INFOBYTES

Numbers 1-20

RA 7-8 yrs

LEVEL 1

SCHOOL SITE LICENCE: For use at the school of purchase only
# InfoBytes - Level 1 - RA 7-8 yrs

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What are StoryBytes and InfoBytes?

These resources were originally developed to provide teachers with short pieces of text that could be completed in one guided reading session. They are especially formatted for our SharpReading approach to reading instruction but can be used in any way the teacher wishes.

Our SharpReading Guided Reading lessons for Stage 3-6 are aimed at habitualising deep processing skills, so four paragraphs usually take around 25 minutes, an ideal timeframe for a guided reading lesson. Follow-up activities provide independent responses for the students who have processed the text deeply. Visit our website for a more extensive explanation of the way you can use StoryBytes and InfoBytes.

Why no illustrations?

Our understanding of the developmental progression of the reader is that it generally takes about two years of instruction before the beginning reader develops true fluency with decoding strategies. During this time it is important for the text they are reading to include picture prompts which helps to scaffold the constructing of meaning.

However, once decoding strategies have been habitualised, (often at a reading age of around 7-8 yrs) the reader is now free to work on the skills required to construct meaning at a deep level. This is what we aim for in SharpReading Stages 3-6 and our research tells us that this process is aided by the absence of picture prompts.

What do the levels mean?

There is a lot of debate about the validity of ‘Reading Ages’. We maintain that, despite the controversy, they still provide a quick, understandable benchmark for measuring achievement. The levels referred to here coincide with the levels in our Informal Prose Inventory testing procedure and line up with PAT Levels (Progress Achievement Test - NZCER and ACER).

These levels assigned to the text allow for the quick identification of appropriate reading material once an instructional reading age (or level) has been identified.

Why are there only some levels?

We have started off providing a spread across the levels from Level 1 (RA 7-8 years) to Level 9 (RA 14+ years). The idea is to back fill some of the missing levels (the odd numbers) as time and motivation allows.

Writing text at a number of levels of difficulty is a very challenging pastime.

For more about our SharpReading approach to reading instruction visit our website www.sharpreading.com. We specialise in teacher workshops or you can do the training online.

Characteristics of the Levels

Level 1 (RA 7-8 yrs): Simple sentences with one or two ideas strung together. Concepts are clearly explained without the need for much inference.

Level 3 (RA 8.5-9 yrs): The progression from Level 1 is that the content remains similar but the sentence structure becomes more varied thus slightly more challenging. There are still usually only two ideas in a sentence for the reader to hold onto but some changes in the vocabulary.

Level 5 (RA 10-11 yrs): Text at this level reflects the ability of the reader to hold onto more complex ideas over longer sentences. Vocabulary is more challenging and meaning may be spread over several sentences. This level is the most often used for students with a 10+ reading age as it provides variety and interest in sentence construction while not overwhelming the student who is developing Stage 3 SharpReading skills - constructing meaning at a deep level.

Level 7 (RA 12-13): Coming soon. We are developing this level because we have found that the jump from Level 5 to Level 9 is too big. This text will provide a challenge for the more able primary aged children without putting them in the cognitive overload that can occur with Level 9.

Level 9 (RA 14+ yrs): Here we have attempted to provide very challenging text to test your most able readers. Text at this level includes complex sentence structures and high end vocabulary. However, just because a student can read text at this level, it doesn't mean they can process and understand it adequately. Guided reading should not be a vocabulary lesson so use this level with some caution.
Cats vs Dogs

The worst thing about having a dog for a pet is when they need to go to the toilet. It doesn’t matter what the weather is like, you will always have to take them for a walk. If you own a cat you will never have to worry about that. They will use a litter-box or they will sit by the door waiting for you to let them out. And they always dig a hole and cover it over when they are finished!

Then there is the smell. As soon as you take your dog outside he will want to roll around in the dirt. He doesn’t mind being dirty - he loves it! Even if you give a dog a bath he will still smell. Cats are not like that at all. You don’t have to give them a bath. They spend hours every day cleaning themselves. You don’t have to do anything! They just want to be clean all the time.

Dogs are also very noisy. They will bark and run around when they hear or see something. This can be very annoying for you and your family and the people who live next door. Cats don’t make a lot of noise. They only meow when they want something to eat or want to go outside. Cats will spend most of their time sleeping and let you get on with the things you need to do.

Cats will get rid of the mice and rats in your house. That’s something a dog will never do. Mice and rats can carry diseases which can make you very sick. Having a cat around might save you from that. OK, it may not be very nice when a cat drops a dead mouse at your feet in the morning. Just remember that this is a good thing and one of the reasons for having a cat and not a dog.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Make a poster showing some of the information about cats and dogs that you have read about.
4. Write a poem about the things you like about cats or dogs.
5. Design something that will keep dogs from barking all the time. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Tattoos

Today a lot of people have tattoos. When you walk down the street you will see people with tattoos on their arms and legs. Sometimes people have tattoos on their faces. But it hasn’t always been like that. Not very long ago it was only sailors who had tattoos. It was not a good idea to have a tattoo if you wanted to get a good job. Now it doesn’t seem to matter. Most people think tattoos are OK.

People get tattoos for lots of reasons. Some people want to hide scars on their bodies. Some people get a tattoo of the name of a friend that they like very much. Some people get tattoos to show that they belong to a group. Other people get tattoos because they think it looks beautiful. Some people spend a lot of time planning their tattoo. Others just decide to do it without thinking too much about it.

Have you ever thought about getting a tattoo? Perhaps you should know a bit more about tattoos before you plan to get one. A tattoo is made by making marks on your skin with ink. You do this by poking a small hole in the skin and pushing ink into the hole. If you make lots of these little holes you can make a picture or write words. The ink is under the skin so you can’t wash it off.

Here are some good reasons for not getting a tattoo. What will happen if you get sick of your tattoo and don’t want it anymore? Maybe in a few years it will not be cool to have tattoos. What are you going to do? It will cost a lot of money to get rid of a tattoo and it is going to hurt. Getting a tattoo is a big thing. Maybe you should think before you ink.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three hard words from the InfoByte.
   Look up the meaning of each word and write it down.
   Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Make a poster showing how to get a tattoo.
4. Write a poem about getting a tattoo.
5. Design your own tattoo.
   Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
The Truth about Pirates

We all know about pirates. There are lots of programmes on TV about pirates. There are lots of books about pirates. There are funny pirates like Captain Pugwash. There are scary pirates like Captain Hook. There are strange pirates like Captain Jack Sparrow. We have all seen people dressed up as pirates with eye patches and fake beards. But what is a pirate? Were they real people? Why were they pirates?

A long time ago there were lots of pirates. They sailed the seas attacking and robbing ships. In those days many people were very poor. Becoming a pirate was their chance to get rich. But there were problems. Many pirates were killed in battle. The food they had to eat was terrible. It was also very boring being at sea for months and months waiting for the next ship to attack. They drank lots of rum to pass the time.

At this time, more ships were being used to carry goods from one country to another. This made it easy for pirates. Out at sea they would sail up to a ship and show their pirate flag. The people on the ship were often so frightened they wouldn’t try to fight back. The pirates would take everything that they thought was valuable. Sometimes they let the ship sail on. But if the crew had put up a fight they were in big trouble.

Soon there were pirate ships everywhere. Something had to be done about them. Ships loaded with soldiers were sent out to find the pirates. There were lots of terrible battles and many pirates were killed. Others were captured and brought back for trial. They were put to death in front of lots of people in the streets. The bodies were left hanging in cages to warn people not to become a pirate. In just a few years there were very few pirates left.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a picture of a fierce pirate that would scare anyone into surrendering without a fight.
4. Write a short story, a poem or a rap about a day in the life of a pirate.
5. Design a pirate ship that was never boring on a long sea journey.
A Bright Idea

In 2002 Alfredo Moser had a very bright idea. He worked in a poor part of a city in Brazil. The power was always going off in his workshop and he couldn’t see what he was doing. He came up with a way to light up the inside of his workshop using a plastic bottle filled with water. His bright idea is now being used in houses that don’t have power, all over the world.

This light is easy to make. Fill a clean, clear plastic soft drink bottle with water and screw on the top. Next you have to cut a hole in the roof the same size as the water bottle. Push the bottle half way up into the hole so that half of the bottle is outside and the other half is inside. Fill up any gaps between the bottle and the roof so that no water gets in when it rains.

How does it work? Light from the sun falls on the part of the water bottle that is poking up through the roof. When the light passes from the air into the water it changes direction a little bit. When the light comes out of the rounded bottom of the bottle it spreads out everywhere lighting up the room. If it is very sunny outside there will be a brighter light in the room. Of course this only works during the day.

This simple light is making life easier for millions of poor people all over the world. They live in small huts with no windows and no electricity. They have to use oil lamps for light. The oil costs them a lot of money and the light is not very good. The oil lamps also give off unhealthy gases and can cause fires which spread very quickly from house to house. This bottle lamp gives them free healthy light during the day with no risk of fire.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram with labels showing how the Moser light works.
4. Make an advertisement for the Moser light so that more people will know about it.
5. Design something else that you could do with plastic drink bottles. Use diagrams and labels to show your wonderful ideas.
What to do with all that ...

Our body has to get rid of the things it doesn't need. We call it going to the toilet. The first humans didn't have to worry about toilets. They were always on the move looking for food. They didn't stay in one place for very long. If they wanted to go to the toilet they just did it on the ground and then moved on. Their body wastes broke down and the good bits went back into the ground.

Later on people began living in towns and cities. With more people living together something had to be done about all the body waste. Large pits were dug under houses and the waste was collected there. These pits had to be emptied every few years. When this didn't happen the pits would overflow into the street. There was always a terrible smell especially in the summer when it was hot.

As time passed more people wanted to live in cities. There were not enough houses or toilets. People used buckets as toilets (chamber pots) and threw the body waste into the street. When it rained the streets became rivers of body waste. All of this drained away into nearby streams and rivers. However this was usually where the city got its drinking water. Because the drinking water was so bad many people got very sick and died.

Today, many cities have large pipes under the ground to collect body waste. Every house has a toilet that is connected to these pipes. All this body waste is pumped away from the city to a special place. The water waste is taken out of the solid waste. Once the water has been cleaned it goes back into rivers and lakes. The solid waste is left to dry out until it is safe and can then be used on farms as plant food.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram with labels showing how the sewage system in modern cities works.
4. Write a poem or a rap about the disgusting smell in old London.
5. Design a new way of getting rid of human waste in overcrowded cities. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Stay Away from Me

What do you do when something bigger than you wants to eat you? Most animals know what to do when this happens. Some will run away or hide. Others will stand and fight with their sharp teeth and claws. They may also have body parts that help. If they have very hard shells it makes them hard to eat and they will be left alone. Here are three living things with very interesting ways to help them keep safe.

The Texas horned lizard has a clever way of keeping other animals away. It can shoot blood from its eyes. It aims the blood into the animal's eyes or mouth. If the animal has the lizard in its mouth it will drop it and try to wipe off the blood or shake it off. The blood also has a bad taste. A bad taste usually means danger. Most animals will stay away from a bad taste.

Another way to avoid being eaten is to play dead. Opossums are well known for this trick. But this is not a trick. When there is danger the opossum gets very upset. Its body shuts down and it falls on the ground. It really does look like it is dead. It also gives off a dead smell. This can last for hours. Many animals do not want to eat something that is already dead and will leave it alone.

Would you die for your friends? There is one kind of insect that is happy to do this. These insects work together to build large nests. When other unwanted insects come along the oldest insects in the group go out to meet them. Each of these insects has a sack filled with poison. If they have to they can make this sack explode all over their enemies. This kills them. Sadly, it also kills the insect.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw diagrams with labels showing how the Texas horned lizard, the opossum and the termite defend themselves.
4. Write a poem or a rap about “Stay away from me”.
5. You are an insect or a mammal. Design new ways of getting rid of other animals that want to eat you. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Unsinkable

In April 1912, the biggest ship that had ever been built set out on her first trip. She was called the Titanic and was built to be like a fancy hotel on water. All the latest ideas had been used to make her very safe. The bottom of the ship was divided into sixteen separate sections. Each of these sections could be sealed off if ever the boat started leaking. People thought that this ship would never sink.

After the Titanic had been at sea for three days, other ships sent messages to look out for icebergs. The captain of the Titanic didn’t worry about it and kept on going through the night at full speed. Suddenly at 11:40 p.m. a large iceberg was spotted. The Titanic was heading straight for it. It was very hard for such a big ship to turn quickly. The Titanic crashed into the iceberg which made big holes in the side of the ship. Water poured into the ship.

It didn’t take long to work out that the Titanic was going to sink. Many people in the lower decks were trapped as water filled the ship. No one on board was ready for something like this. To make things worse there were not enough lifeboats for everyone. The women and children were put into the lifeboats first and the men were left behind. But everyone was in such a hurry that many of the lifeboats were pushed off when they were only half full.

Just over two hours after hitting the iceberg, the Titanic went down. The sea had filled the front of the ship and it went under the water. Now water was pouring in through all the openings on the deck. As the front went down the back of the ship lifted up out of the water. It kept rising up until the boat was pointing straight down. Hundreds of people fell into the sea. Others held on to whatever they could. Suddenly the whole ship slid down into the water and sank to the bottom of the sea. Fifteen hundred people died in the icy waters that night.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte.
   Look up the meaning of each word and write it down.
   Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram with labels showing how the Titanic sunk.
4. Write a poem or a rap about the sinking of the Titanic.
5. Design a ship that is really unsinkable.
   Use diagrams and labels to explain your interesting ideas.
What a Spectacle

“Where are my glasses? Has anyone seen my glasses?” If you need to wear glasses to see clearly you will know how it feels when you can’t find them. It can be quite scary if you have to get by without them. But did you know that the glasses we wear today haven’t been around for very long? It makes you think about what it must have been like when there were no glasses.

Many years ago there was nothing that could be done if your eyes were not very good. It must have been very difficult walking around when everything was blurry. However if your eyes were not too bad it may not have been a problem. There weren’t many books and only a few people could read. If your job was to make things with lots of detail you would have to have good eyes. But if you didn’t you could just chose a job where having good eyes wasn’t so important.

Once there were lots of books being printed, people whose eyes were not so good wanted to be able to read. They began looking for ways to make the words on the page bigger. One idea was to put a rounded piece of glass on the page. This worked like a magnifying glass. About 300 years ago someone came up with the idea of joining two of these pieces of glass together and bringing them up close to the eyes - the first glasses!

Once people wanted to wear glasses it took many years to think of a good way to stop them falling off. The people who made them tried to get them to stay in place on the person's nose. But everyone's nose was a different size and shape. Other people tried tying them in place with ribbons around the head. It took many years to get to what we have today. Now glasses are easy to wear and many people like to wear them because they look cool.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram with labels to show you understand how people used pieces of glass to help them read.
4. Write a poem or a rap about the history of spectacles.
5. Design a new way of attaching glasses to a person’s head. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
King of the Beasts

Most people think of the lion as the king of all the animals. I am not sure that other animals would think that was true. Even in the cat family, the tiger is bigger and stronger than the lion. If a lion and a tiger had a fight it would be the tiger who would win. So why do we think of lions as being the king of all the animals? I think it is because of the way they look and behave. They remind us of our own kings.

A king is someone who is very important. A lion looks as if he is very important. His long hair makes him look like a king. He has a very loud roar which can be heard from a long way away. He doesn't hide away like other animals. He doesn't seem to be afraid of anything. He doesn't do very much. He sits around all day just like a king.

A king looks after the people around him. He makes the rules and makes sure that everyone follows them. This means that everyone feels safe and can get on with their life. It is the same for male lions and the group of lions that they live with. The biggest lion is the leader. He keeps everyone in line. He fights off any other animals that hang around. In return the other lions do most of the hunting and get him the food he needs.

Whenever there is a king someone else will always want to take his place. The king has to be able to fight these people off if he wants to continue being the king. It is the same for the lion. Young male lions are always looking for the chance to take over and be in charge. As the lion in charge gets older and weaker there will come a time when he will be defeated. He must step down and the new king will take over.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte.
   Look up the meaning of each word and write it down.
   Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a picture showing how the life of a male lion is like the life of a human king.
4. Write a poem or a rap about the wonderful “King of the Beasts”.
5. Design some extra physical features for the male lion so that as he grows older he can still fight off the younger lions and keep his place as the king. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Pompeii

Two thousand years ago the world was shocked by a big disaster. In one day, the city of Pompeii disappeared from sight and more than 5,000 of its people were killed. Pompeii was a city of about 20,000 people. It had been built right next to a huge mountain, Mount Vesuvius. No one knew that the mountain was a volcano and no one knew that for hundreds of years it had been getting ready to explode.

August 24, 79 AD, started as any other day. But at 1pm the mountain started rumbling. A huge cloud of boiling rock, ash and gas shot up into the sky. The people of Pompeii all stopped what they were doing to watch. But then the cloud started to drift over the city. It covered the sun and suddenly it was like the middle of the night. Rocks and ash from the mountain began to fall on the city.

People were very frightened. Many ran from the city. Others stayed indoors to get away from the falling rocks and ash. However, the rock and ash piled up outside and they were trapped. The roofs of the houses started to fall in because of the weight. Then it got even worse. Part of the cloud above the mountain collapsed and super hot gases and hot rocks rolled down the side of the mountain and into the city.

For the people left in the city there was no way that they could escape. The hot gases killed everybody. Their bodies were quickly covered in ash. Eighteen hours after the mountain first started to rumble, Pompeii was buried in ash and rock. Nothing was left, everything had changed forever. The river and the port had disappeared. A few years later no one could even remember were the city had been.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram with labels showing how Pompeii was buried.
4. Write a poem or a rap about the end of Pompeii.
5. Design a Pompeii volcano shelter which would protect you from the rocks, hot gas and ash. Use diagrams and labels to explain your ideas.
Insects - Future Food

Would you like to eat some fried crickets? How about some yummy boiled ants? That doesn't sound like what I would want to eat. But it may be what we end up eating soon. There are more and more people on the planet and most of them want to eat meat. It is becoming harder and harder to grow enough for everyone. The answer to this may be wriggling around at our feet - insects.

Why would growing lots of insects for food be the answer? Insects are full of the good things that we need to stay healthy. Insects can grow in much smaller spaces than farm animals so insect farms would be a lot smaller. Cows and pigs give off a lot of gas that is bad for the planet but insects don't. Insects grow much more meat than other animals for the amount you have to feed them. So this could be the answer to the food problem.

To make this work we need to get more people to want to eat insects. That is not going to be easy. Many people think that eating any sort of animal is yuck. Even the people who love eating meat only eat a few of the animals that they could eat. No one wants to eat rats or cats. And we certainly don’t want to eat insects because we think they are unhealthy. We see them feeding off things that are dirty or rotten. That makes us think that they carry diseases.

It will take time to get us to change our minds about eating insects. Asking people to eat whole insects isn’t going to work. Some people have started making cricket flour which can be added to the food we already eat. We don’t see the insects and it doesn’t taste too different. Maybe it won’t be too long before insects do become our normal food. So watch out - that crunchy thing in your lunch might not be what you think it is.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte.
   Look up the meaning of each word and write it down.
   Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Make a poster telling people why they should eat insects.
4. Write a letter to the owner of an insect restaurant saying why you won’t (or will) be coming to their restaurant for an insect meal.
5. Design a delicious insect meal. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Time to Go

Many living things have great stories to tell. They are born to do strange and wonderful things. Here is one of those stories. There is a fish (a long finned eel) that lives in a pond somewhere along the east coast of Australia. Its life is very simple. It just eats insects and other small fish and swims around. But as it gets towards the end of its life, something happens. It leaves its home and heads off on a strange journey.

One night it is raining. Something tells this fish that it is time to go. It wriggles out of the water, over the grass, across footpaths and around anything else that gets in its way. It is looking for a stream or a river that will take it out to sea. But this is a fish? How can it do that? The secret is the rainy night. It can survive as long as it is raining and there is water on the ground.

But that is only the beginning of this story. The fish finds a stream that takes it out to sea. Big changes must take place. The fish has been living in fresh water and now its gills have to get used to living in salt water. Also its stomach shrinks because it doesn’t eat any more. Now the fish starts on its final journey. It swims 2,000 km north to where it will breed. If it is a female she will be carrying millions of eggs. When she arrives she lays her eggs and then dies.

The baby fish now start the 2000 km journey back to where their mother came from. It takes two years as the ocean carries them south. Only a very small number make it back. One night, when it is raining, they feel the fresh water from the rivers and streams flowing into the sea. They swim upstream. They leave the water and wriggle over the grass. Finally they arrive at that same pond and plop in. The circle of life has been completed.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram with labels showing the journey that these eels take - the circle of life.
4. Write a poem or a rap about this eel.
5. Design some new features for the eel that will help it get from the pond to the sea and back again.
Blue Jeans

I am sure that everyone has a pair of blue jeans. Who hasn’t got a pair tucked away somewhere? If you travel anywhere in the world you will see people wearing blue jeans. From children to old people, everyone wears them. Someone has even done a study to check this out. If you went out in the street in almost any country in the world and counted the first 100 people, more than half of them will be wearing jeans.

Why do so many people wear jeans? Some people like them because they are easy to wear. Others buy them because they think that wearing jeans is cool. But did you know that these pants started out as very uncool work clothes for farm workers in American over a hundred years ago. People wanted hard wearing pants that would last a long time and not fall apart. The answer was the first pair of jeans.

But we don’t wear jeans today just because they are well made and last a long time. There are other reasons as well. After World War 2, young people began to wear jeans because they wanted to be different. Wearing jeans became their way of saying that they didn’t want to be like their parents. This made older people nervous. Soon students were not allowed to wear jeans to school in America. But that didn’t work because it just made them want to wear them even more.

By the 1960s, lots of different people in America had started to wear jeans. In other countries jeans were also catching on. Everybody wanted to wear them. They didn’t cost much and looked good when they were old as well as when they were brand new. They didn’t have to be washed very often and they didn’t have to be ironed. It was all right to wear them just about anywhere. This is still the main reason that so many people wear them today.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a time line showing the history of Blue Jeans.
4. Write a letter to your school principal explaining why you want to wear Blue Jeans to school.
5. Design a new pair of pants that will replace jeans as the best ever pants for everyone to wear. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Ewe Won’t Believe It!

Sheep usually have one or two lambs. Sometimes they might have three. But this week a man in Thames, Weston Finlay, got a lot more than that when his sheep gave birth. He used to be a farmer but now he lives in town. He has always kept one sheep to help mow the lawn. A while ago, a friend gave him another one. His friend was sure it was a girl, just like the one Finlay already had.

“When I got the new sheep I could tell it was a male,” said Finlay. “I thought that might mean that I would end up with some lambs.” So he wasn't surprised one morning when his sheep gave birth. Finlay put the new lamb in a shed out of the rain. He was surprised when he came back to have a look at it an hour later. There were two more lambs on the ground outside the shed.

These lambs weren’t very happy. They were lying in a muddy puddle. Finlay got a bucket of hot water and gave them a bath to warm them up and get them clean. He helped them to feed from their mother. But there was more to come. She started to push and out came another lamb. This was a real surprise. Finlay moved them all to a better place out of the rain and left them to rest. When he came back two hours later there was number five!

Finlay doesn’t know of any sheep that has given birth to five lambs that have lived. Most of the time, if a sheep has more than three lambs, some of them will be dead when they are born. He will keep the two lambs that his sheep is feeding. He has found some other people to look after the other three. What will happen to the father sheep?
"We don't want any more sheep. I think he will end up in my freezer as sausages,” said Finlay.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a map to show where the action took place in the news item.
4. Write a letter to Weston Finlay telling him why you would be the perfect person to look after one of his lambs.
5. Sheep can’t feed more than two lambs. Design a machine that would help her feed five. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Children of the War

How would you like to leave your mother and father for five years and go and live with a family you didn’t know? This happened to a lot of British children in World War 2. When Germany started dropping bombs on London in 1939, it became very unsafe. Many parents decided to move their children out into the country. Families living away from London in small towns and on farms were asked to look after children from the city.

In four days a million children were moved. The train stations were crowded with children who didn’t know where they were going. They all had name tags around their necks like they were parcels. Each child had one small bag of clothes. They arrived in the country tired and hungry. They didn’t know whether they would ever see their mothers and fathers again. They were lined up and the people who they were going to live with walked up and down the lines picking the ones they wanted. The best looking children were always chosen first.

Families where paid to look after these children. Many of the children ended up staying with farm workers. These people lived in small cottages with no electricity or hot water. The toilet was outside in the garden which was a bit of a surprise for children from the city. Some people just did it for the money and the children weren’t looked after very well. They had to work hard on the farm for no pay and wanted to run away.

However it was not all bad. Lots of children had a great time. They met new friends and learnt new things like baking bread and looking after animals. One girl from a very poor family ended up living with very rich people who had servants. The war went on for six years. When it was all over many of the children didn’t want to go back to city life. In that time about 5,000 children who stayed in the cities were killed. If it hadn’t been for this programme a lot more would have died.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES
1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Make a list of all the things you would have in your bag if you were leaving the city to go and live in the country in 1939.
4. You have been moved out of the city because of the war. Write a letter to your Mum and Dad telling them what it is like with your new family.
5. Design an air raid shelter that would protect you and your family from the bombs. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Global Warming

Everyone is talking about global warming. What is it and what is the problem? It seems that the earth is slowly heating up and this is called “Global Warming”. For a long time a lot of people didn’t believe this was really happening. Now we have to face up to the facts. Every year the earth is getting warmer and this is going to change the way we live. The frightening thing is that we are the ones to blame.

Here is what has happened. Over the last 100 years we have learnt how to make lots of wonderful machines. It wasn’t so long ago that there were no cars and no electricity in houses. Now we have lots and lots of things that need energy to make them go. To make energy we have to burn coal, oil and gas. As we make more machines then we have to burn more and more coal oil and gas. This is where the problem starts.

The air around the earth is made up of a lot of gases. One of these gases (CO2) is very good at stopping heat from going off into space. It keeps the earth warm enough so that living things can grow. Without it nothing could live on Earth. But when we burn oil and coal and gas a lot more of this CO2 gas is added to the air. More and more heat gets trapped and everything on earth gets warmer and warmer. This changes everything.

What will happen if it gets hotter? Maybe the ice caps at the North and South Poles will melt and the level of the sea will rise. That will mean that lots of places will be flooded and people will have to find somewhere else to live. Things will change for the fish, plants and animals. They will also have to find better places to live or they will die. Places that are already hot will become deserts where no one can live. We must do something about it while there is still time.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram showing how global warming works. Include labels.
4. Make a poster warning people about global warming.
5. Design something to help you survive global warming. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Clive Staples Lewis

The land of Narnia is a world of magic. It is full of rare and strange creatures. There are animals that talk, a wicked witch and the great lion, Aslan. There are castles, giants, and sword-fighting mice. All these great ideas came from the mind of the writer, C S Lewis. He wrote over thirty books, most of them for adults. But his children’s books about Narnia are his most well-known works. What sort of person could create this marvellous world?

C S Lewis was born in Ireland in 1898. He always had a love for animals and books. When the family’s pet dog died, Lewis took its name, Jacksie. He was known as Jack to family and friends for the rest of his life. He and his brother made up a country which was run by animals. Its name was Boxen. They used to sit in a big old wardrobe and tell stories about it. They also enjoyed fairy tales.

As a young man, Lewis went to Oxford University. He did very well and was given a job there. Then, for a short time he was in the army. He fought in World War 1. After the war he returned to the university and went back to teaching there. He also wrote a lot of books. When he started to write children’s books, some people thought it was a bad idea. The last laugh is on them!

Here are a few facts about C S Lewis. He smoked a pipe. He enjoyed long walks in the country with his friends. He was hurt in the war. This meant that he had some small bits of metal in his body for the rest of his life. He was a kind person who gave money to help the poor. He once said, ‘You can never get a cup of tea large enough or a book long enough to suit me’.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte. Look up the meaning of each word and write it down. Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a timeline of C S Lewis’s life using the information you have.
4. Make a poster advertising C S Lewis’s books.
5. Design some interesting, weird characters for your own imaginary world. Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
Your Own Worm Farm

You should have a worm farm! Why? There are lots of good reasons. It is easy to do, it is fun and it is ‘green’. Everybody has food waste so why not make this stuff useful? Don’t just dump it in the garbage, feed some worms! There will be many good outcomes for your home, garden and nature in general.

Having a worm farm can cut down global warming! When you put food in the rubbish bin, it goes to a landfill. Once there, it takes a long time to break down. It also smells bad and creates methane gas. This gas stays in the air for about 10 - 12 years and leads to global warming. If more people used worm farms, there would be less methane gas. Worms are small but they are very important for the whole planet.

It is said that ‘worm poo is black gold for your garden’. Worms eat their way through scraps such as potato peels and old salads. They even eat egg shells, hair and coffee grounds! From this waste comes a rich manure for the garden. It is 100% natural, does not smell and costs nothing. It feeds your soil and helps vegetables or flowers grow. If you have no garden, it is great for pot plants!

A worm farm does not take up much space or time. About 28 square centimetres is enough for a bin. This can be put in a shady part of the garden. It should not get too much sun on it. If you live in an apartment building, use a dark cupboard. After you set up your worm farm, just add food scraps. Also, check that it does not become too dry. This only takes five minutes a week! Later on, you can get the rich compost from the bottom. So - for the good of your home, garden and the planet – get your own worm farm!

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte.
   Look up the meaning of each word and write it down.
   Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram showing how to make a worm farms. Include labels.
4. Make a poster encouraging people to run a worm farm.
5. Design your own super efficient worm farm.
   Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
The Island of Pukapuka

Do you want to run away to a peaceful sunny island? Do you dream of long sandy beaches and warm blue water? Pukapuka, in the Cook Islands, is just like those dreams! It is made up of three small islands. Huge sandy reefs join the islands together. In the middle of them is a big safe lagoon. This is where you can swim and catch fish.

The people live on just one of the islands. It is the largest of the three and has three villages on it. The other two islands are used as garden areas. There, foods like taro and bananas are grown. Some food is brought in by boats and planes but most of the time, people find their own food. They fish, work in their gardens and gather coconuts. The children also love to catch big crabs to eat.

The people of Pukapuka have their own special way of life, language and customs. Women weave fine mats and men are good at building canoes. Children collect wood for the fires, husk coconuts and help in other ways. People of all ages love to sing and dance. Teams from Pukapuka travel to Rarotonga to perform. The crowds there love their style! This is because they sing so well, are cheeky and great fun to watch.

Life on this peaceful island has not always been easy. In the 1600s, huge waves swept away most of the people. Just 17 men, 2 women and some children remained alive. Slowly, numbers grew again. Then, in 1863, slave traders captured 145 men and women. They were taken away and sold as slaves. Only two of them ever came home again. In 2005, a severe storm destroyed much of the island. After it, only a few of the houses still stood. This made many people go to live in other places. There are about 500 people who live on Pukapuka today.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte.
   Look up the meaning of each word and write it down.
   Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a map of the atoll Pukapuka using the information you have been given.
4. Make an advertising poster encouraging tourists to come to Pukapuka.
5. Design some protection for the islands from tsunamis and cyclones.
   Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.
The Planet Venus

The moon is the brightest light in the night sky. The second brightest light is the planet Venus. Have a look and see if you can find it! It was given its name after the Roman goddess of love. It is the second planet from the sun and the closest planet to Earth. They are alike in some ways but not the same in others. Venus is smaller than Earth, and does not have a moon. Also, it is always covered by clouds.

The clouds are very thick and hide the planet. When the sun shines on these clouds, Venus looks very bright. That is why it is easy to spot on a fine night. The clouds are made up of gases which would kill anyone who breathed them. They also trap heat between them and the planet. This makes it really hot on Venus – too hot to live. It is hotter than on Mercury, the planet closest to the sun.

There is no water on Venus and it is very dry. The land is bare and rocky. There are thousands of volcanoes, many still alive. The lava has made wide desert plains which have low hills in them. There are also small mountains. We know this because photos have been taken of the planet’s surface.

In the 1960s, people started to send spaceships to look at Venus. There was no-one in the spaceships as it was too risky. Most of the time, they did not land but sent data from far off. The USA made a map of Venus from far off. But Russia did land some spaceships which were able to take good photos. After about two hours, the ships were destroyed. But the photos had been sent! Now, a few countries are working with each other to learn more about the planet Venus.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Select three tricky words from the InfoByte.
   Look up the meaning of each word and write it down.
   Use each word in a sentence to show you know what it means.
2. For each paragraph decide on a heading which tells you what the paragraph was about.
3. Draw a diagram showing how global warming works. Include labels.
4. Make a poster warning people about global warming.
5. Design something to help you survive global warming.
   Use diagrams and labels to explain your great ideas.