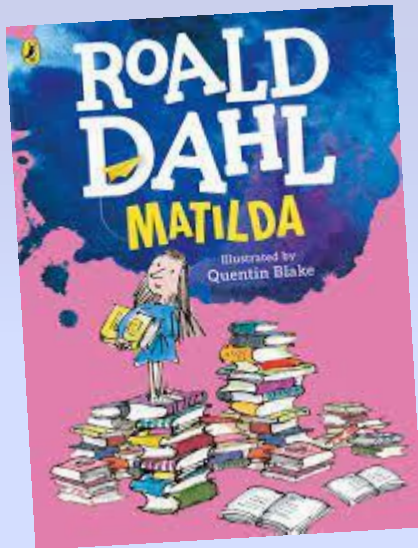


Reading in year 5 and 6

We use whole class texts to develop a range of reading skills and also as a stimulus for our writing:



What does this word tell you about the character?

Can you explain why?

Which other stories have similar themes?

Does this story have a moral?

Who is telling the story?

Sum up what has happened so far?

Can you write a school report in the character of Mrs Trunchbull?

Reading in Year 5 and 6

In our comprehension lessons, we read different types of texts from a range of genres. We focus on specific reading skills (VIPERS)

What are Vipers?

They are the key areas which we feel our children need to know and understand to improve their comprehension of texts.

VIPERS stands for: Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explanation, Retrieval, Sequence or Summarise

Unit focus: Rainforests
Text focus: Poetry

STAGE 5

The Cunning Plan

The rainforest is known as the lungs of the Earth,
Home to a number of unique plants and birds,
Shelter to animals – the large and the small
The rainforest certainly seems to have it all.

But despite all it offers,
It's still under threat,
And in one particular rainforest,
Some animals met.

They were sick of the humans,
With their development plans,
Cutting down trees,
And stealing the land.

In the middle of the rainforest,
These animals met,
To come up with a plan
To stop the human threat.

"We're fed up!" they said,
"Of their noise and machines,
And the destruction of our rainforest
Becoming their dreams."

"They have no regard for the forest – our home,
The unique creatures that are found here alone,
The biodiversity of which we are proud,
The medicines made from plants of which we're endowed."



Unit focus: The Greatest Show
Text focus: Information Text

STAGE 6

The History Of The Circus

Ancient Entertainment

Although the term circus was not coined until the 1780s, the concept can be dated back to Ancient Rome. Here, audiences flocked to daily amphitheatre shows of athletic and military feats: chariot racing, gladiators, wild animals and the re-staging of famous battles. The Roman Colosseum and Circus Maximus held audiences of up to 250,000 in stadia with long sides and rounded ends – like a modern-day football stadium. People went to see a show and to be entertained.

The Modern Circus

The late 18th and early 19th saw the growth of the modern circus. This began in 1786 when ex-cavalry officer Philip Astley opened a show in London of horsemanship riders doing tricks. In between each act, a series of clowns and acrobats would perform. Astley's "circus" was in a purpose built amphitheatre in Lambeth called The Circle – later to become the circus – and was built around an indoor central performance ring. The diameter of this (13m) was determined by the minimum distance required by the riders to perform their tricks and would become the standard measurement for a Big Top tent. In fact, the circus tent would not become commonplace until later, when the growth of the railways led to circuses touring the country.

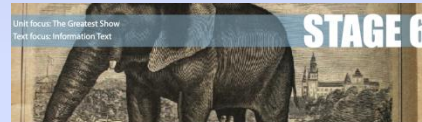
P.T. Barnum and the American Circus

The early part of the 1800s saw the circus grow in the USA, after Englishman John Bill Ricketts took the concept overseas. The first American circus followed a similar line-up to the British counterpart and even attracted President George Washington to their audience.

However, it was really the shows of P.T. Barnum that truly brought the circus to a mass audience. Barnum, who was a sometimes successful entrepreneur, had had some success with his American Museum in New York. A collection of "curiosities", such as the "Teesee mermaid" (a taidemistis model with a monkey head and a fish's tail) waxworks, and "General Tom Thumb" (child dwarf Charles Stratton) attracted people's attention and helped Barnum raise enough funds to promote the tour of Jenny Lind – a singer known throughout Europe as "The Swedish Nightingale". Realising he had tapped into a lucrative business, Barnum recruited more live performers, including a gipsies, Siamese twins and bearded ladies Josephine Cofullia and later Annie Jones, and took his collection on tour as "P.T. Barnum's Grand Travelling Museum, Menagerie, Caravan and Hippodrome".

Barnum and Bailey: The Greatest Show on Earth

Merging in 1881 with James Bailey and James L Hutchinson, Barnum created a huge multi-ring circus which could be transported round the world on purpose-built trains with Big Top tents.



Unit focus: Light
Text focus: Narrative

STAGE 6

The Light

What would you do if you knew somebody was in trouble, trapped on a rocky outcrop by a rapidly rising tide and with nobody else to save them? What if you thought that they might be spies? That was the dilemma that my best friend Joan and I faced. I suppose I'd better take you back to the beginning to give you a better idea of what I mean, and maybe then you'll understand why we did what we did. It all happened last night...

Earlier that afternoon, we'd been scouring the beach for bits of scrap metal or other flotsam that we might be able to sell to the scrap men in the village. Ever since Dad had gone off to fight in the war, Mum has been trying her hardest to make ends meet, but it's getting harder every day. King George isn't doing anything to help us, Mum says, though she says it with a whisper. Anyway, we were digging around when we stumbled into a hidden nook in the cliffs. The storm was growing outside, and the light was draining from the sky. Back at the top of the hill, we could see the gas lamps being lit along the main road, a sure sign that the night was settling in early. Out at sea, the waves were climbing higher, each one wearing a jewelled tiara of foaming white surf. It was not a night to be out and unprotected.

Suddenly, I saw a flash of light, maybe a hundred yards out to sea. There weren't too many boats that used this part of the coast, not since the war started and they'd all headed south. This didn't seem like a boat's lantern, anyway. It wasn't bright enough, it was too narrow a beam. Boat lanterns are broad-beamed to flood the ocean to look for drowning men or lost cargo. This had been a narrow beam, more like a torch. Joan had been too busy picking at her nails to notice, but I knew what I'd seen. I kept my eyes focused on the unseen object until they watered.

Then, it flashed again. This time Joan saw it as well. "It's somebody on the Skull," she said, horrified. I understood why. The Skull is a small pile of rocks several hundred yards out from shore. If you look at it from the top of the hill, it looks kind of like a skull if you squint a bit, hence the name. When the tide is out, children climb over the rocks and splash in the rock pools; when the tide is in like it was now, you do not want to be on the Skull.

Now the light was regularly flashing and with a pattern. It would alternate between long, bright

