

Comprehension Workbook 4

Landslide!

Cliffs and waves



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

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Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

Landslide

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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Landslide

Natural changes happen more suddenly along our cliffs than anywhere else. Cliffs are also places where people like to live because they get great sea views.



Landslides are common along coasts with cliffs. They are very common along coasts with cliffs made of soft layers of rock. In Britain, some of the places where landslides are most common of all are Dorset and North Yorkshire.

Landslides happen because the waves wear away the bottom of the cliff. A strong rock can stand up easily, but soft rocks cannot. Think of a pile of sand; you cannot make it stay upright, no matter how hard you try.

If the soft cliff rock becomes full of water, it is even more likely to get slippery inside, and slide. This happens in autumn, winter and spring, just when the waves are biggest and do most damage. So this is why most landslides happen in winter.

But the damage may take weeks to show. That is why some cliffs slide many months after the waves and rain have done their job. The rock is getting ready to slide, but you cannot see it. Then, all of a sudden, it goes.

That is what happened in June 1993 when a huge slab of the cliff at Scarborough, North Yorkshire, fell away. A million tonnes of cliff suddenly moved. The clifftop was cut back 60m, and on this piece of cliff was the Holbeck Hall Hotel.

In fact, if you had looked very carefully in the days before the slide, you would have seen cracks open up in the footpaths along the coast. The local council closed the footpaths to walkers, but they were still not expecting the disaster that followed.

On the 3rd of June the whole garden of the hotel suddenly disappeared at 6 o'clock in the morning. Everyone was evacuated, and within two days most of the hotel had gone down the cliff, too.



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 'evacuated'.

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

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

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

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'evacuated' 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: slab	piece

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Summarising

(the gist of the story)

Lyme Regis

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

British Geological Survey.



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

Then on our wedding day, the hotel collapsed.

The day before the wedding, the garden of the hotel fell away.

Some days before the wedding we saw the council had closed the paths.

We chose to have our wedding reception at the hotel because of its fine view.

All we could do was to stand in the car park in our wedding gowns.



Get to the facts

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

British Geological Survey.



1 Where are landslides common?

2 In which parts of the UK are landslides the most common of all?

3 When was the Holbeck Hall landslide?

4 When did it begin?

5 How much cliff was lost?



Whys and wherefores

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

British Geological Survey.



1 Why was the hotel built close to the cliff?

2 Was there any sign of what was to happen?

3 What happened to the hotel?

4 How long did the landslide take?



Opinions matter

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

1 Do you think it makes sense to buy a house by a clifftop?

2 Why do you think the building shown in this photo below stands empty?
(it is in a different part of the country)

3 Write about whether there should be any clifftop building.

4 The Holbeck landslide took away 60m of cliff. Where should building begin in the future?

5 Now the landslide has happened, would it be safe to rebuild?





Talking it through

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



Discussion topic: Should you build on the cliff top?

Many people want to live by the sea, and living on a cliff top might seem a good idea. Suppose you were the planning officer of a county and a builder sent you in an idea for a block of flats on the cliff in this picture. Discuss what you think you might say.



Make a story...

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



Too close for comfort?

Imagine you are sitting on this seat and suddenly you notice a large crack in the tarmac by your feet that you hadn't seen before. Make a story about what happens next.

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