

Catastrophe



Comprehension

Catastrophe

Inside my burrow, I twitched my nose and shook my furry little body. A tremendous noise was coming from outside. I could hear dinosaurs running around and roaring in distress. I scurried out into their big, wide world to see what was going on.

Before my eyes was a terrible scene. Huge dinosaurs, such as Triceratops and Tyrannosaurus rex, were usually frightening to little mammals like me. But now they were the ones charging around in a panic. In the sky, Pterosaurs wheeled here and there, shrieking unbearably.

I soon saw why. A blazing fireball streaked across the sky, far off in the distance. It must have been gigantic, as it looked huge even from here. It hurtled towards the horizon at an alarming speed.

I eventually tore my gaze away from the strange sight, and ran back into my burrow. Once inside, I curled up tightly and closed my eyes. Moments later, there was a deafening boom, and the ground shook. I lay very still, until I thought the shockwaves from the impact had passed.

I uncurled my body and cautiously stepped back outside. All I could see was devastation. The impact had flattened trees, and many of the dinosaurs had not survived. Dust was hanging in the air, making the sun darker already.

The dust stayed in the air over the coming months. Nothing would grow properly any more, and the dinosaurs that had survived were starving. They could not cope with the world after the disaster. But I could, and so could other mammals. The age of the dinosaurs was ending. The time of the mammals had come.

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 'impact'.

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

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

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

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

Try this for other words, too. 

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: devastation	destruction

Sequencing

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

I ran back inside my burrow and hid.

The dinosaurs could not cope afterwards, but we mammals could.

When I looked up at the sky, I saw a meteorite heading for earth.

I went out to investigate, and saw the dinosaurs in a panic.

From inside my burrow, I could hear a terrible noise.

I heard and felt the impact of the meteorite. When it was over, I went back out.

Get to the facts

- 1 Which huge dinosaurs were usually frightening?
- 2 What did the mammal see far off in the distance?
- 3 Where did the mammal run back to?
- 4 What had the impact flattened?
- 5 What was hanging in the air?

Make a story...

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

What the Pterosaur saw

Imagine you are a Pterosaur, soaring through the air. You can see the meteorite heading for earth, and the dinosaurs running around in a panic... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

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Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – devastation

Synonym – destruction

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Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

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