**Week 1 Comprehension** The Story of Nu Wa (Fiction- myth) by Holly Robinson

The Story of Nu Wa is a myth that originated in China and was first recorded many centuries ago. The myth tells the story of how a goddess called Nu Wa saved the world from destruction after two warring gods split the sky and cracked open the Earth.

Questions to ask before reading the text with your reading group:

1) Different countries and cultures around the world have their own myths and legends. What does this mean?
2) What do you want to find out about the story?
3) Look at the glossary. What is the key word and what does it mean?

As pupils read the text, focus their attention on what they think the features of myths are. 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) Look at the summary. What type of story is this?
1b) Look at the summary. Why are there so many versions of the story?
1c) Look at the events below. Write them in order of when it appears in the text:
   - Nu Wa knew she needed to mend the sky.
   - Nu Wa was distraught at the sight of the devastation and suffering.
   - The fight between the two gods brought misery to humankind.
   - The gods each thought that were more powerful than the other.
1d) What was the name of the two gods who were fighting?
1e) What does the word ‘summit’ mean? Use the glossary to help you.

**Section 2:**

2a) How does the text suggest that gods are different to what people think?
2b) What does Gong Gong do to show his power?
2c) What does Nu Wa believe gods and goddesses should do?
2d) Which word is used instead of ‘said’ in line 7? Why do you think the author chose this word?
2e) What does the word ‘arrogant’ mean? You can use a dictionary to help.

**Section 3:**

3a) In your own words, explain why Mount Buzhou is important?
3b) Which of the following words is closest in meaning to ‘flaws’ (line 1)? You can use a dictionary to help.
   - Choose one:
   1) problems  2) weaknesses  3) strengths  4) feelings
3c) Give two features of the text that suggest it is a myth.
3d) Find and copy a phrase that tells the reader that Gong Gong knows that he isn’t going to win the battle.
3e) What does the word ‘humankind’ mean? You can use a dictionary to help.
3f) What was the name of the two gods who were fighting?
3g) Do you think that Nu Wu is a powerful character? Explain your answer fully.
3h) Do Gong Gong and Zhu Rong behave like you would expect gods to act? Explain your answer fully.
The Story of Nu Wa is a Chinese myth that is hundreds of years old. It tells the story of a goddess called Nu Wa who saved the Earth from destruction. Because the myth is so old, there are many different versions of it. One of the most popular versions is described below.

Contrary to popular belief, not all gods are perfect — they have flaws just like you and me. Some gods are vengeful, some are cruel, some are vain and some are unbearably arrogant. But no gods were more arrogant than two gods who lived many, many moons ago: Gong Gong, the God of Water, and Zhu Rong, the God of Fire. These two quarrelsome gods each thought they were more powerful than the other.

“I am superior!” crowed Gong Gong. “Look how much devastation I can cause by flooding the plains!” And with a nod of his head the river below him burst its banks and washed into the surrounding farmland.

“Water is no match for fire!” spat Zhu Rong, as he sent a jet of flame to Earth and reduced a forest to cinders.

The fight between the two gods raged on and on, and they brought untold misery to humankind. Eventually, Gong Gong realised that he was losing the battle. Angered, he punched Mount Buzhou, an enormous mountain whose summit held up the sky. As he landed his blow, the summit collapsed, the sky caved in and the Earth cracked open. This caused the slumbering dragons that lived beneath the surface of the Earth to awaken and crawl out of the cracks. They flew out of the ground and hungrily went in search of food, breathing jets of fire as they swooped across the shattered sky.

A goddess called Nu Wa, who was as caring as the other gods were selfish, was distraught at the sight of the devastation and suffering. She believed that gods and goddesses should use their powers for good and decided to save humankind.

Firstly, she knew she needed to mend the sky. She melted together five coloured stones and used the mixture to repair the cracks. Next, she killed a giant turtle and used its legs as pillars to support the fallen sky. Finally, she turned her attention to the dragons which were terrorising the land below. Using her bare hands, she plucked one dragon from the sky as if it were nothing but a feather and crushed it between finger and thumb, causing all the other dragons to flee in panic.

And this is how Nu Wa saved humankind from the selfishness of gods.

**Glossary**

summit — the very top of a mountain

Written by Holly Robinson.
Week 2 Comprehension  *Escape from Germany (Fiction)* by Penny McKinlay

*Escape from Germany* by Penny McKinlay is part of the *Sparks* series, a range of books that introduce children to historical events and the experiences of people who lived through them. Explain to the class that this extract takes place during Kristallnacht or the 'Night of Broken Glass', a Nazi attack on Jews that took place on the night of 9-10 November 1938. Jews throughout Germany were attacked and their schools, homes, businesses and synagogues were vandalised or burnt.

Questions to ask before reading the text with your reading group:
1) What do you think the story is about?
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, encourage them to think about the Jewish family in the story. 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) In the summary at the top of the page, what does it say the novel is about?
1b) What is the date of when the events in the story happened?
1c) Why does Margot wake up at the start of the extract?
1d) How do we know that Margot is shocked at what she sees out of her window and why? Explain your answer fully using evidence from the text.
1e) What does Herr and Frau mean? Use the glossary.

### Section 2:

2a) Why are some of the men laughing and throwing stones at the people?
2b) Find and copy the first example of speech in the story, making sure the punctuation is correct.
2c) Why is there 'red light' coming through Margot’s window (line 4)?
2d) What do you think might happen next in the story? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.
2e) What does 'swastikas' mean? Use the glossary.

### Section 3:

3a) In your own words, explain why people are 'running' (line 10) outside Margot’s window.
3b) Why do you think Peter chooses to support Hitler?
3c) The author compares the flames to 'tigers on a leash' (line 8). Why do you think she chose this comparison?
3d) What is different about line 2 compared with the rest of the extract?
3e) Why do you think the author chose to start her book like this?
3f) How do we know that Margot is shocked at what she sees out of her window and why? Explain your answer fully using evidence from the text.
3g) How do you think Margot feels when she sees Peter taking part in the violence? Explain your answer.
3h) Explain what this extract tells you about Margot’s personality. Use evidence from the text.
Berlin, 9th November 1938

CRASH!

The sound of shattering glass burst into Margot’s dream. She sat up in bed. The curtains were rippling with red light from the street outside. She was scared, but she had to see what was happening.

She tiptoed to the window and looked out. She gasped in horror. Across the road Herr Lowenstein’s shop was on fire. Flames roared from the windows, leaping into the darkness and falling back, like tigers on a leash. Further down the street Heimpi’s sweet shop was ablaze.

Down below people were running, black against the red firelight. Herr and Frau* Lowenstein were out in their night-clothes, desperately throwing buckets of water at the flames. But worst of all a crowd of men stood watching and laughing, throwing stones at them as people fought to save their homes. The men wore armbands with bent crosses on them, swastikas*, and Margot knew they were Nazis, supporters of Adolf Hitler, the German leader.

“You bullies!” Margot pounded her fists on the glass. Someone looked up. She realised with a shock that it was Peter, the boy from the next street who only last summer had let her have a ride on his new bike. As she looked down at him in horror, he bent down to pick up a stone. She screamed as he hurled it straight at her.

“Margot! Get away from the window, now!”

Papa pulled her away from the window just as the stone smashed through the glass, sending splinters all over the room. He held her close in his arms.

“Oh, Margot, you must not take such risks. They will hurt you!”

Margot was still furious, even though she was shaking with fear.

“But we must stand up to them, Papa! Look what they are doing!”

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Glossary

Herr and Frau — Mr and Mrs
swastikas — symbols of the Nazi Party

An extract from Escape From Germany by Penny McKinlay.