

Fast Finishers English  
**Non-fiction**  
Ages 9-10

 SCHOLASTIC

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**Fast Finishers English**

**Non-fiction**

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

Fast Finishers English  
**Non-fiction**  
Ages 9-10

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 9-10**

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

Information text 41

**PROBLEM & SOLUTION**

QR code for online version of the card

Mini-passage

**Applying medicine**

The ancient Egyptians suffered accidents and illnesses just as we do. They also had doctors. However, their doctors did not have the advantage of our modern medical advances, our medicines, tablets, antibiotics and vaccines. Instead, the Egyptians looked to nature. Through experimentation, they discovered that many plants and foods could be used for medicine. Liner, which has vitamin A in it, was used to ease sore eyes. Copper salts have a drying effect and were found to be effective at drying up wounds. Inflammation could be soothed by the application of willow leaves. These leaves contain what is now known as salicylic acid. It is interesting that salicylic acid is a principal ingredient of our own aspirin.



**KEY QUESTIONS**

1. **PROBLEM:** What problem is described in this text?
2. **SOLUTION:** How is it solved?
3. **TEXT EVIDENCE:** What suggests that willow leaves were a wise choice? Quote the text.
4. **CONTEXT CLUES:** What do you think *inflammation* means?
  - coldness
  - hot, painful swelling
  - fever
5. **S-P-R-E-T-I-O-N:** Find out why dock leaves can be useful tools. What ingredients do they ease?

Focus topic questions

Bonus question

Vocabulary question

Creative-thinking question

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SCHOLASTIC

ISBN 978-0702-30858-1



9 780702 308581

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## Context clues

Hints that readers use to work out the meaning of an unknown word in a text. Context clues can come before or after the unknown word.

### TIP

Authors use many words you may not know. However, nearby words and sentences can offer important clues to the unfamiliar word's meaning. As you read, play detective and search for clues to the meaning of the mystery word.

This will help you improve your understanding and vocabulary without needing 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.*
- **Synonym clues:** *A word with a similar meaning is near the unknown word.*
- **Antonym clues:** *A word with the opposite meaning is near the unknown word.*

# Lights in the sky

Audiences around the world watch in amazement at expensive light displays created artificially. They may be in capital cities on New Year's Eve or to mark ceremonies for Olympic Games. However, nature is able to put on an equally spectacular light display of its own. The Sun blows a constant stream of particles into space. Some of the particles become trapped near Earth's North Pole. As the **solar** wind meets Earth's air near the North Pole, a beautiful light display is created. The amazing display of moving light is called the *aurora borealis*, or Northern Lights. Tromso, in northern Norway, is widely regarded as one of the world's best places to view this wonder.



## KEY QUESTIONS

- 1. MAIN IDEA:** What is the main idea?
- 2. DETAILS:** What is an important detail?
- 3. TEXT EVIDENCE:** Where do the Northern Lights look best? Quote the text.
- 4. CONTEXT CLUES:** What do you think *solar* means?
  - linked to the Earth
  - related to the Sun
  - part of the Moon
- 5. S-T-R-E-T-C-H:** Find out about the Southern Lights. What is their other name?

# How do you breathe?

To breathe, you first suck in oxygen from the air through your nose or mouth. The oxygen then progresses down your windpipe and into your lungs. Your chest moves in and out, creating more space in your lungs, letting oxygen reach branching tubes in your lungs. At the end of these tubes, air sacs fill with air. Oxygen can **seep** through the air sac walls into your blood, which carries oxygen around your body. The oxygen mixes with nutrients from food in your blood and gives you energy. The waste gas carbon dioxide is produced, so your blood carries this back to your lungs. As you breathe out, your chest moves in and air containing carbon dioxide is squeezed out.



## KEY QUESTIONS

- 1. SEQUENCE:** What does the body suck in first?
- 2. SEQUENCE:** Where does this gas go next?
- 3. DETAILS:** What gives you energy?
- 4. CONTEXT CLUES:** What do you think *seep* means?
  - choke
  - breathe
  - ooze out slowly
- 5. S-T-R-E-T-C-H:** What did you learn from this text? Place your hands below your chest and feel your chest moving in and out.

# Confusing fruits



Have you ever picked up a pink or purple-red coloured fruit in the supermarket and not recognised it?

You may have picked up a pomegranate. With its

varying shades of deep pink and red, it is easily mistaken on the outside for a variety of apple.

The pomegranate on the inside is very different from an apple. It contains many more seeds: from 200 to 1400. Each seed is surrounded by a deep pink or red jewel-like capsule. You can spoon out the juicy flesh and eat that, putting the seeds to one side, or eat the seeds and flesh together. It is all healthy! The seeds and juice are often recommended for their medicinal **properties**.

## KEY QUESTIONS

- 1. COMPARE:** How are pomegranates and apples similar?
- 2. CONTRAST:** How are they different?
- 3. INFERENCE:** Is a pomegranate messier to eat than an apple?
- 4. CONTEXT CLUES:** What do you think *properties* means?
  - problems
  - disadvantages
  - qualities
- 5. S-T-R-E-T-C-H:** Compare and contrast an apple with a different fruit, such as a plum.

# Fast Finishers English: Non-fiction (Ages 9-10)

## 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 Years 5 requires children to understand what they read by learning essential skills such as:

- asking questions to improve understanding
- exploring the meaning of words in context
- summarising the main ideas drawn from one more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas
- identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- retrieving, recording and presenting 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 homework. They could also be used with partners, small groups



# SAMPLE ANSWERS

## 1: Tasty tomatoes

1. A tomato is a fruit.
2. It suits our diet to treat it as a vegetable.
3. According to the text, a tomato can be 'red, orange, yellow, green and purple'.
4. *Nutritional* means 'health-giving'.
5. Answers will vary.

## 2: Lights in the sky

1. Nature has a light display called the Northern Lights.
2. The lights are caused by the solar wind meeting Earth's air. (Other answers are possible.)
3. According to the text, 'Tromsø, in northern Norway, is widely regarded as one of the world's best places to view this wonder'.
4. *Solar* means 'related to the Sun'.
5. The other name for the Southern Lights is the 'aurora australis'. Australia and New Zealand are considered the best places to view them.

## 3: The rat king

1. There have been reports of discoveries of the bodies of rat kings.
2. A rat king is really a number of rats joined or linked together. (Other answers are possible.)

3. No. According to the text, 'These discoveries date from the 15th century up to the 21st century'.
4. *Intertwined* means 'twisted together'.
5. Answers will vary.

## 4: A glorious occasion

1. Queen Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee in 1887.
2. There was a grand procession watched by large crowds. (Other answers are possible.)
3. According to the text, 'She appeared on the balcony of Buckingham Palace'.
4. *Marquees* means 'tents'.
5. Answers will vary.

## 5: Greek myths

1. A myth is a traditional story.
2. Greek myths usually feature gods and goddesses. (Other answers are possible.)
3. Early and late myths are set in ancient times and are usually an explanation for a strange or important event. Early myths were oral stories; later myths were written down.
4. *Oral* means 'spoken'.
5. Answers will vary.