, for he was feeling hungry, and when he came to the village gate he saw the big thorn-bush that was drawn up before the gate at twilight, pushed to one side.

“Umph!” he said, for he had come across more than one such barricade in his night rambles after things to eat. “So men are afraid of the People of the Jungle here also.” He sat down by the gate, and when a man came out he stood up, opened his mouth, and pointed down it to show that he wanted food. The man stared, and ran back up the one street of the village shouting for the priest, who was a big, fat man dressed in white, with a red and yellow mark on his forehead. The priest came to the gate, and with him at least a hundred people, who stared and talked and shouted and pointed at Mowgli.

“They have no manners, these Men Folk,” said Mowgli to himself. “Only the gray ape would behave as they do.” So he threw back his long hair and frowned at the crowd.

“What is there to be afraid of?” said the priest. “Look at the marks on his arms and legs. They are the bites of wolves. He is but a wolf-child run away from the jungle.”

Of course, in playing together, the cubs had often nipped Mowgli harder than they intended, and there were white scars all over his arms and legs. But he would have been the last person in the world to call these bites; for he knew what real biting meant.

“Arrre! Arrre!” said two or three women together. “To be bitten by wolves, poor child! He is a handsome boy. He has eyes like red fire. By my honor, Messua, he is not unlike thy boy that was taken by the tiger.”

An extract from The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling.

| Glossary            | Ravine — a steep and narrow valley | Pariah — stray |
Alistair and Jonathan Browntree are two of Britain’s most successful triathletes, having achieved a number of Olympic, World, European and Commonwealth titles between them. Their autobiography is about their journey from growing up in Yorkshire, to becoming professional triathletes and competing at the 2012 London Olympics, where they won gold and bronze respectively. This book describes their relationship as brothers, as well as their development as sportsmen.

Questions to ask before reading the text with your reading group:
1) What does the triathlon involve?
2) What do you know about the Olympics?
3) Look at the glossary. What are the key words and what do they mean?

As pupils read the text, encourage them to focus on the features of autobiographies.

After reading the text, ask the pupils the first question from their group’s section and discuss. They will then record this into their books and work independently, while you go around to the other pupils.

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Section 1:
1a) In the summary at the top of the page, what does it say the extract is about?
1b) Who is the first speaker in the autobiography?
1c) What is the name of the punctuation mark between forty and five in line 2?
1d) Why do you think the brothers chose to write an autobiography?
1e) What is the Serpentine? Use the glossary.

Section 2:
2a) Why do you think Alistair was surprised to have slept well?
2b) Which phrase in lines 1-6 shows that the Olympic final was very important to Alistair?
2c) What noise is Jonathan (Jonny) referring to in line 24?
2d) Why do you think Jonny asks himself questions after the bang?
2e) What is the name of the autobiography the extract is taken from?

Section 3:
3a) How did Alistair feel before the Olympic final?
3b) How does this compare to the way Alistair usually feels before a race?
3c) Why does Jonny use an exclamation mark in line 25?
3d) Why do you think Jonny stopped being nervous (line 27)?
3e) Name one similarity and difference between Alistair and Jonny’s account in the extract.
3f) Why do you think the brothers chose to write an autobiography?
3g) Write down one feature of this text which shows that it is an autobiography.
3h) How do you think you would feel if you were about to represent your country in your favourite sport? Explain your answer fully.
**Extension activities:**

- As a class, explore the autobiographies. How is this autobiography different from the standard autobiography? Discuss how the book alternates between the brothers' voices and the effect this has.
- Discuss why the Brownlee brothers are inspirational figures. Ask pupils to make a poster about someone who inspires them. They should include a picture of their inspirational figure and a short passage about who the figure is and why they find them inspiring.

**Answers**

**Section 1:**
1b) Alistair Brownlee
1c) hyphen
1d) E.g. To share their experiences at the Olympics.
1e) a lake in Hyde Park

**Section 2:**
2a) E.g. Because he usually sleeps badly before an important race and two nights earlier he had been unable to sleep, so he though that his nerves would keep him awake.
2b) “the biggest two hours of your life”
2c) E.g. The crowd cheering.
2d) E.g. Because he is unsure what to expect next.
2e) Swim, Bike, Run: Our Triathlon Story

**Section 3:**
3a) E.g. He felt excited.
3b) E.g. This is different to how he usually feels before a race - usually he feels nervous.
3c) E.g. To emphasise how loud and sudden the noise of the crowd is.
3d) E.g. Because he saw how many people were there to support them and this helped him to relax.
3e) E.g. Similarity - both are about the morning of the Olympics. Difference - Alistair's is about when he wakes up and Johnny's is about just before the race.
3f) E.g. To share their experiences at the Olympics.
3g) E.g. It is written in the first person. OR E.g. It describes the author's feelings about important events in their lives.
3h) Any appropriate answer. E.g. I think I would feel excited to be representing my country. I would also feel nervous because I would want to do well in the competition.
Alistair and Jonathan (Jonny) Brownlee are brothers who were born in Yorkshire. They compete in triathlons — races that involve swimming, cycling and running. This extract from the Brownlee’s autobiography is about the morning of the 2012 London Olympics triathlon final.

**ALISTAIR BROWNLEE**

Six forty-five a.m., 7 August 2012. I opened my eyes and looked around.

I saw the ceiling of my hotel room. I saw piles of kit strewn around the floor. I sat up in bed and asked myself how I felt.

How do you sleep the night before a home Olympic final, the biggest two hours of your life? If you’re me, the answer – rather unusually – was extremely well.

Two nights earlier I just couldn’t get down. I had turned the light off, lain there for half an hour, turned it back on again to read, and then repeated the whole cycle. But with the hooter in London’s Hyde Park just hours away, I had no such problems, nodding off around ten p.m. and then waking up nine hours later, completely naturally. I had only one thought: where did the time go?

Instantly I felt the excitement. Never before have I felt like that on the morning of a race; usually there are nerves. You are shaky, you struggle to eat breakfast. This morning there was none of that. It was pure excitement.

**JONNY BROWNLEE**

With an hour and a half before the start we strolled across into Hyde Park and into the athletes’ entrance, completely at ease, completely unaware of the madness that was going on everywhere else.

[...]

As we set up our helmets and running shoes in the transition area* — which we would later come sprinting into after the swim and then the cycle — we became aware of the thousands crammed in along the banks of the Serpentine*. Then, coming round a corner and out from behind a screen as we headed out on our bikes for a brief warm-up, the noise hit us.

Bang! It was incredible, almost disconcerting*. What should we do — wave? Smile? Try to acknowledge it all?

At a stroke any final nerves went. I looked at the endless smiling faces, felt the cheers hammering my ears and thought: this is the coolest thing I’ve ever experienced.

An extract from Swim, Bike, Run: Our Triathlon Story by Alistair and Jonathan Brownlee.

**Glossary**

*transition area — where triathletes change between sports
*Serpentine — a lake in Hyde Park
*disconcerting — unsettling