

Comprehension Workbook 6

# Rockpool

## Herman's home



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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# Herman's home

Herman was a hermit crab. Like other hermit crabs, he carried his house around on his back. Herman's house was a shiny winkle-type shell, that its owner and grower no longer needed. This was because, although Herman did not know it, its owner and grower had long since gone to the great rockpool in the sky thanks to the probing beak of a very hungry bird.



But when Herman came across this shiny shell it seemed ideal, and for many happy months he had crawled about quite lazily inside one particularly desirable rockpool at the end of a long beach.

Twice a day the sea rose and new water flooded in to his rockpool, bringing in a new selection of dainty morsels to eat. It was a bit of a rough and tumble time as waves splashed about, but then Herman was used to that.

In fact, it was more uncomfortable when the tide dropped, for then the pool water became still and birds could be seen overhead looking into the water. But Herman kept his head inside his home and he kept his some well out of sight below a large stone on the floor of the pool.

But now summer had arrived and there were people on the beach. Herman was not sure what this meant until he found long soft feelers groping around in the water near his stone. Lucy – who owned the long soft feelers, but preferred to call them fingers of her hand – was looking for things in the pool. She was also remarkably good at finding them. Soon she had picked up Sammy his flat-shelled neighbour and was holding him up for her brother to see. Then she put him back and he scuttled away under another stone.

Grope, grope, grope and, quite suddenly, Herman found himself lifted out of the pool and into the air. It was like being on a roller coaster, but hermit crabs are not very fond of roller-coasters and Herman was getting very frightened indeed. Then a great brown eye came to look at him. He pulled his head and claws back into his home as far as he could. He knew his end had come.

He waited. And waited. And waited. And then he felt himself going down, down, down until the coolness of the rockpool water was all around him again. As he floated gently back to the rockpool floor, Herman was quite pleased to be home. Now if that had been a bird...



# 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 'hermit'.

**b** From that sentence, suggest what 'hermit' means.

**c** Write a new sentence using the word 'hermit'.

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

**e** Draw a small picture showing what you think 'hermit' 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: dropped	fell



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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.**



# Sequencing

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



He found himself back in the cool waters of the rockpool.

A girl began to look for creatures in the rockpool.

The shell Herman found had once belonged to a winkle.

He was picked up and looked at.

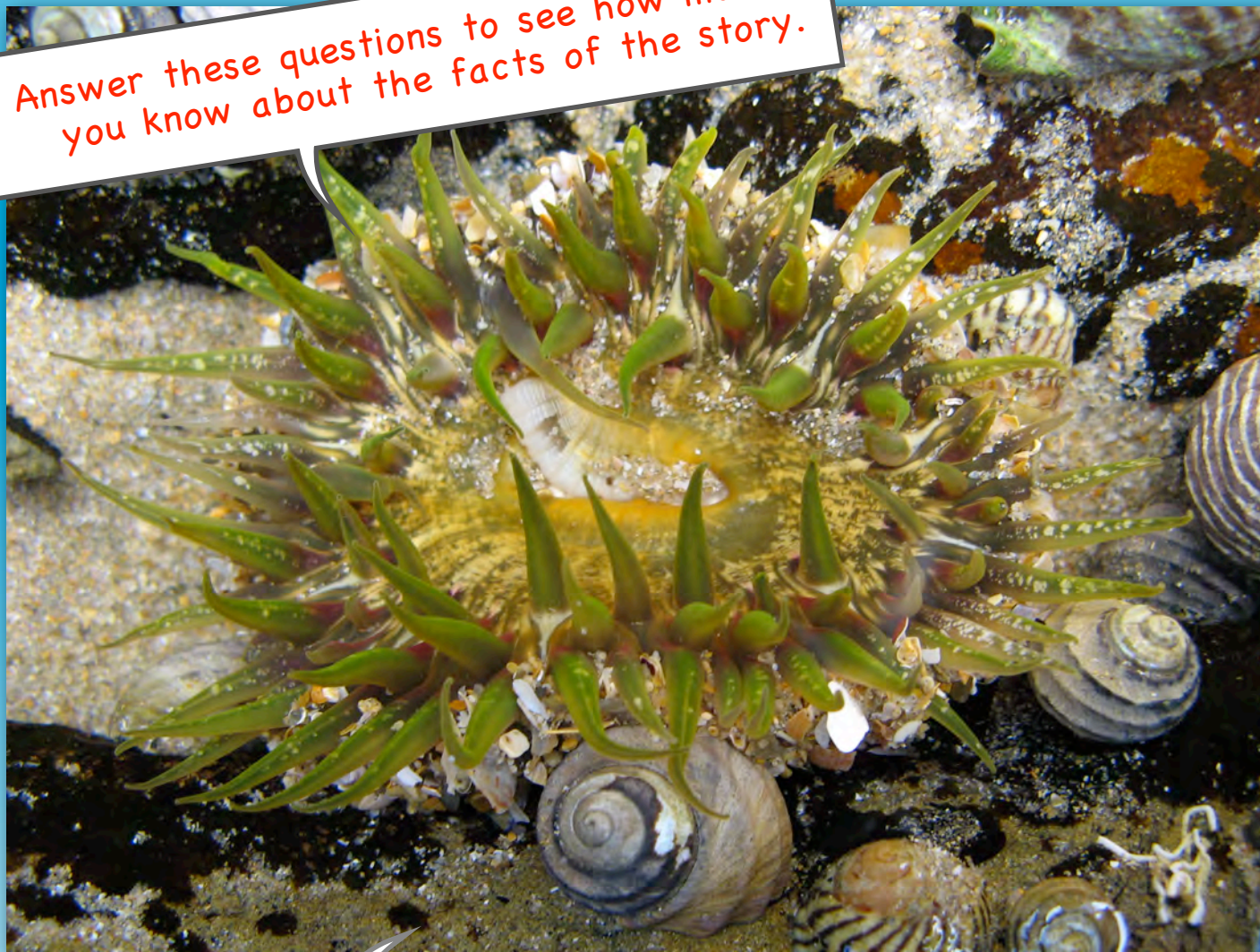
Herman was used to being tumbled about as the tide rose and fell, but being picked up was frightening.

Herman found a new shell.



# Get to the facts

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



1 Where did Herman live?

2 What did Herman use for a home?

3 Who picked Herman up?

4 How many times did the tide rise?

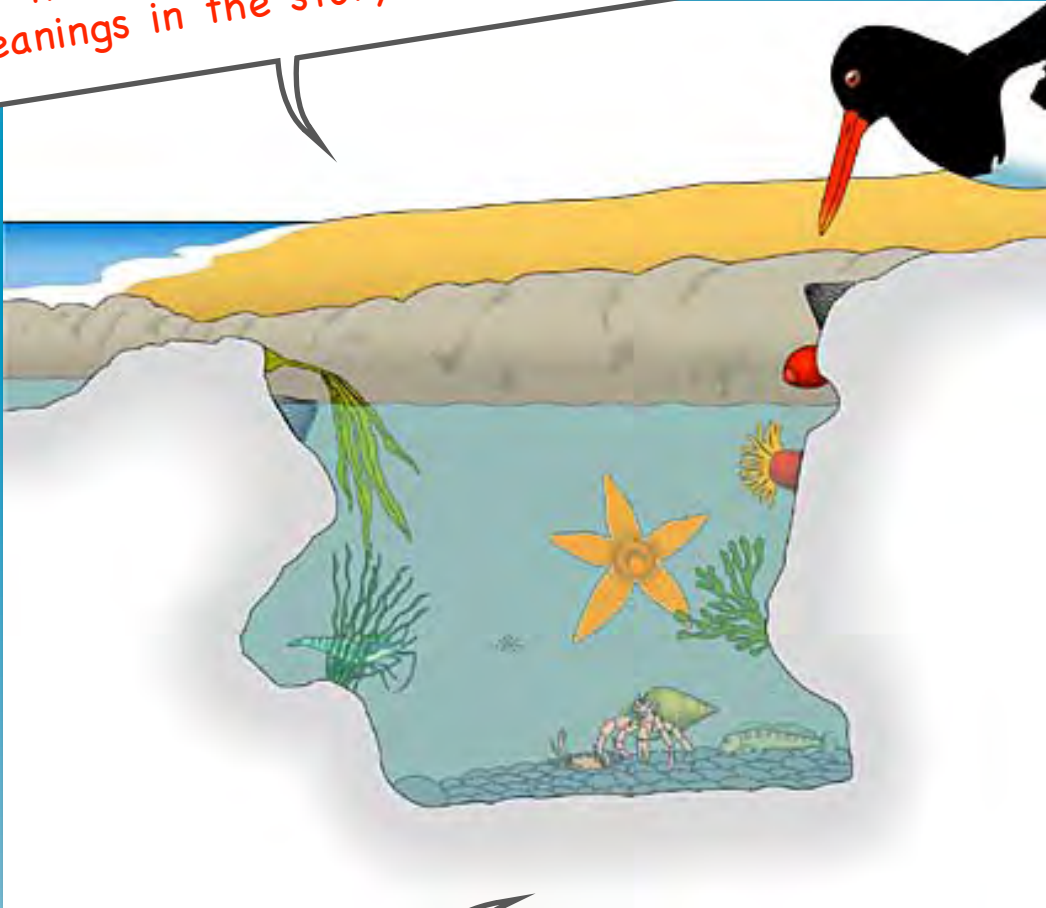
5 What was the name of Herman's neighbour?





# 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 did Herman live in a shell?

2 What was useful about the tide rising?

3 Why was it uncomfortable when the tide dropped?

4 What was special about summer?





# Opinions matter

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

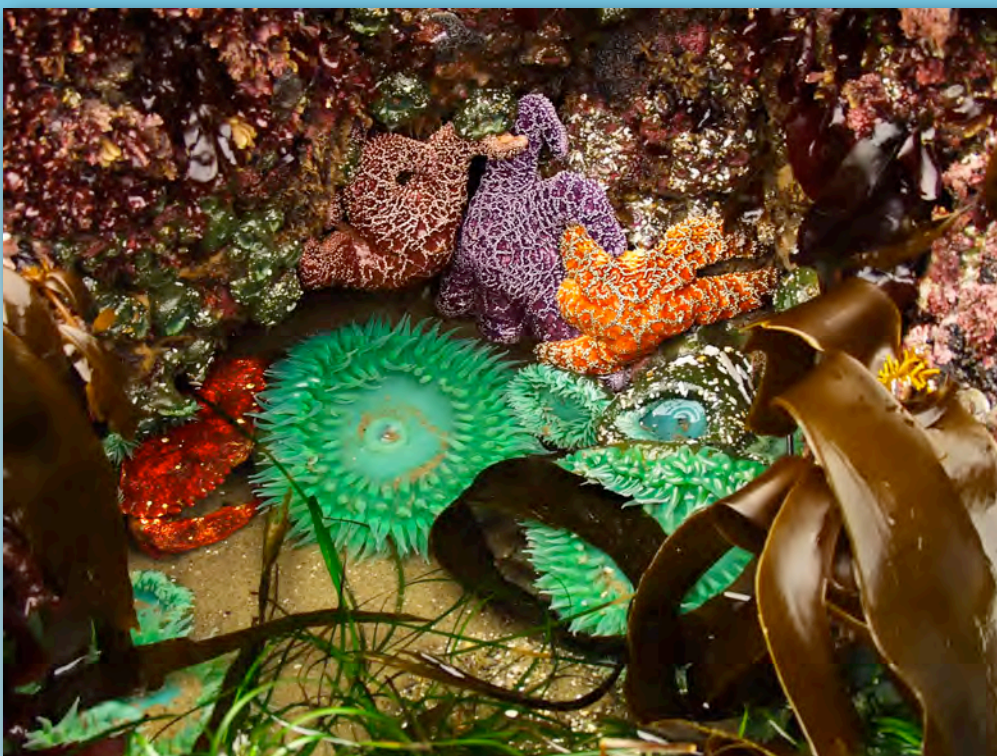
1 Do you think it was right for Lucy to pick up Herman?

2 What was Herman keeping out of sight from?

3 Write about the best place to live in a rockpool.

4 What do you think Herman was waiting for?

5 What is suggested by 'Now if that had been a bird...'?





# Talking it through

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



## Discussion topic: Rockpool hunting

It is interesting to see what is in a rockpool, but what do you do when you find something? Do you put it into a jar and take it home, put it back, leave it alone completely or what? Discuss what is best.





# Make a story...

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



## High and dry!

Herman the hermit crab has misjudged the tide and he finds he has crawled onto a rocky area which has been left high and dry as the tide falls. His favourite pool is some distance away. (Now you make up a story about what happens next)...



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