

Note to Parents – *If you are unable to print off this reading pack, this will not hinder your child being able to do it. Any tables, Read Aloud/Think Alouds etc can be copied into their Learning from Home book and texts can be read from screens. 😊*

Text One

Robert the Bruce



Stage 6 Comprehension Pack

This free pack is aimed at those children working at the expected reading level for a child in Y6 in England. P7 in Scotland and Ireland. (Ages 10-11) The texts have a Lexile level range between 890L and 980L.

What do the letters mean?

The questions in the comprehensions are not numbered but labelled with a letter from VIPERS. These letters correspond with key reading skills. Many schools use these codes in reading lessons so lots of children will be familiar with them.

If your child is not familiar with the letter codes, then do not worry – it is just highlighting the skill for them.

If you would like to read more about VIPERS then there is an explanation on our blog here:
www.literacyshedblog.com/vipers

Reading Vipers

Vocabulary
Infer
Predict
Explain
Retrieve
Sequence or Summarise



If you enjoy these comprehensions, then further comprehensions can be found in our membership area on www.literacyshedplus.com

Robert the Bruce

Over dark moors, a dreadful wind howled at the stars and prodded and poked at a rickety wooden door, making promises of snow and ice. Beyond the door and inside the dirty but dry hut that had seemingly been cast adrift on a sea of heather, Robert the Bruce pulled a thick fur blanket tighter around his shoulders. A small fire fought back against the elements though Robert was disgruntled to see it was more ash than flame.

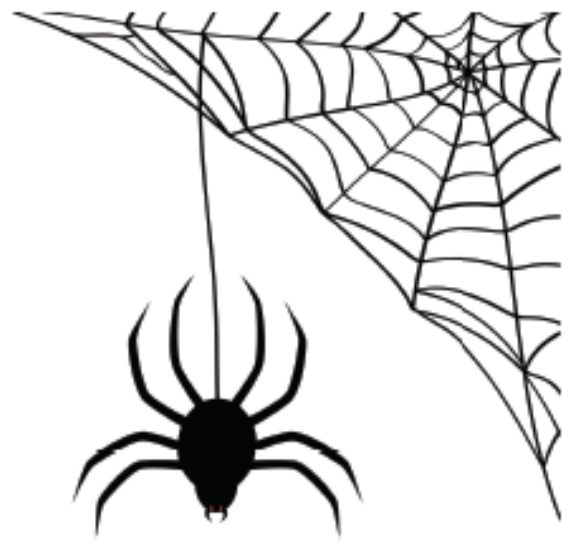
“Curse you, vile weather, and curse you Longshanks. I’ll have my revenge yet!” Robert, the exiled king of Scotland, shouted his daily curse to the night sky. He snatched up a scrap of near-mouldy bread from a rough earthenware plate and tore off a chunk. He ate it dry; the cheese been devoured many weeks ago and what little milk he’d been able to pick up on his travels to the forsaken hut had long since turned sour. He picked up a small flint and carved a line into the soft wall: one amongst a thousand other siblings.

“Four months,” he muttered to himself. “Four months and six battles since that upstart Edward first came north.” He turned over in his bed and stared at the ceiling. The cinders were glowing just enough to make out subtle shadows on the walls. When he’d first arrived - hungry and cold but still strong - Robert had set about preparing himself for vengeance. He’d sharpened his sword and worked his muscles but, eventually, he had grown weak with hunger and cold and then winter had set in. Now he spent his evenings lying on his mean wooden cot hurling curses at the mice and spiders. Even now, as he lay and watched, a small spider was spinning a web where two beams met at an angle.

“They chased me out of Scotland, ya ken?” Robert said. If the spider had any opinion on this, it didn’t offer it. “It all went awry at Methven. He had too many men, there was nothing I could do. They chased us hard, och aye, but they dinna like it when we fought ‘em in the mountains.” For the briefest moment, a tear twinkled in the king’s eye before his brow furrowed and his lips pursed. “I had a wife too, Kildrummie, and a brother. He’s dead now, executed. She’s been captured. The took

everything, the blasted English, that devil Longshanks.”

Robert threw himself back down in a huff and tried to get to sleep, but the small spider occupied his thoughts. Up above, the arachnid was attempting to cast a web from one beam to another; each time it would throw itself into the abyss and fall just short, plummeting towards the ground before its safety line pulled it to safety. He watched captivated as it tried over and over again: four times, five, six. The irony of the spider trying and failing six times (as many as Bruce had failed against the English) wasn't lost on the king, and he sat bolt upright. If the spider makes it this time, he thought, then I too will try a seventh time. If it fails, I will travel to the Holy Land and join the Crusades.



Sure enough, the spider leapt again between the beams and, this time, it made it. Snatching up his sword and armour, Robert the Bruce set out into the bitter night and led the clans of Scotland to victory over the English. He went on to become one of the most loved kings in Scottish history.

INFERENCE

1. How is Robert feeling in the first paragraph? How do you know?
2. What do you think he was doing when he carved a line into the wall?
3. How does Robert feel as he's telling the spider stories of his battles? Explain.
4. Why was the spider occupying his thoughts?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

- V** What do you think “Ya ken” means?
- V** What contraction does “dinna” replace?
- E** Explain how Robert used the activities of the spider to influence his own thoughts.
- R** How many times did the spider fail?
- S** What is the moral of the story?

Text Two

Worst Jobs for Kids



Worst Jobs For Kids

Ever moaned about having to do your homework? What about cleaning your bedroom, or hoovering the floor? Count yourself lucky you weren't a child during Queen Victoria's reign. You were lucky if you were sent to school back then; most children were sent out to work in some of the most horrific conditions you can imagine. You've probably heard about chimney sweeps and flower sellers, but there were much worse jobs out there if you were desperate.

Do you love rolling around in the mud? How about scraping through the dirt to find any coins or lost bits of jewellery? If that sounds good, then a job as a tosher might have been right up your street. It wasn't just the muck and filth on the street though, you'd spend most of your time down in the sewers rummaging around for anything that the rich folk up above might have dropped into the drains.

Tiny children have tiny hands, and they were perfect for fixing the fiddly little mechanisms on the enormous looms that factories used to weave fabric. The sound of the shuttles flying backwards and forwards would have caused quite a din; however, they couldn't stop working just to fix a machine. Instead, children would scuttle around underneath the vast wooden machines and try to time their movements perfectly. Quite often they would get it wrong. The lucky ones only lost a finger. The unlucky ones? Well, I'm sure you can guess.

It wasn't just fixing the looms that children's dainty digits were perfect for. The rise of the steam train meant that lots of children were needed to scrape out the cinders and clean the undercarriage of the engine. Not only did this involve a lot of choking dust and ash, but the cinders were often still red-hot, and many children suffered horrific burns.

Most houses were lit by candles back then, and so matches were needed by the thousands. Dipping the sticks in the toxic phosphorus was another job saved for the cursed children. The horrible chemical would rot their teeth and often led to fatal lung disease. Not sure it was worth it for a penny a day.



Dick Whittington said that the streets of London were paved with gold. More accurately, they were often paved with filth, particularly dog droppings. Luckily for the children of the time, they could earn money by scraping it up and selling it to the tanners - people who turned the hide of a cow into leather. If they really wanted to earn some money, they could help the tanners by stamping the poo into an odorous mix of chemicals (barefoot, of course) and using it to soak the skins. Unfortunately, many poor children didn't have access to a bath afterwards!

So there you have it. There were some pretty vile jobs for luckless lads and lasses in Victorian times, and we haven't even mentioned leech collectors, coal miners, rat catchers, navvies (canal diggers) and grave robbers. No wonder so many children were desperate to go to school!

SUMMARY FOCUS

1. What were most children lucky to do?
2. Which features of children made them perfect for many jobs?
3. What did all of the jobs have in common in terms of children's health?
4. What happened that meant more children were needed in railway stations?
5. Put the jobs in the text in order from worst to best. Give a reason for each one.

VIPERS QUESTIONS

- V** What word tells the reader how loud a noise was?
- I** What did Dick Whittington mean when he said, "The streets are paved with gold"?
- I** How do you think the author felt about Victorian children? What tells you this?
- R** What ingredient did tanners need?
- P** If you still had to do these jobs, do you think you would moan about school? Give reasons.