

PROBEBLUETM

reading comprehension assessment

PROBE2 Revised Edition

MANUAL

A multiple-use reading probe designed to gain insight into a reader's comprehension skills and reading behaviours with the purpose of determining teaching strategies

CREATED, DESIGNED & WRITTEN BY
Chris Parkin, Catherine Parkin & Barnaby Parkin



2020

COMPANION ASSESSMENT TO PROBE**GREY**

PROBE **BLUE** Reading Comprehension Assessment™ **Manual**

Chris Parkin, Catherine Parkin & Barnaby Parkin

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revised edition of PROBE **2**
COMPANION TO PROBE **GREY**

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INTRODUCTION

‘Students should be encouraged to read carefully, to use the evidence, and draw legitimate conclusions. Studying a writer’s work in this way makes demands on your intelligence and your concentration, whereas guessing the point he [sic] is making, without regard to logic or to the clues he has dropped, is as easy as it is unrewarding.’

Young & Gardner, *Intelligent Reading*, Longmans Green & Co., London, 1964

There is no point in reading if you don’t understand what you are reading about. Knowing how to read every word in a text does not necessarily mean the reader understands them all.

While reading often and widely is a major contributor to success, for many young people the ability to comprehend at a high level doesn’t just happen naturally – it needs to be taught. And taught not once, not twice, but regularly throughout their schooling.

This involves teaching the skills of close and intelligent reading. These skills must not be overlooked. They must not be dismissed as unimportant, or just too hard to achieve.

To ensure students get the guidance and practice they need, teachers of reading must continue to develop their understanding of the reading process and the skills successful readers require.

Teachers must use close and intelligent observations of their students to help determine existing skills and the achievements their students make.

A CONTROLLED IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

PROBE Reading Comprehension Assessment (PROBE) is an assessment resource that can help make these observations. While PROBE assists teachers to determine a student’s reading level, the focus of attention should not simply be on a numerical outcome. It is more important to utilise the strengths of this assessment to:

- get a greater understanding as to how students engage with the texts.
- get an insight into whether the mental images they are forming match the intent of the author.
- see if they can reorganise scattered information, pick up complex and simple inferences, work out unknown vocabulary in context and form an opinion directly related to the text.

In effect, PROBE is a controlled in-depth interview that will, if the information gathered is well considered, greatly help teachers to determine specific teaching strategies for their students.

PROBE 2 REVISED

PROBE **2** was first published in April 2011. PROBE **BLUE** is the 2020 revised edition of PROBE **2**. It has been revised, upgraded, and rebranded to align with its companion assessment PROBE **GREY**.

While it has the same stories and questions as PROBE **2**, the Guide and the Answer sections have been extensively revised, in particular the taxonomy and the notes that accompany each answer. These revisions strengthen the assessment and help make analysis more precise.

The student texts have been reformatted to make it easier for students to search for answers.

PARALLEL ASSESSMENTS

PROBE **GREY** (with 40 new stories and questions) is parallel to its companion PROBE **BLUE**. They have the same design and same method of levelling. While they are each stand-alone resources, having both will provide more choice.

NOTE: The Online PROBE Course is applicable to both comprehension assessment resources.

ABOUT THE CREATORS

PROBE **BLUE** has been created, designed and written by Chris Parkin, Catherine Parkin & Barnaby Parkin.

Chris and Catherine both have had extensive and varied teaching experiences – working with primary (elementary), secondary and adult students and teachers in New Zealand and Australia for more than four decades. Their experience in reading assessment and analysis led them to recognise that a high level of reading accuracy did not necessarily correlate with a corresponding depth of understanding.

Barnaby’s breadth of knowledge, keen analytical skills and eye for detail has been invaluable in the refinement of this revised work.

ABOUT THE TEXTS

PURPOSE-WRITTEN

Each of the forty texts has been purpose-written. They appear in no other publication. The texts have been controlled to suit the level of difficulty in both content and concept. They have been meticulously worked to accommodate a full range of comprehension questions. This avoids the problems posed by material which has not been specifically written for an assessment or has been taken out of context.

They have been written as complete units, with no reliance on previous or later information.

The texts have been written and organised with a high interest level and include both fiction and non-fiction at each reading age. This reflects the view that the two types of writing are distinct in their internal organisation, use of vocabulary and the demands each makes on the reader.

Omitting one or the other could disadvantage readers or misrepresent real ability.

Some students are more comfortable, for example, with the objectivity and sequential presentation of factual information contained in non-fiction texts. Others cope more readily with the subjectivity, varied use of vocabulary and less predictable structure of fiction.

CONTENT

Poetry, technical and instructional writing have been intentionally omitted as research suggests that the specialised vocabulary makes the noun frequency method unreliable in these genres.

Fictional texts are devoid of fantasy. The themes, settings and characters of the stories have been carefully considered to ensure they appear plausible to most readers.

In selecting topics for non-fiction texts every effort has been made to ensure factual accuracy. Numerous sources have been consulted and facts have been cross-referenced. Topics involving debatable or controversial information have been avoided.

The overlapping of consecutive texts allows for a wider choice of material in a small range.

LANGUAGE FEATURES

To reduce bias and enable the assessor to more accurately evaluate the reader's ability to draw on the information contained in the texts, they are, as much as possible:

1. written in Standard International English
2. culturally and geographically non-specific.

As this is an assessment of a reader's ability to decode and comprehend text, there are:

1. no pictures
2. limited title clues.

READING LEVELS

The reading age of the texts has been largely determined using the Elley Noun Frequency Method (Elley, W.B. and Croft, A.C., – NZCER, revised edition 1989), with some cross-checking using the Fry Readability Formula (Modified) for higher level texts.

For texts with fewer than 25 nouns, in which the Noun Frequency Method is acknowledged to be unreliable, Holdaway's Sight Words and Progression of Word Recognition Skills (Holdaway, D., Ashton Scholastic, 1972), and Bedrock Sight Words have been used.

In addition to these readability tools, the creators have used their collective experience to determine the linguistic and conceptual complexity of each text.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Catherine Parkin wrote thirty eight of the forty original stories in PROBE 2/BLUE. Hard Tack was contributed by Barnaby Parkin (Oxford, UK) and The Big Race by Samuel Parkin (London, UK).

The need for this resource to have a variety of stories, written in such a way that they are compact, cover twenty reading levels, meet the needs of six question types and could be used with students both young and old from around the world is a credit to Catherine's skill as a precision writer.

Triune Initiatives thanks all the volunteers, young and old, who obligingly took part in trialling the texts and the questions, thereby helping to fine-tune this work.

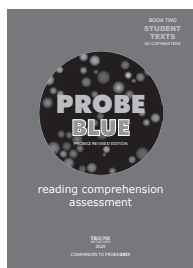
THE PROBE KIT COMPONENTS



BOOK ONE: MANUAL

Contents:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Part 1: Guide | purpose, procedure, options and taxonomy |
| Part 2: Determiner | pre-test – purpose and procedure |
| Part 3: Answers | includes notes and key words |
| Part 4: Copymasters | Recording Sheets |



BOOK TWO: STUDENT TEXTS

Contents:

- PROBE **BLUE** Determiner word lists
- 40 stories and questions (fiction & non-fiction)
- Students read stories from this book only
- Replacements are available

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- Copies of copies are **NOT** permissible.

NO CHANGES PERMITTED

THIS WORK MUST NOT: 1. be reformatted. 2. have texts or questions altered. 3. have illustrations added.

PURCHASING KITS & COMPONENTS

PROBE BLUE Reading Comprehension Assessment – full kit

Two book kit: 1. Manual (includes copymasters) 2. Student Texts

PROBE BLUE Reading Comprehension Assessment – Supplementary kit

Two book kit: 1. Guide & Answers (no copymasters) 2. Student Texts

- Same stories and questions as in the full kit.
- Supplementary kits are only sold to schools for use on the one site (campus).
- Each campus must have at least one full kit to access copymasters.
- Specialists, private educators & teachers who work in more than one school require a full kit.

Additional Student Texts are not available.

Replacement components can be purchased. Proof of original purchase may be requested.

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PART ONE GUIDE

Polonius: What do you read, my lord?
Hamlet: Words, words, words.
Polonius: What is the matter, my lord?

W. Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*



Do not copy Part 1

It is an infringement of international copyright law.

To ensure the effectiveness of this assessment, assessors should be familiar with the texts being used and the structure and methodology of the procedure.

THE PURPOSE OF PROBE

PROBE is designed to help identify instructional need and monitor individual progress. It can be used as part of formal reporting.

WHO CAN ADMINISTER PROBE

- General classroom teachers to education specialists.

HOW PROBE SHOULD BE ADMINISTERED

- The assessment is designed to be used with individual students only.

WHO CAN BE ASSESSED WITH PROBE

- 7-year-olds to adults – wherever English is being read.
- Those below 7 years who decode well.
- Students learning to read English as a second language.

FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH THIS ASSESSMENT

- Read the Guide.
- Read the stories.
- Read the questions.
- Read the answers.
- Read the notes and keywords.

A comprehensive **online PROBE course** is available.

QUICK GUIDE TO USING THIS ASSESSMENT

- Have the Manual and Student Texts book at hand (not copies).
- From Part 4: Copymasters, print copies of all the sets you are likely to use.
- Organise the student, advising them how the assessment will proceed.
- Establish the starting point.
- Decide which Option is going to be used.
- Select the appropriate text(s) to be used.
- Have the relevant Recording Sheet ready.
- Have the Manual open at the corresponding answer page.
- Begin the assessment. More than one text will be required.

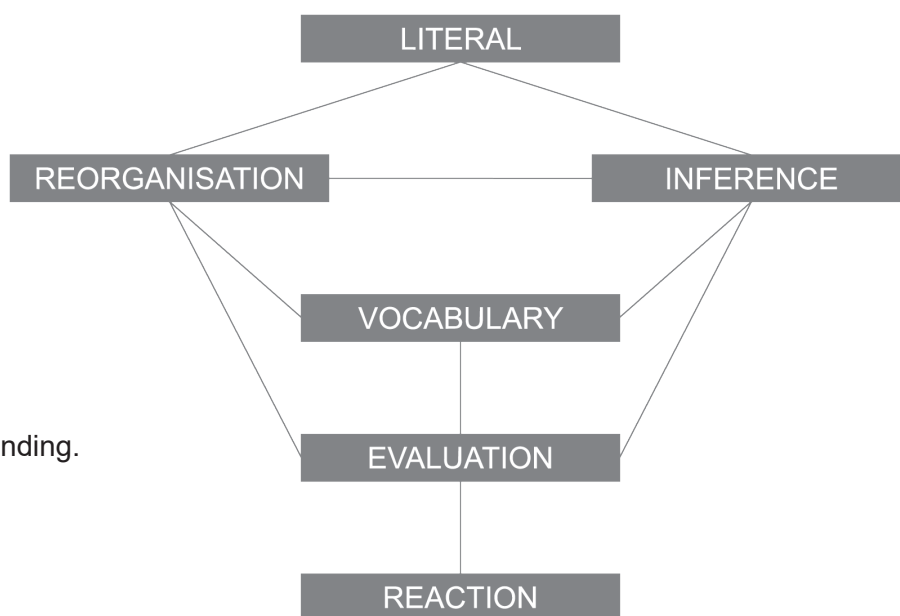
SPECIFIC TO PROBE

There is considerably more to reading than surface meaning. For students to become more insightful and analytical in their reading, they need to be able to 'read between and beyond the lines'.

As students progress through the school system, increasingly the expectation is that they can reorganise information, comprehend the underlying inferences, infer the meaning of unfamiliar or unknown words from context, evaluate the text by extending beyond what is given, and react to what has been read.

The purpose of creating the PROBE question taxonomy is to demonstrate the relationship between the questions, and their progressive nature.

This taxonomy has not been developed from or matched to any other educational taxonomies, e.g. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, Bloom, B. S., et al.



Triune has identified and defined six types of questions. These help teachers measure each student's depth of understanding.

LITERAL (LI)

DEFINITION: Finding information that is given directly in the text.

FEATURES: Answers are found in a single sentence.

IMPORTANCE: Fundamental to all other question types.

NUMBER OF QUESTIONS: One per text in SETS 1–20.

REORGANISATION (RO)

DEFINITION: Reconstructing two or more literal pieces of information contained in the text.

FEATURES: Pieces can be within two adjacent sentences or scattered throughout the text. Reorganisation could be regarded as **complex literal**.

The knowledge and skills of this type:

- **generally** require those of the literal question and, at times, simple inference and/or vocabulary.
- **specifically** require those for joining or grouping relevant information.

IMPORTANCE: Required for both fiction and non-fiction reading.

It is necessary for reading timetables, menus, guides and manuals, and doing internet searches. It is a vital sub-skill of inference, vocabulary, evaluation & reaction.

NUMBER OF QUESTIONS: One per text in SETS 1–4. Two per text in SETS 5–20.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED

- OTHER QUESTION TYPES: Literal.
- THE PLURAL FORM: Indicates that the answer is to be either a list or a total.
- CONNECTORS: Transitional words/phrases that join information within two or more sentences.
- USE OF CONVENTIONS: e.g. the asterisk, the dash, italics and quotation marks.
- REFERENTS: Words that refer to (replace) parent words or phrases across two or more sentences.

Reorganisation types:

1: **Joined** – merging of interrelated elements found within two or more sentences.

Two types: Joined, Joined with referent.

2: **Grouped** – merging, comparing, listing or counting (totalling) key elements.

Four types: Grouped, Grouped with referent, Grouped with elimination, Grouped with calculation.

MODEL TEXT

Alex was struggling to write a thank-you card to send to his Aunt May.
 This was because he had broken his arm last week.
 He said to his mother that he would phone his aunt.
 She said a card would be better, as May was hard of hearing.

His aunt knew he was keen to go fishing and had sent him a high-quality rod and reel for his birthday.
 He wanted to thank her for this gift, as well as the tackle box and the book *Fishing For Beginners*,
 that his friend had told him was the best.

MODEL QUESTION

QUESTION:

What gifts did his aunt send to Alex?

ANSWER:

1. (fishing) rod and reel 2. tackle box 3. the book *Fishing For Beginners*

NOTE:

LIST OF 3 GIFTS – ALL REQUIRED.

IF NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: “Can you tell me more?” NO ½ mark.

GROUPED with referent. Gathered from three sentences (1, 5, 6)

REFERENT: ‘his, him, he’ refer to Alex ♦ ‘her’ refers to ‘his aunt’ ♦ ‘this gift’ refers to the ‘rod and reel’

KEYS:

Alex / His aunt / had sent him a high-quality rod and reel / He wanted to thank her for this gift,
 as well as the tackle box and the book *Fishing For Beginners*

QUESTION FORM: The interrogative ‘What’ is asking for a thing.

MATCHED WORDS: *Alex...gifts* (question) *gift* (text)...*his aunt...send* (question) *sent** (text) *past tense

Number of matched words: 5. Location: 1st, 5th & 6th sentence.

Order: inverted. ‘his Aunt...Alex’ (question) ‘Alex...his Aunt’ (text)

PLURAL FORM: gifts (more than one) – asking for a list.

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PART THREE

ANSWERS

Includes key words and notes
to help with both marking accuracy
and the knowledge and skills
required to answer specific questions

Features	pp.38–40
Quick Reference	p.41
Sets 1–20 fiction and non-fiction answers	pp.42–81



Do not copy Part 3

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This is an assessment of close and intelligent reading.
Assessors must be familiar with Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 before using this assessment.
If the methodology is changed, the purpose of the assessment will be invalidated.
Incorrect results will be detrimental to the student.

AN IMPERATIVE

Always have the Guide open at the relevant answer page, and refer to it when testing to ensure the assessment is not compromised.

THE OUTLINES

They are designed to make the writer's intent clear and provide a general idea and some specific features of each story.

DON'T share the outlines with students.

On five occasions the outline has a note about words used in the text that are not in the word count.

e.g. NOTE: *Inuit* is not in the word count. You can pronounce this word for the students, but do not give an explanation.

THE ANSWERS

Answers must relate to the question and to the text.

It is not an assessment of prior knowledge or creative thinking.

Each answer a student gives must be compared to the assessment answer.

Discernment must be used to determine whether the student's answer is correct.

While an exact match does not have to be given, the student's intent must match the PROBE answer. The response cannot be one that is considered 'close enough' or 'almost right'.

PROBE is not designed for half marks. Don't give them.

Answers are presented in three ways.

1. One answer.

e.g. **At the top of a hill**

2. One answer expressed in more than one way.

e.g. **Up at the sky • In the sky**

A bullet point (•) separates each variation.

3. Two or more answers.

e.g. **1. Seeing the sky 2. Seeing all the way down the hill**

Each answer is numbered.

OUTLINE

Provides a general idea and specific features of each story.
DON'T discuss with students.

QUESTION TYPE

Indicates the strategies students are expected to use.
See taxonomy in the Guide.

NOTES

Help to decide if an answer is acceptable, and when a supplementary question should be used.

Provides information on how answers are determined.

e.g. referents, clues, links

KEYS

Short for key words, phrases and sentences within the text, relevant to the answer.

SYMBOLS

(•) between different words for the same answer.

(♦) separating elements in the notes (clues, etc.).

CLOSED QUESTIONS

always require a reason.
Most closed questions are answered YES & NO.

NO. The grass was scratchy

NUMERALS

indicate there is more than one answer to the question.
Always check notes.

1. Grew longer 2. Became dry

SET NUMBER**STORY TYPE****STORY TITLE****ANSWERS****Set 7 FICTION****SUMMER HIDEOUT**

All answers must relate to the text

OUTLINE: A timeless story of children enjoying a summer of hot, hazy days. They have each other and their imaginations. The reader needs to form a strong mental image of the scene and the feel of the story to fully understand it. An important feature is the proximity of their 'hideout' to the house.

1. LI **Hadn't told anyone • no-one • nobody**

NOTE: ONLY ACCEPTABLE ANSWER

KEYS: They hadn't told anyone that their hideout was there.

2. RO **It: 1. Grew longer 2. Became dry 3. Became brown**

NOTE: LIST OF 3 WAYS – ALL REQUIRED. If not enough, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark. GROUPED with referent. Gathered from three sentences (1, 2, 3)

REFERENT: 'It' refers to 'the uncut grass'

KEYS: uncut grass / It grew longer as / summer went on. It became dry and brown.

3. RO **Lying back and talking about things**

NOTE: UNACCEPTABLE (not enough): "Lying back." ♦ "Talking about things."

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

JOINED with referent. Gathered from four sentences (4, 9, 10, 11)

REFERENT: 'They' refers to 'the three friends'

KEYS: the three friends / in this hidden world. They / lie back and talk about things. Often they pretended to be / sailing across the sea.

4. IN **Andy's • Andy's mother's. Because Andy's mother was calling from the back door**

NOTE: CLUE: 'calling from the back door' – implies that the backyard is theirs.

KEYS: backyard / Andy's mother calling from the back door

5. IN **Every day. Every day the three friends played together**

NOTE: LINK: 'How often' (in the question) TO 'Every day' (in the text). Both refer to frequency.

KEYS: Every day the three friends played there

6. VO **A secret place • a place where no-one could see them • a place no-one else knew about**

NOTE: CLUES: 'hideout' ♦ 'hidden from view' ♦ 'hadn't told anyone'

KEYS: the three friends played there, / hidden from view. They hadn't told anyone / their hideout / in this hidden world.

7. EV **YES. She would call out to them when she had food for them**

NOTE: IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

CLUE: 'Andy's mother calling from the back door' – implies that she knew they were in the backyard

KEYS: hidden from view. They hadn't told anyone / their hideout was there. /

They were never too far away to hear Andy's mother calling from the back door when / food ready for them.

8. RA **YES. It was a secret place where they could do what they wanted**

NO. 1. The grass was scratchy 2. There were spiders and caterpillars there

NOTE: ONE REASON REQUIRED. The reason must relate to the text. You can say: "Show me where it says that." IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: YES. uncut grass at / end of / backyard was like another world / the three friends played there, / hidden from view.

They hadn't told anyone / That was the way they liked it. /

They were never too far away to hear Andy's mother calling / when she had food ready for them.

NO. uncut grass / It grew longer / It became dry and brown. / The grass was scratchy.

Sometimes a caterpillar crawled / across / leg or a spider ran up / arm.

QUOTATION (with notes)

When quoting words from a text or question, italics and single quotation marks are used.

e.g. 'It' refers to 'the uncut grass'

When quoting a student's response, italics and double quotation marks are used.

e.g. "Lying back."

When quoting an assessor's response, double quotation marks are used (no italics).

e.g. "Show me where it says that."

SLASH (in the keys)

A slash (/) indicates words from text have been omitted,

e.g. uncut grass / It grew longer as / summer went on

REFERENTS (in the keys)

Referents in the KEYS are underlined,

e.g. Diners would wipe their hands on unused trenchers and then throw them to their dogs

OUTLINE: A story where a positive action has a negative affect. The reader has to unravel some simple inferences:

1. The bird did not know where or why the tree had gone.
2. The man who cut the tree down and the property owner, Mrs Jones, did not know the bird had a nest in the tree.
3. The homeless bird has no choice but to settle in a tree down the road.

1. LI Mrs Jones

NOTE: ONLY ACCEPTABLE ANSWER

KEYS: Mrs Jones looked up at it and said, "Noisy thing..."

2. RO Trying to find its nest and the tree that it was in (had been in)

NOTE: UNACCEPTABLE (not enough): "*The tree had been cut down.*"

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

JOINED with referent. Gathered from two sentences (1, 2)

REFERENTS: The first '*it*' refers to the '*bird*' ♦ the second '*it*' refers to the '*nest*'

KEYS: Round and round / bird flew, / it / couldn't find / nest or / tree that it was in.

3. RO 1. Cut the tree down 2. Take the wood away 3. Remove the stump

NOTE: LIST OF 3 THINGS – ALL REQUIRED.

IF NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

GROUPED with referent. Gathered from three sentences (5, 6, 7)

REFERENT: '*He*' refers to the '*man*'

KEYS: man who / cut / tree down / He put / wood onto / truck / drove away. He / back tomorrow / remove / stump of / tree.

4. IN The tree the man had chopped down • Mrs Jones' tree

NOTE: CLUE: '*It just couldn't find its nest or the tree it was in*' – implies the tree was the one that was chopped down.

KEYS: bird / just couldn't find / nest or / tree / it was in. Mrs Jones / the man who had cut her old, rotting tree down

5. IN NO. She didn't know why it wouldn't go away

NOTE: CLUES: '*Why doesn't it just go away?*' ♦ '*I think it's looking for something*' – implies neither the man nor Mrs Jones knew about the nest.

KEYS: bird / Mrs Jones looked up at it and said, "Noisy thing. Why doesn't it just go away?"

"I think it's looking for something," said the man

6. VO The part of the tree that is left in the ground

NOTE: UNACCEPTABLE (unclear): "*Bottom of the tree.*"

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

LINK: '*cut the tree down*' TO '*come back...remove the stump of the tree*' – implies there's no stump until a tree is felled.

KEYS: cut / tree down / put / wood onto / truck / He / come back tomorrow and remove the stump of the tree.

7. EV The tree with its nest in had been cut down

NOTE: This is the main idea of the story. Most of the text must be used to answer this question.

INCORRECT: "*It (the bird) was tired.*" ♦ "*It's night time.*"

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: small, black bird / couldn't find / nest or / tree / it was in. / the man who had cut / tree down that morning. /

small, black bird settled down for / night in a tree at / end of / road.

8. RA YES. 1. It was old and rotting (its life was over)

2. It could have fallen on someone or something (was old and rotting)

NO. 1. The bird's nest was in it

NOTE: ONE REASON REQUIRED. The reason must relate to the text. You can say: "Show me where it says that."

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: YES. man / cut / old, rotting tree down

NO. bird / the nest / the tree / it was in. / the man / cut / tree down

OUTLINE: A straightforward story about cheetahs and how they are different from the other big cats.

Knowledge of the dash and semi-colon is needed to see that cheetahs, not big African cats, are the fastest land animals.

'...cheetahs – big African cats; the fastest...'

The reader must understand that the old African story of the black marks on cheetahs' faces is folklore – not fact.

1. LI 1. Big cats 2. Great cats 3. Large cats

NOTE: LIST OF 3 NAMES – ALL REQUIRED.

IF NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: Big cats, great cats, large cats – all are names for the largest members of the cat family.

2. RO 1. Lions 2. Tigers 3. Jaguars 4. Leopards 5. Cheetahs

NOTE: LIST OF 5 ANIMALS – ALL REQUIRED.

IF NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

GROUPED. Gathered from three sentences (1, 2, 3)

CONNECTORS: 'Included' ('Included are lions, tigers...') AND 'Also' ('Also in the family are cheetahs...')

KEYS: large cats / members of the cat family. Included are lions, tigers, jaguars / leopards. Also in the family are cheetahs

3. RO 1. Can't draw their claws back 2. Can't growl 3. Don't live as long 4. Black marks on their faces (like tears)

NOTE: LIST OF 4 WAYS – 2 REQUIRED.

IF NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

GROUPED with referent. Gathered from five sentences (4, 5, 6, 10, 13)

REFERENT: 'They' refers to 'cheetahs'

KEYS: Cheetahs / different to / other big cats. / can't draw their claws back into their paws, / Unlike other large cats, cheetahs cannot growl. / They don't live / long compared / other large cats. / story says / black marks on / cheetahs' faces are / tear stains

4. IN Africa

NOTE: LINK: the dash directly links 'cheetahs' TO 'big African cats'

KEYS: cheetahs – big African cats

5. IN A growl

NOTE: CLUE: Double negative: 'unlike...cannot' (negative + negative = positive) – implies all other cats can growl.

KEYS: Unlike other large cats, cheetahs cannot growl.

6. VO Join • come together

NOTE: CLUE: 'all...to make' – implies gathering more than one thing.

KEYS: shape of / head / very long legs, / large heart and lungs / rough foot pads all combine to make / cheetah / very fast runner.

7. VO Pull • retract

NOTE: CLUE: ('draw') 'back into'

KEYS: Cheetahs / They can't draw their claws back into their paws, but this is useful for extra gripping power

8. EV The marks go from the eyes to the mouth, making it look as if the cheetah has been crying (for its dead cubs)

NOTE: Africans of long ago knew that many cubs died and so made up the story about the black marks.

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

LINK: 'Many cubs don't survive' TO 'An old African story'

KEYS: Cheetahs / They have black marks on their faces / from / eyes down to / mouths. / Many cubs don't survive into adulthood. / An old African story says / black marks on / cheetahs' faces are / tears stains of the mothers, crying for their lost children.

9. EV 1. The grip of their claws (not retractable) 2. Their rough foot pads

NOTE: BOTH THINGS REQUIRED. The things must relate to the text. You can say: "Show me where it says that."

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: Cheetahs / They can't draw their claws back into their paws, but this is useful for extra gripping power when moving at high speeds. / the rough foot pads all combine to make the cheetah a very fast runner.

**10. RA YES. It helps their survival because: 1. Adults don't live long in the wild 2. Young have a low survival rate
NO. Their bodies are made for running so they need wide open spaces**

NOTE: ONE REASON REQUIRED. The reason must relate to the text. You can say: "Show me where it says that."

UNACCEPTABLE (not related): "YES. You can get to see them." or "NO. It's cruel."

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: YES. Cheetahs / They don't live / long compared to other large cats. Many cubs don't survive into adulthood. / die from starvation, disease or are killed by other animals.

NO. cheetahs / the fastest land animals in the world. / The shape of the head / long legs, / large heart / lungs / rough foot pads all combine to make the cheetah a very fast runner.

OUTLINE: A reporter interviews Lily, a local identity. She reflects on her past. Lily and the reporter share the narration, using both direct and reported speech. The story is non-linear, with Lily portrayed first as an old lady, then a young girl and finally as an old lady again.

1. LI On Hinton Avenue**NOTE:** ONLY ACCEPTABLE ANSWER**KEYS:** Lily / who owns the kennels on Hinton Avenue**2. RO In her youth • when she was young****NOTE:** JOINED with referent. Gathered from two sentences (4, 5)

REFERENTS: 'her' and 'she' refer to 'Lily'

KEYS: In her youth Lily had been ill. She / spent / time in hospital.**3. RO Outside the window (in the garden)****NOTE:** JOINED with referent. Gathered from four sentences (7, 8, 11, 14)

REFERENT: 'she' refers to 'Lily'

KEYS: armchair by a low window overlooking the garden / Ruff, / sometimes sit outside the window. / Lily / sitting in / armchair by the open window. / She looked up / saw Ruff, / staring at the tray.**4. IN YES. She was in hospital for a long time and she had to recover still more at home****NOTE:** CLUE: 'long time in hospital' ♦ 'recovery...slow'**KEYS:** Lily / spent / long time in hospital. Back home, her recovery was slow**5. IN A journalist/writer/reporter****NOTE:** LINK: 'She told me' TO 'for my magazine' – implies it is someone who works for a magazine.**KEYS:** Lily / She told me her story for my magazine.**6. VO Getting better • regaining health/strength • recuperation****NOTE:** LINK: 'ill' ♦ 'long time in hospital' TO 'recovery' ♦ 'slow' ♦ 'regained...strength'**KEYS:** Lily / ill. She / long time in hospital. Back home, / recovery / slow / when / regained / strength, / able / sit / short time each day.**7. VO Despair • dread • no enthusiasm • unable to cope****NOTE:** LINK: 'little appetite' ♦ 'must eat everything' TO 'I can't eat all of this' – implies she could not cope with the meal.**KEYS:** She / little appetite, / told that to get better she must eat everything / cooked for her. / She looked with dismay at / meal. / 'I can't eat all of this,' she thought.**8. EV NO. When she regained her strength she was able to sit in the chair for a just a short time each day****NOTE:** LINK: 'when she regained her strength' TO 'was able to sit' – implies that she couldn't sit up at first.**KEYS:** Lily / in hospital. Back home / recovery / slow / armchair / and when she regained her strength, / was able to sit in it for a short time each day.**9. EV 1. Kept her company (at a time when she was lonely) 2. Helped her by eating the food that she couldn't eat****NOTE:** BOTH THINGS REQUIRED.

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: Lily / loves dogs, but her opinion of them / not always / so high. / Lily / ill. / Back home, / recovery / slow / she / often lonely. / Ruff, the / dog, / outside / window. Lily didn't like dogs, / gave / no encouragement / She looked with dismay at / meal / 'I can't eat all of this,' / She / saw Ruff, tongue hanging out, staring at / tray. / she realised Ruff could be useful. / I gave him some, / from then on, Ruff came every day. We both enjoyed it**10. RA YES. 1. She couldn't eat all of her food 2. It gave her a friend 3. It led to her liking dogs (and owning kennels)****NO. 1. She was told she must eat all her food (to get better)****2. She might be overfeeding the dog (wasn't a stray)****NOTE:** ONE REASON REQUIRED. The reason must relate to the text. You can say: "Show me where it says that."

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: YES. Lily / owns / kennels / she loves dogs, but her opinion of them / not always / high. / She looked / at / meal / 'I can't eat all / this,' / She / saw Ruff, / realised Ruff / useful. / gave him some, / Ruff came every day. / both enjoyed it / I slowly got better.**NO.** She had / little appetite, / told that to get better / must eat everything / cooked for her. / She looked with dismay at / meal / 'I can't eat all / this,' / She / saw Ruff, / realised Ruff / useful. / gave him some, / Ruff came every day. / both enjoyed it

OUTLINE: An informative text on the knowledge that people have gained about natural navigational skills. It dispels the long-held belief that without visible landmarks, humans go round in circles because one leg is stronger than the other. Both humans and pigeons use visual clues, but for humans, it is dominant. Pigeons have magnetite in their brains, enabling them to use Earth's magnetic field. We have a trace of magnetite in our noses, suggesting that humans once had this ability.

1. LI Iron-based crystals

NOTE: ONLY ACCEPTABLE ANSWER

KEYS: iron-based crystals called magnetite

2. RO 1. Visual clues (seeing landmarks) 2. Using the Earth's magnetic field (magnetite in their brains)

NOTE: LIST OF 2 WAYS – BOTH REQUIRED.

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

GROUPED with referent. Gathered from six sentences (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13)

REFERENTS: 'they', 'their' and 'them' refer to 'homing pigeons' ♦ 'this' refers to 'iron-based crystals..in their brains'

CONNECTOR: 'But' ('But they are equipped...')

KEYS: Homing pigeons find / way home / Like humans, they will use visual clues. They / seen following highways, / around roundabouts / turning at intersections. But they are equipped with more than one method of navigation. They have iron-based crystals / in their brains. Somehow this enables them to use / Earth's magnetic field to find their way.

3. RO They use visual clues • they look for landmarks

NOTE: JOINED with referent. Gathered from two sentences (8, 9)

REFERENTS: 'their' ♦ 'they' refer to 'homing pigeons'

KEYS: Homing pigeons find their way home no matter where they start from. Like humans, they will use visual clues.

4. IN NO. It says 'Somehow'

NOTE: CLUE: 'Somehow' – implies people do not know.

KEYS: They have / magnetite in their brains. Somehow this enables them to use the Earth's magnetic field to find their way.

5. IN NO. Experiments have proved this wrong

NOTE: LINK: 'one leg stronger than the other' ♦ 'would veer off' TO 'Experiments...have proved this to be wrong'

KEYS: This strange occurrence used to be explained away by saying / humans have one leg stronger than the other / that we would veer off in / direction of / weaker leg. Experiments / have proved this to be wrong.

6. VO State of the surroundings • state of things around you

NOTE: UNACCEPTABLE (not enough): "The weather."

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

CLUE: 'very foggy or very dark'

KEYS: When the conditions are very foggy or very dark

7. VO An extremely small amount

NOTE: CLUE: 'if only just'

KEYS: bones in our noses contain magnetite – if only just a trace.

8. EV They had no visual clues (were blindfolded)

NOTE: LINK: 'no visible landmarks, people lose all sense of direction' TO 'Experiments with blindfolded people' ♦ 'proved...humans...use visual clues'

KEYS: When / very foggy / very dark / no visible landmarks, people lose all sense of direction. / usually walk / in circles. / This / occurrence used to be explained / by saying / humans have one leg stronger than the other / we would veer off in / direction of / weaker leg. Experiments with blindfolded people / proved this to be wrong. / humans, / use visual clues.

9. EV Using the Earth's magnetic field

NOTE: CLUE: 'use the Earth's magnetic field to find their way' – implies that they don't need visual clues.

KEYS: Homing pigeons / will use visual clues. / But / are equipped with more than one method of navigation.

They have / magnetite in their brains. / this enables them to use the Earth's magnetic field to find their way.

10. RA YES. 1. Gives an alternative/easier method for finding your way 2. Less chance of ever being lost

NOTE: ONE REASON REQUIRED. The reason must relate to the text. You can say: "Show me where it says that."

IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.

KEYS: YES. Homing pigeons find their way home no matter where they start from. / They have / magnetite in their brains. / this enables them to use / Earth's magnetic field to find their way. / bones in our noses contain magnetite / just a trace. / early humans may have been better at finding their way through unknown territory, without relying on vision.

PROBE BLUE™

reading comprehension assessment

PART FOUR

COPYMASTERS

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PROBE VERSION
(BLUE)

STUDENT DETAILS
name, age, assessor & date
important reference information

OPTIONS
circle option
being used

PAGE
in Student
Texts book

SET DETAILS
set number, type, decoding level, title.

ANSWERS **Set 7 FICTION** **SUMMER HIDEOUT** All answers must relate to the text

OUTLINE: A timeless story of children enjoying a summer of hot, hazy days. They have each other and their imaginations. The reader needs to form a strong mental image of the scene and the feel of the story to fully understand it. An important feature is the proximity of their 'hideout' to the house.

TEXT
The text is spaced to allow the assessor to record any behaviours and/or errors when using Option 1. The text is small, justified and without paragraphing. Students **MUST NOT** read from this page.

1. LI Hadn't told anyone • no-one • nobody

NOTE: ONLY ACCEPTABLE ANSWER
KEYS: They hadn't told anyone that their hideout was there.

2. RO It: 1. Grew longer 2. Became dry 3. Became brown

NOTE: LIST OF 3 WAYS – ALL REQUIRED. If not enough, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark. GROUPED with referent. Gathered from three sentences (1, 2, 3)
REFERENT: 'It' refers to 'the uncut grass'
KEYS: uncut grass / It grew longer as / summer went on. It became dry and brown.

3. RO Lying back and talking about things

NOTE: UNACCEPTABLE (not enough): "Lying back." ♦ "Talking about things."
IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.
JOINED with referent. Gathered from four sentences (4, 9, 10, 11)
REFERENT: 'They' refers to 'the three friends'
KEYS: the three friends / in this hidden world. They / lie back and talk about things. Often they pretended to be / sailing across the sea.

ORAL READING ANALYSIS
For Option One only. Allows details of accuracy and behaviours to be recorded. Minimum decoding success (96%) has been calculated for you. The exact percentage can be calculated after the assessment.

4. IN Andy's • Andy's mother's. Because Andy's mother was calling from the back door

NOTE: CLUE: 'calling from the back door' – implies that the backyard is theirs.
KEYS: backyard / Andy's mother calling from the back door

5. IN Every day. Every day the three friends played together

NOTE: LINK: 'How often' (in the question) TO 'Every day' (in the text). Both refer to frequency.
KEYS: Every day the three friends played there

WORDS NOT IN COUNT
You can pronounce these words for the students, but do not give an explanation.

6. VO A secret place • a place where no-one could see them • a place no-one else knew about

NOTE: CLUES: 'hideout' ♦ 'hidden from view' ♦ 'hadn't told anyone'
KEYS: the three friends played there, / hidden from view. They hadn't told anyone / their hideout / in this hidden world.

7. EV YES. She would call out to them when she had food for them

NOTE: IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.
CLUE: 'Andy's mother calling from the back door' – implies that she knew they were in the backyard
KEYS: hidden from view. They hadn't told anyone / their hideout was there. / They were never too far away to hear Andy's mother calling from the back door when / food ready for them.

QUESTIONS
Questions ordered by comprehension type. Don't change the wording of questions. Record responses in the spaces below the questions. A tick box is next to the question number.

8. RA YES. It was a secret place where they could do what they wanted

NO. 1. The grass was scratchy 2. There were spiders and caterpillars there
NOTE: ONE REASON REQUIRED. The reason must relate to the text. You can say: "Show me where it says that."
IF UNCLEAR/NOT ENOUGH, you can ask: "Can you tell me more?" NO ½ mark.
KEYS: YES. uncut grass at / end of / backyard was like another world / the three friends played there, / hidden from view. They hadn't told anyone / That was the way they liked it. / They were never too far away to hear Andy's mother calling / when she had food ready for them.
NO. uncut grass / It grew longer / It became dry and brown. / The grass was scratchy. Sometimes a caterpillar crawled / across / leg or a spider ran up / arm.

COMPREHENSION ANALYSIS
Record total number correct & percentage. Record totals for each question type.

DECISION

A minimum comprehension pass is 70% (With 6 or 8 questions the result is rounded to nearest 10). The reference table gives percentages for Set items with 6 or 8 questions.

- If result is below 70% go down to a lower set – if necessary keep going down until the result is ≥70%.
- If result is 70% or above, go up to a higher set – if necessary keep going up until the result is <70%.
- The independent reading level is the student's **best pass** (70% or more).
- This process applies to both fiction and non-fiction texts.

Bracketing will normally reduce the number of texts required to find a pass level.

Reference Table: Comprehension Question Percentages for 6 & 8 questions (rounded to nearest 10)

6	1/6	20%	2/6	30%	3/6	50%	4/6	70%	5/6	90%	minimum pass 4/6				
8	1/8	10%	2/8	30%	3/8	40%	4/8	50%	5/8	60%	6/8	80%	7/8	90%	minimum pass 6/8

ORGANISATION OF TEXTS

Copymasters are for recording purposes only – not for students to read from.
 Stories in the Student Texts book are appropriately paragraphed, sized and spaced.
 The texts are organised in 20 sets – 2 stories for each set (one fiction & one non-fiction).
 Each set has a reading age/level span of 12 months. Consecutive sets overlap each other by 6 months.
 The number of questions for each text ranges from 6 to 10.

QUESTION TYPES PER TEXT

Sets	Literal (LI)	Reorganisation (RO)	Inference (IN)	Vocabulary (VO)	Evaluation (EV)	Reaction (RA)	Total
1–4	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
5–8	1	2	2	1	1	1	8
9–20	1	2	2	2	2	1	10

READY REFERENCE & PAGE FINDER

Set	Level ¹	Q's ²	Fiction	Non-fiction	Pages		
					Answers	Masters	Student Texts
1.	5.0–6.0	6	The Bird in the Tree	Pet Fish	42–43	86–87	5–6
2.	5.5–6.5	6	In the Garden	Day and Night	44–45	88–89	7–8
3.	6.0–7.0	6	Jack's Choice	Water	46–47	90–91	9–10
4.	6.5–7.5	6	Snap	Teeth	48–49	92–93	11–12
5.	7.0–8.0	8	Jessie's Book	Desert Life	50–51	94–95	13–14
6.	7.5–8.5	8	Gone	Lighthouses	52–53	96–97	15–16
7.	8.0–9.0	8	Summer Hideout	Apples	54–55	98–99	17–18
8.	8.5–9.5	8	Aunty Bett	Cave Homes	56–57	100–101	19–20
9.	9.0–10.0	10	The Big Race	Cheetahs	58–59	102–103	21–22
10.	9.5–10.5	10	All to Themselves	Instant Fire	60–61	104–105	23–24
11.	10.0–11.0	10	Treasure Hunt	The Green Land	62–63	106–107	25–26
12.	10.5–11.5	10	Grand Idea	Silbo Gomero	64–65	108–109	27–28
13.	11.0–12.0	10	Talking to Lily	Trenchers	66–67	110–111	29–30
14.	11.5–12.5	10	Where's Freddie	Selkirk	68–69	112–113	31–32
15.	12.0–13.0	10	Bay Rescue	Beckford's Folly	70–71	114–115	33–34
16.	12.5–13.5	10	Just Nothing	Hard Tack	72–73	116–117	35–36
17.	13.0–14.0	10	Along the Shore	Homing In	74–75	118–119	37–38
18.	13.5–14.5	10	Arf	Diamonds	76–77	120–121	39–40
19.	14.0–15.0	10	Heat Wave	Smallpox	78–79	122–123	41–42
20.	14.5–15.5	10	Before the Swarm	Frankenstein	80–81	124–125	43–44

1. Level – Reading Age span (in years) 2. Q's – Number of Questions

NAME	AGE
ASSESSOR	DATE
OPTION USED	1 2 3

SET 13 FICTION Decoding 11.0 – 12.0 **TALKING TO LILY**

STUDENTS **MUST NOT** READ FROM THIS SHEET

Student Texts	29
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Lily is the old lady who owns the kennels on Hinton Avenue, looking after dogs when their owners go away. Everybody knows how much she loves dogs, but her opinion of them has not always been so high. She told me her story for my magazine. In her youth Lily had been ill. She had spent a long time in hospital. Back home, her recovery was slow and she was often lonely. There was an armchair by a low window overlooking the garden and when she regained her strength, Lily was able to sit in it for a short time each day. Ruff, the neighbour’s dog, would sometimes sit outside the window. Lily didn’t like dogs, so gave him no encouragement, shooing him away. She had very little appetite, but was told that to get better she must eat everything that was cooked for her. One afternoon, Lily was sitting in the armchair by the open window. She looked with dismay at the meal on the tray on her lap. ‘I can’t eat all of this,’ she thought. She looked up and saw Ruff, tongue hanging out, staring at the tray. That, she said, was when she realised Ruff could be useful. “Yes. I gave him some,” she said with amusement. “Well, from then on, Ruff came every day. We both enjoyed it and I slowly got better.”

ORAL READING ANALYSIS – OPTION 1 ONLY

<p>SELF-CORRECTIONS: ACCURACY: /228 (219 = 96%)%</p> <p>BEHAVIOURS: SPEED high low HESITATION low high OMISSION low high INSERTION low high DEPENDENCE low high</p> <p>ALL WORDS IN COUNT</p>	<p>COMMENT:</p>
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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS Write down student’s responses – NOT just a tick or a cross.

- LI 1. Where were Lily’s kennels?
- RO 2. When was Lily in hospital?
- RO 3. Where was Ruff when he was staring at the tray?
- IN 4. Was Lily’s illness serious? How do you know that?
- IN 5. Who was Lily talking to?
- VO 6. ‘...her *recovery* was slow...’ What does the word **recovery** mean here?
- VO 7. ‘She looked with *dismay*...’ What does the word **dismay** mean?
- EV 8. Had Lily been able to sit up when she first came home from hospital? How do you know that?
- EV 9. What two things did Ruff do to change Lily’s opinion of dogs?
- RA 10. Should Lily have fed Ruff? Why do you think that?

COMPREHENSION ANALYSIS

<p>LI LITERAL /1 RO REORGANISATION /2</p> <p>IN INFERENCE /2 VO VOCABULARY /2</p> <p>EV EVALUATION /2 RA REACTION /1</p> <p>TOTAL /10 % minimum pass 70% (7/10)</p>	<p>COMMENT:</p>
<p>NO HALF MARKS If 70%+ try a set up. If below 70% try a set down.</p>	<p>Fiction decision: up <input type="checkbox"/> down <input type="checkbox"/> final <input type="checkbox"/></p>

NAME	AGE
ASSESSOR	DATE
OPTION USED	1 2 3

SET 17 NON-FICTION Decoding 13.0 – 14.0 **HOMING IN**

STUDENTS **MUST NOT** READ FROM THIS SHEET

Student Texts	38
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When the **conditions** are very foggy or very dark and there are no lights, therefore no visible landmarks, people lose all sense of direction. When attempting to walk directly to their destination, they usually walk around in circles. The circles are surprisingly small; on average only twenty metres in diameter. Most people end up close to where they started, but don't know it. They are totally confused. This strange occurrence used to be explained away by saying that humans have one leg stronger than the other and that we would veer off in the direction of the weaker leg. Experiments with blindfolded people have proved this to be wrong. Homing pigeons find their way home no matter where they start from. Like humans, they will use visual clues. They have been seen following highways, even going around roundabouts and turning at intersections. But they are equipped with more than one method of navigation. They have iron-based crystals called magnetite in their brains. Somehow this enables them to use the Earth's magnetic field to find their way. 'Follow your nose' is a saying used if someone doesn't have a map or has only been given vague directions for getting to an unknown place. This means to act on instinct. Interestingly, the bones in our noses contain magnetite – if only just a **trace**. This could suggest that early humans may have been better at finding their way through unknown territory, without relying on vision.

ORAL READING ANALYSIS – OPTION 1 ONLY

<p>SELF-CORRECTIONS: ACCURACY: /242 (232 = 96%)%</p> <p>BEHAVIOURS: SPEED high low</p> <p>HESITATION low high</p> <p>OMISSION low high</p> <p>INSERTION low high</p> <p>DEPENDENCE low high</p>	<p>COMMENT:</p>
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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS Write down student's responses – NOT just a tick or a cross.

- LI 1. What is magnetite?
- RO 2. What two ways do homing pigeons use for navigation?
- RO 3. In finding their way home how are humans like pigeons?
- IN 4. Do people know exactly how pigeons use Earth's magnetic field? How do you know that?
- IN 5. Is the theory about one strong leg and one weak leg true? How do you know that?
- VO 6. 'When the *conditions* are...' What does the word **conditions** mean here?
- VO 7. '...only just a *trace*.' What does the word **trace** mean here?
- EV 8. Why did the people in the experiment walk around in circles?
- EV 9. How would a homing pigeon navigate its way across a sandy desert?
- RA 10. Would you like to have more magnetite in your body? Why do you think that?

COMPREHENSION ANALYSIS

<p>LI LITERAL /1 RO REORGANISATION /2</p> <p>IN INFERENCE /2 VO VOCABULARY /2</p> <p>EV EVALUATION /2 RA REACTION /1</p> <p>TOTAL /10 % minimum pass 70% (7/10)</p>	<p>COMMENT:</p>
<p>NO HALF MARKS If 70%+ try a set up. If below 70% try a set down.</p>	<p>Non-fiction decision: up <input type="checkbox"/> down <input type="checkbox"/> final <input type="checkbox"/></p>