

# Talking Turkeys!!



## Question Book:

Year 6, pages 2-3

## Author / Source:

Benjamin Zephaniah

## Genre:

Poetry

## Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (reducing waste; animal welfare)

## Introduction

*Talking Turkeys!!* is taken from Zephaniah's first collection of children's poetry, which was originally published in 1994. *Talking Turkeys!!* is a fun and engaging poem for children, with some strong messages about animal rights and consumerism. A lot of Zephaniah's poetry is designed to be heard, rather than read, and children may enjoy listening to a video clip of Zephaniah performing his poem after they have read it.

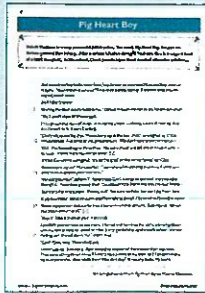
## Answers

1. E.g. Turkeys have the right to life, the right to roam freely and the right to not be genetically modified.
2. d. ABCBDED
3. E.g. Benjamin uses some non-standard spellings such as "yu" and "dis". I think he chose to do this because it reflects his own accent.
4. a. d. personification b. E.g. Because it gives the turkey a voice, so the reader sympathises with it.
5. E.g. I don't think Benjamin likes Christmas because it's a time when people eat turkeys. He also says that humans are "greedy" and wasteful at Christmas.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. No, because eating turkey at Christmas is traditional and Christmas dinner wouldn't be the same without some turkey. OR E.g. Yes, because thinking about Christmas from the turkey's perspective makes me feel guilty. We don't need to eat them — there's plenty of other food.

## Extra Activities

- Explain to the class what a half-rhyme is. Ask pupils to identify all the half-rhymes in the poem.
- Point out lines 20-21 and explain that they form a rhetorical question. As a class, discuss how this technique affects the reader. Why do pupils think authors use rhetorical questions in persuasive writing?
- Ask pupils to write a poem entitled *Talking Trees!!* about Christmas trees that don't want to be cut down. Pupils should write in a similar style to *Talking Turkeys!!* and use features they've learnt, e.g. half-rhymes, rhetorical questions and phonetic spellings. Ask some pupils to perform their poems to the class.
- Initiate a discussion about Christmas. Zephaniah raises the issues of waste (people cutting down Christmas trees) and greed (business people exploiting consumers at Christmas time). Do pupils feel differently about Christmas after reading the poem? In response to this, ask pupils to produce a leaflet that explains how families can reduce waste at Christmas time.
- Split pupils into small groups and ask them to research what people from other countries and cultures eat at Christmas time. Ask pupils to present their findings to the rest of the class.
- Explain to pupils that some poultry farmers rear birds indoors with very little space. Other farmers rear free-range poultry instead, which means that the birds have access to outdoor areas. Get pupils to draw up a table of pros and cons for free-range and indoor-reared poultry. Then, split the class in half and hold a debate between the two groups about whether all poultry should be free-range.

# Pig Heart Boy



## Question Book:

Year 6, pages 4-5

## Author / Source:

Malorie Blackman

## Genre:

Fiction — novel extract

## Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (medical ethics)
- Science (the heart)
- PE (exercise and heart rate)
- Maths (line graphs)

## Introduction

Malorie Blackman has written numerous novels for children and young adults. Her novels often use science fiction to tackle complex ethical issues. *Pig Heart Boy* explores the issues that could arise from the use of pig organs for human transplants. Before pupils read the extract, make sure they are aware that the transplantation of whole organs from pigs to humans is not currently possible. You may also want to explain that heart valves from pigs and cows can be used to replace damaged human heart valves, and that scientists in the USA are attempting to grow human organs in pigs for transplantation.

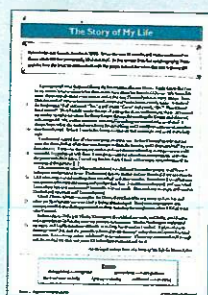
## Answers

1. "Now there's a surprise!" OR "I wonder what they're arguing about today."
2. "It burnt like a laser"
3. E.g. To show that Cam's mum stressed those words when she spoke. It also helps to emphasise that she's angry with Cam's dad for making up his mind about the pig heart treatment without asking her.
4. E.g. The dialogue makes the extract feel realistic. It also helps the reader to understand the characters better because it shows how Cam's parents feel about the situation.
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. He feels angry with his parents for making decisions about his treatment without asking him first. He might also feel upset that his parents have been arguing.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because Cam's own heart doesn't work properly — he can't even run all the way up the stairs. If he has the transplant then he might be able to lead a more normal life. OR E.g. No, I think that Cam should wait for a human heart because using a pig's heart might be more likely to have complications, and Cam's mum says that it would "deform" him.

## Extra Activities

- As a class, discuss the use of direct speech in this extract. Do pupils enjoy reading texts that use a lot of direct speech? Get pupils to underline all the words that Blackman uses instead of "said". How many other words can they think of that they could use instead of "said"?
- Ask pupils to write a short dialogue between two friends who have fallen out. Encourage them to use the techniques identified in the class discussion to make their dialogue interesting and to avoid repetition.
- Hold a class debate about the idea of using animal organs to treat people who need organ transplants.
- Explain to the class how blood circulates between the heart, the lungs and the rest of the body. Give pupils a diagram of the heart and challenge them to find out the names of the different chambers and blood vessels. Can they add arrows to show the circulation of blood around the heart?
- Get pupils to measure their resting heart rate, then give them a list of activities, such as star jumps, running on the spot and balancing on one leg. Ask pupils to do each activity for one minute and measure their heart rate immediately afterwards, one minute later and two minutes later. They should then draw line graphs to show how each activity affected their heart rate.

# The Story of My Life



## Question Book:

Year 6, pages 6-7

## Author / Source:

Helen Keller

## Genre:

Non-fiction — autobiography

## Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (disability; braille)

## Introduction

Helen Keller (1880-1968) had a remarkable life and most children will find her story fascinating. Although Helen was blind and deaf, her tutor, Anne Sullivan, taught her how to communicate, and the pair remained very close until Sullivan's death in 1936. Helen attended several specialised educational institutions and successfully earned a degree in 1904. Today, Helen is still remembered for her achievements; she has appeared on American currency and stamps, and has lent her name to streets, hospitals and schools.

## Answers

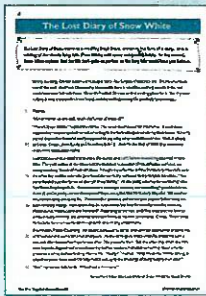
1. E.g. It is written in the first person. It recalls events from Helen's life.
2. E.g. I think it means Helen's blindness. Because she can't see, there is only darkness.
3. E.g. Because she remembered waving to guests before her illness.
4. E.g. Because Helen knew she would get what she wanted if she kicked her nurse. Helen also felt angry and frustrated at not being able to speak and this was how she let out her anger.
5. E.g. Helen admits she was very mean to Martha, so Martha probably didn't like Helen very much. She was probably also scared of Helen, because Helen says that Martha nearly always did what Helen wanted her to do.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. If I was blind and deaf I wouldn't be able to do a lot of the things I like to do, like listen to music and play football. I wouldn't have any independence because I would probably need someone to help me do simple things like go to the shops or cross the road.

## Extra Activities

- Discuss the differences between autobiographical and biographical writing. Ask pupils to research important events in Helen Keller's life, e.g. meeting her teacher Anne Sullivan for the first time, going to college, receiving her degree, meeting Winston Churchill etc. Then ask pupils to write an account of one of the events they've researched in a biographical style.
- Drawing on pupils' research for the first activity, discuss whether they think Helen Keller's disability held her back. Are pupils surprised that she achieved so much? Do pupils think Helen's life would have been different if she hadn't lost her hearing and her sight?
- Explain to pupils that a play called *The Miracle Worker* was made about Helen Keller and her teacher, Anne Sullivan. The events in it were based on events from Helen Keller's autobiography. Ask pupils to re-read the final paragraph of the extract, then write a playscript for a scene in which Helen and Martha Washington play together as children.
- Helen could read braille. Introduce children to the braille alphabet. Can pupils write their name in braille (by colouring in the dots rather than raising them)?  
Divide pupils into pairs, then ask each pupil to write their own message in braille.  
Pupils should swap messages with their partner, then decipher the one they receive.

P	E	N
●●	●○	●●
●○	○●	○●
●○	○○	●○

# The Lost Diary of Snow White



## Question Book:

Year 6, pages 8-9

## Author / Source:

Boyd Brent

## Genre:

Fiction — novel extract

## Cross-curricular links:

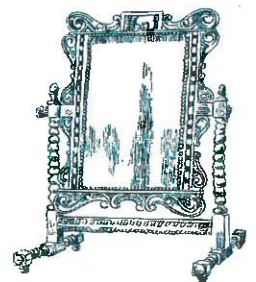
- D&T (costume and set design)

## Introduction

Pupils will almost certainly be familiar with the story of Snow White, but this modernised version is told from the perspective of Snow White in the form of a diary. Both boys and girls will enjoy the witty writing style, as well as the inversion of some of the classic fairytale elements. Before reading the text, ask pupils to explain what they know about the plot and characters of the tale of Snow White.

## Answers

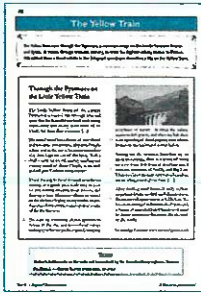
1. Any two from: it is written in the first person; the entry starts with “Monday”; it contains the writer’s thoughts and feelings; it talks about events that happened that day; it uses informal language; it has a chatty tone.
2. E.g. To make it stand out, which emphasises just how pale Snow White is.
3. E.g. “welcome to my fairytale paradise”
4. E.g. The names of the dwarves represent Snow White’s personality, so she’s pessimistic, unsure, interfering, sad and awkward.
5. E.g. Most traditional fairy tales use quite formal language. The language in this story is a lot more informal and chatty, for example “Cripes” and “No pressure, then”.
6. E.g. No, because she says she needs to rest for a hundred years to be “up to the challenge”, which suggests that she is reluctant about living happily ever after.



## Extra Activities

- Initiate a discussion about whether pupils prefer this version of Snow White or the traditional version. Ask pupils to write a review of this version of Snow White, explaining the reasons for their preference.
- Explain to pupils that irony can be shown through language (for example, their answer to Q3) as well as through situations. Give pupils the following definition of situational irony: “when readers’ expectations don’t match up with what actually happens in the story.” Challenge pupils to find some examples of situational irony from the text (e.g. Snow White’s “fairytale” life isn’t actually much of a fairy tale).
- Ask pupils to write a diary entry from the perspective of a different fairytale character, e.g. Sleeping Beauty, Prince Charming, Cinderella. Ask them to invert some of the traditional features of those characters and their stories. For example, what if Prince Charming was actually quite rude or if Cinderella was just as lazy as her ugly sisters?
- Ask pupils to design the scenery and costumes for a stage version of this extract. Encourage pupils to be creative — if life in Snow White’s fairytale land is different to the traditional version of the story, would the landscape and clothes look different as well? Pupils should label their drawings with useful information, e.g. materials to be used, a rough estimate of size.

# The Yellow Train



## Question Book:

Year 6, pages 10-11

## Author / Source:

www.telegraph.co.uk

## Genre:

Non-fiction — travel article

## Cross-curricular links:

- Geography (the Pyrenees)
- Art (Charles Rennie Mackintosh)
- Science (circuit diagrams)

## Introduction

Officially opened to the public in 1909, the Yellow Train remains a popular tourist attraction in the south of France. This travel article uses poetic and imaginative descriptions to recreate the character and charm of the Yellow Train, whilst delivering useful factual information to readers. Before reading the article, show pupils some images of the Pyrenees and ask them if they would like to go there.

## Answers

1. E.g. Because the train isn't like modern trains, so it's like going back in time.
2. E.g. A symphony is where all the different instruments in an orchestra feature in a piece of music. I think the author is saying that the Yellow Train's surroundings are made up of lots of different natural features.
3. b. a metaphor
4. a. c. to inform      b. E.g. Because it contains facts which tell the reader about the train journey.
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Different, because the newspapers that I've read usually talk about current affairs, not travel. They also don't use as much descriptive language. OR E.g. Similar, because it is a non-fiction text that gives information about something.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because the article makes a journey on the Yellow Train sound like an amazing experience, for example the author calls it a "magical trip". OR E.g. No, because I don't like heights and the article describes part of the train journey as being like "the roof of the world".

## Extra Activities

- Split the class into groups. Ask each group to underline examples of descriptive language in the extract (e.g. "magical trip", "tumultuous scenery"). As a class, discuss the effect of this language on the reader. Compile this descriptive language into a class display to help pupils with their own creative writing.
- Get pupils to imagine they are going on a train journey to an amazing place (either real or fictional). They should write their own travel article about the trip, making the scenery sound as attractive as possible.
- Show pupils a map of Europe and ask them to use the introduction in the Question Book to locate the Pyrenees. Ask pupils to research how the range was formed, the climate and popular tourist locations and activities. Pupils should use their research to create a tourist leaflet for the Pyrenees.
- Charles Rennie Mackintosh was a famous Scottish artist and architect, born in 1868.. He moved to the south of France in the 1920s and lived in a town called Port-Vendres. Get pupils to research Mackintosh's watercolours of Port-Vendres. Pupils should consider his use of colour and shape, then create a watercolour painting of their own in a similar style.
- Explain to pupils that the Yellow Train is powered by electricity. Show pupils an image of a simple electric circuit, then ask them to write a set of instructions describing how to set one up. Pupils should then swap their work with a partner and advise each other on how it could be improved.