

Comprehension Workbook 5

Sandcastle

Building on the beach



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

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Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with your normal subject studies. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our textbook.)

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The sandcastle builders

Making a sandcastle is not something every little boy does for fun.



It is dawn. Another dawn, another hot day on a paradise island in the Pacific. It is a paradise island for the many tourists who come to stay for holidays.

Just as the sun rises on this day, the tide is on the way out. So, all along the beach near the hotels, little boys come out to make sandcastles. But they are not the boys who are fast asleep in the hotel bedrooms.

The little boys toil away with old tin cans for buckets, making their sandcastles with the wet sand that will hold together until the next tide comes. They have learned to be very skillful and very fast. All must be done before the tourists arrive.

They make sandcastles like the ones they have seen in books, for their job is to make something the tourists will want to see. There are no such castles where they live, nor have there ever been any.

After a leisurely breakfast in their hotels, the tourists go down to the beach. Loungers have been set out for them by the hotel staff, and, kept a little way away, are the sandcastles. Next to each sandcastle is a small tub. By the tub is a small boy.

The boys know that the wet sand is made of water with salt in it. In the heat of the sun the sand will dry out, but the salty water will hold their magical towers and sturdy walls intact.

So they stand and wait. The tourists are fascinated by the skill of the little boys. They walk up and down, looking in to the face of each boy with their large brown eyes. The tourists know what the tubs are for and they drop a few coins into the tubs.

When all the tourists have come to the beach there is no more money to be made, so the boys leave the sandcastles, take their precious tins and even more precious tubs, and scamper off to the shanty town near the hotel. This precious money will help keep their family in food.

Later on in the day the tide comes back in and the waves knock down the sandcastles that were put up with such care. But the little boys do not cry, for the clean beach is just what they need tomorrow to build the new sandcastles that they can put their little tubs beside.



Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'paradise'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'paradise' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'paradise'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'paradise'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'paradise' means.



Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: toil	work

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Summarising

(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

1 Write a heading for your summary.

2 Now write the main idea in one sentence.
e.g. "This story tells us..."

3 Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.

**Finally,
can you rewrite your
summary to make it better?**

1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.
2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.
3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.
4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?

There is nothing wrong with rewriting; even the best authors rewrite their work.

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Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order.
Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make



The boys return home with their precious money.

When all is done the little boys stand by their sandcastles.

The boys place tubs next to each sandcastle.

Their sandcastles look like ones they have seen in books.

Tourists drop a few coins into the tubs by the sandcastles they like.

As the tide falls, little boys start to build sandcastles.



Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.



1 Who builds the sandcastles?

2 Where are the sandcastles built?

3 Who gives the money to the boys?

4 Where do the boys go with their money?

5 What do the boys do the next day?



Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.



1 Why do the boys build sandcastles?

2 Is there a special time of day for building sandcastles?

3 What holds the sandcastles together?

4 Do the boys build sandcastles for fun?



Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.

1 Do you think it was right to ask for money?

2 Should tourists give money?

3 Do you admire the boys for being so skillful?

4 What would be the worst time of day for making sandcastles?

5 Would you give money to all the boys – even those who were not so skillful and if so, why?





Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.



Discussion topic: The best time of day

The tide comes and goes at different times each day. If you were a small child who had to build sandcastles to help your family make a living, how would you cope? Discuss when tourists use a beach and what you would have to do to make the best of your chances.



Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



The sandcastle is attacked!

Sandcastles can be made so well that they look like real castles. Write a story imagining this castle coming to life when the tourists go home, and how the soldiers would cope as it comes under attack from soldiers in a rival sandcastle...

The sandcastle-builders

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