

Fast Finishers English
Non-fiction
Ages 8-9

 SCHOLASTIC

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Fast Finishers English
Non-fiction

*Extension activities for home and school.
Great for Fast Finishers!*

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Non-fiction
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Mini-passages with
comprehension questions
Perfect for:

Early finishers in class

Extension work

Independent practice

Homework

Preparation for
national tests

Master key comprehension skills in just 10 minutes a day!

Fast Finishers English
Non-fiction

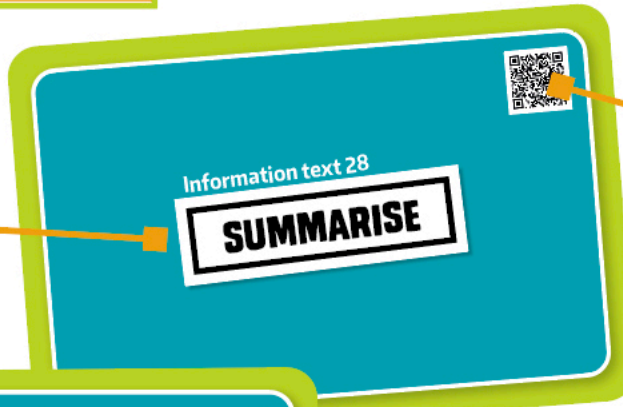
Ages 8-9

100 motivating mini-passages with questions covering:

- Main idea and detail
- Sequence of events
- Fact and opinion

...and many more key comprehension skills

Focus topic



QR code for online version of the card

Mini-passage

A new idea

Over 170 years ago, a man in New York had a problem. He owed someone \$15. He needed to make some money to pay off the debt. His name was Walter Hunt. He was an inventor.

He started twisting a piece of wire to try to invent something useful. Soon, he had created a pin with a spring at one end and a guard at the other. He called it a dress pin. We call it a safety pin. Walter Hunt didn't think his dress pin was a **significant** invention. He sold the rights to his idea for \$400. Now there are millions of safety pins in the world. But Walter Hunt never made any more money out of his invention.

Note: the sign '\$' means 'dollars'.

KEY QUESTIONS

- SUMMARISE:** Summarise this text in a few sentences.
- INFERENCE:** Why do you think Walter Hunt sold his invention idea for \$400?
- TEXT EVIDENCE:** How much money did Walter Hunt owe? Find the words used by the writer.
- VOCABULARY:** What do you think significant means?
 - important
 - new
 - old-fashioned
- S-T-R-E-T-C-H:** Write a list of different things you could use a safety pin for. Be as imaginative as you can!

Focus topic questions

Bonus question

Details question

Creative-thinking question

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ISBN 978-0702-30857-4



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Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the words written on the page. Sometimes you need to work out what unknown words mean.

TIP As you read, play detective and search for clues to the meaning of the mystery word. Nearby words and sentences can offer important clues about the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Playing detective in this way will help you improve your understanding and vocabulary without reaching for a dictionary.



Examples

- **Definition clues:** *The unknown word is defined in the text.*
- **Example clues:** *An example of the unknown word is provided in the text.*
- **Similar word:** *A word with a similar meaning is near the unknown word.*
- **Opposite word clues:** *A word with the opposite meaning is near the unknown word.*

Puzzling times

The first jigsaw puzzle was made more than 250 years ago. A map-maker glued a map of the world on to a wooden board. He cut out the separate countries. The puzzle helped children to learn where different countries were. Now, most jigsaw puzzles are made from stiff cardboard. Jigsaw puzzles get their name from the tool that is used to cut the pieces. A jigsaw is an upright saw. It can cut the wood or cardboard into small shapes. A metal cutter cuts out all the pieces at once, like a giant cookie cutter. Some wooden jigsaw puzzles are cut out by lasers. They can cut very small, **intricate** shapes. Laser-cut jigsaw puzzles can be very puzzling. They can also be very expensive!



KEY QUESTIONS

- 1. MAIN IDEA:** What is the main idea?
- 2. DETAILS:** What is an important detail?
- 3. TEXT EVIDENCE:** What are modern jigsaw puzzles usually made from? How do you know? Quote the text.
- 4. VOCABULARY:** What do you think *intricate* means?
 - clumsy
 - tasty
 - complicated
- 5. S-T-R-E-T-C-H:** Do you like doing jigsaw puzzles? Why or why not?

The busy machine

Washing machines don't just wash things. They do all sorts of other things as well. First, the washing machine heats up the water. It **soaks** the clothes in the warm water. Then, it adds the soap mixture. It moves everything around gently so the soap can clean the clothes. After that, the machine sucks out the dirty water. It rinses the clothes in clean water. Then, it spins everything very fast. This gets most of the water out of the



clothes. When the washing machine beeps, you can take out the clean clothes and hang them up to dry.

KEY QUESTIONS

- 1. SEQUENCE:** What is the first thing that a washing machine does?
- 2. SEQUENCE:** What is the last thing that a washing machine does?
- 3. MAIN IDEA:** What is the main idea?
- 4. VOCABULARY:** What do you think *soaks* means?
 - makes very wet
 - scrubs
 - makes smaller
- 5. S-T-R-E-T-C-H:** Describe the noises that a washing machine makes.

A big step forward



Some people don't have a lower leg or foot. Some people use an artificial

limb to replace the missing part.

Artificial **limbs** used to be heavy, uncomfortable and hard to use. An

American man was not satisfied with his artificial limb. His name was Van Phillips. In 1970, he invented curved artificial legs that were light, flexible and strong. They were comfortable and practical. People could even run in them. They became known as running blades. Running blades are C-shaped with no heels. The shape was inspired by cheetahs' legs. The flexible curve acts like a spring to propel a person forwards. Now, people use running blades for sports and in everyday life. Some of the fastest people in the world run on blades.

KEY QUESTIONS

- 1. PROBLEM:** What problem is described in this text?
- 2. SOLUTION:** How did Van Phillips solve the problem?
- 3. DETAILS:** What gave Van Phillips the idea for the shape of his running blades?
- 4. VOCABULARY:** What do you think *limbs* means?
 - arms and legs
 - feet
 - hands
- 5. S-T-R-E-T-C-H:** If you could have a feature of an animal, what would you choose and why?

Fast Finishers English: Non-fiction (Ages 8–9)

INTRODUCTION

The vast majority of what we read is non-fiction: newspaper articles, biographies, sports stories, science books, business memos, blogs, history titles, editorials, health-care information, instruction manuals, textbooks, advertisements, websites, memoirs, persuasive essays, magazine features and more.

But navigating this diverse array of informational texts can be a daunting task. The truth is, some children are not achieving 'deep comprehension' because they've yet to master core reading comprehension skills. The National Curriculum in Year 4 requires children to understand what they read by learning essential skills such as:

- asking questions to improve understanding
- drawing inferences... and justifying inferences with evidence
- explaining the meaning of words in context
- identifying and summarising the main ideas
- identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- retrieving and recording information from non-fiction.

Fast Finishers Non-fiction will help learners improve these key comprehension skills in just minutes a day. The 100 comprehension cards in this box offer motivating mini-passages with key questions related to:

- Main idea and details
- Sequence of events
- Summarise
- Compare and contrast
- Problem and solution
- Cause and effect
- Fact and opinion
- Debate
- Description
- Author's purpose

How to use Fast Finishers

The cards are designed for instant and flexible use. These compact cards are great for independent practice work – slot them in at the end of an English lesson as meaningful extension work or as

SAMPLE ANSWERS

1: A hopping rat

1. The main idea is information about a kangaroo rat.
2. It has a fur-lined pouch on each cheek. (Other answers are possible.)
3. No. The text says that: 'it doesn't drink anything'. It also says it gets all the water it needs from food.
4. *Pouch* means 'pocket'.
5. Answers will vary.

2: Swirling rainbows

1. The main idea is information about colours in soap bubbles and how the thickness of the soap bubble affects the colours it makes. (Other answers are possible.)
2. Different parts of the bubble get thinner and thicker as the mixture moves. (Other answers are possible.)
3. The text says that: 'Where there is no colour at all, the bubble is extremely thin... a colourless bubble is probably the thinnest thing...'
4. *Sinks* means 'moves down'.
5. Answers will vary.

3: Puzzling times

1. The main idea is information about making jigsaws.
2. Jigsaws get their name from the type of saw that was used to make them.

3. According to the text: 'Now, most jigsaw puzzles are made from stiff cardboard.'
4. *Intricate* means 'complicated'.
5. Answers will vary.

4: Rainforest fruit

1. Many different types of fruit grow in the rainforest.
2. People of the rainforest want to protect it. (Other answers are possible.)
3. The text says that: 'Cupuaçu trees grow in the Brazilian rainforest.'
4. *Flesh* means 'the inside of a fruit'.
5. Answers will vary.

5: Stone Age food

1. Stone Age people used tools to cook and eat.
2. Cooking meant Stone Age people could eat a wider range of food. (Other answers are possible.)
3. The text says that: 'People from the Stone Age used sharp stones to cut up their food into small pieces.'
4. *Edible* means 'good to eat'.
5. Answers will vary.