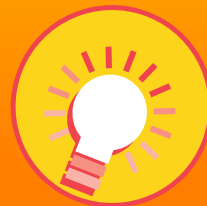


Livingstone At Victoria Falls



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

Comprehension Workbook 3

Livingstone

At Victoria Falls

Victoria Falls today



Falls seen in 1855

Livingstone



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

River

Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with the study of river. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our River Book.)

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Victoria Falls, 1855

In early November 1855, Livingstone went on an expedition to see the waterfall that the native people called "smoke that thunders."

His diary reports what he saw:



"After twenty minutes sail from Kalai we came in sight, for the first time, of the columns of vapour appropriately called 'smoke,' rising at a distance of five or six miles, exactly as when large tracts of grass are burned in Africa. Five columns now arose, and, bending in the direction of the wind, they seemed placed against a low ridge covered with trees; the tops of the columns at this distance appeared to mingle with the clouds. They were white below, and higher up became dark, so as to simulate smoke very closely."

The whole scene was extremely beautiful; the banks and islands dotted over the river are adorned with sylvan vegetation of great variety of colour and form. No one can imagine the beauty of the view from any thing witnessed in England. It had never been seen before by European eyes; but scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight. The only want felt is that of mountains in the background. The falls are bounded on three sides by ridges 300 or 400 feet in height, which are covered with forest, with the red soil appearing among the trees.

When about half a mile from the falls, I left the canoe by which we had come down thus far, and embarked in a lighter one, with men well acquainted with the rapids, who, by passing down the centre of the stream in the eddies and still places caused by many jutting rocks, brought me to an island situated in the middle of the river, and on the edge of the lip over which the water rolls. In coming hither there was danger of being swept down by the streams which rushed along on each side of the island; but the river was now low, and we sailed where it is totally impossible to go when the water is high. But, though we had reached the island, and were within a few yards of the spot, a view from which would solve the whole problem, I believe that no one could perceive where the vast body of water went; it seemed to lose itself in the earth, the opposite lip of the fissure into which it disappeared being only 80 feet distant.

At least I did not comprehend it until, creeping with awe to the verge, I peered down into a large rent which had been made from bank to bank of the broad Zambesi, and saw that a stream of a thousand yards broad leaped down a hundred feet, and then became suddenly compressed into a space of fifteen or twenty yards.

In looking down into the fissure on the right of the island, one sees nothing but a dense white cloud, which, at the time we visited the spot, had two bright rainbows on it. From this cloud rushed up a great jet of vapour exactly like steam, and it mounted 200 or 300 feet high; there condensing, it changed its hue to that of dark smoke, and came back in a constant shower, which soon wetted us to the skin."

Livingstone, David, Missionary Travels and Researches In South Africa (1858)



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 'lip'.

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

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

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

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'lip' 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: mingle	mix

3

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?**

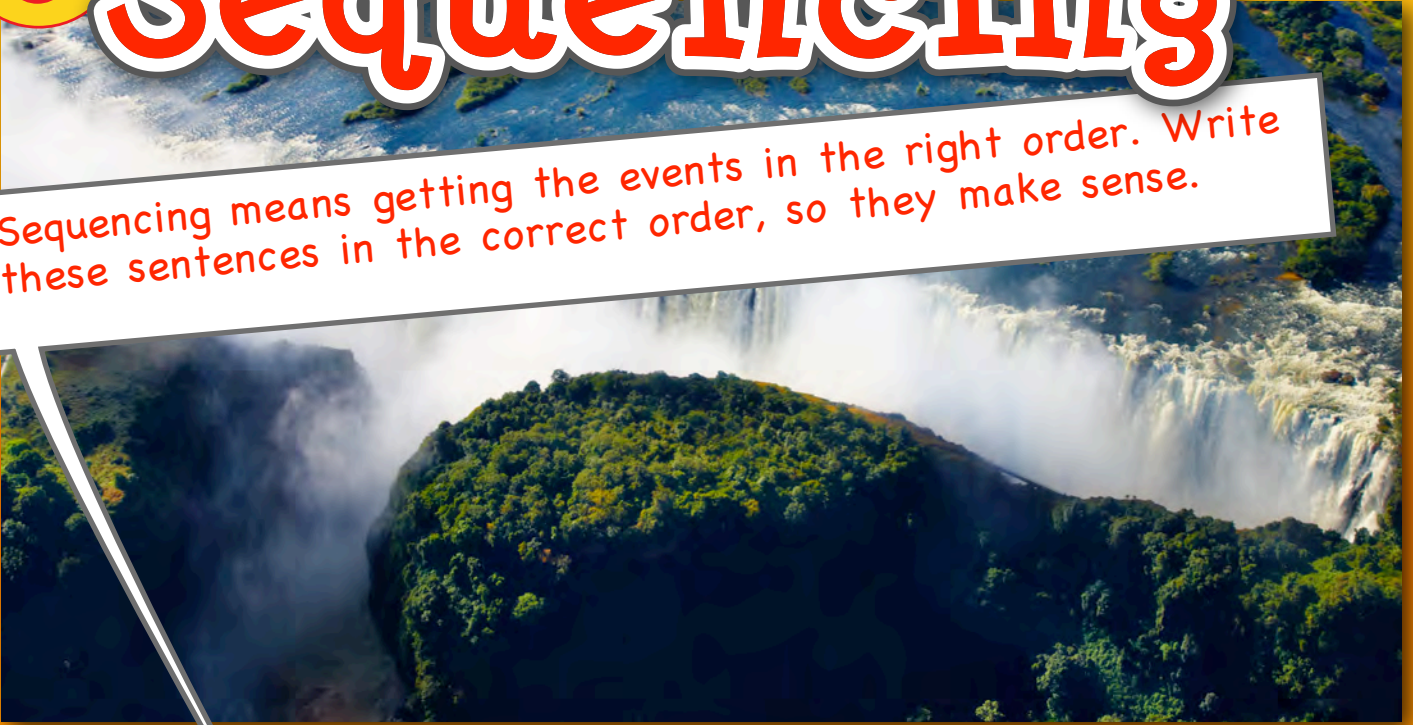
1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.
2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.
3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.
4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?

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

123
4

Sequencing

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



Looking down towards the island just above the falls, one sees nothing but a dense white cloud.

It had never been seen before by European eyes.

When about half a mile from the falls, I left the canoe to get to the island by a lighter canoe.

Then I peered down and saw a mighty river disappear 300 feet into a huge rent in the earth.

We saw the white clouds of vapour, called 'smoke' for the first time.

The river seemed to lose itself into the Earth.



Get to the facts

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



1 When did Livingstone arrive at the Victoria Falls?

2 Which words tell us about the water droplets rising from the falls?

3 Who was the first European to see the Victoria Falls?

4 Was the water level high or low?

5 How many rainbows did Livingstone see?



Whys and wherefores

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



- 1 What made Livingstone call the water vapour 'smoke'?
- 2 Why do you think Livingstone did not go the island alone?
- 3 Why do you think Livingstone thought about angels when he saw the falls?
- 4 How has Livingstone written about his visit?



Opinions matter

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

- 1 Livingstone says “adorned with sylvan vegetation”. Another way of saying this would be “covered with lush plants”. Which version do you prefer, and why?
- 2 Find all the words that tell how he was frightened on two occasions on his visit. What do these tell you about Livingstone?
- 3 Why do you think the native peoples took Livingstone to the island and not the bank opposite to the falls?
- 4 If Livingstone could have visited the falls by helicopter, do you think he could have written a more powerful story?
- 5 Put yourself in the role of a Victorian newspaper journalist who has to write a short article to go with an illustration (below) that has just come in to the office. It is the first drawing of the Victoria Falls ever.





Talking it through

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



Discussion topic: Livingstone's character – in stone

Here, and on the next page, are two pictures of David Livingstone. The one above is located at Victoria Falls. The one on the next page is near to Edinburgh Castle, Scotland. Discuss what kind of character each sculpture suggests David Livingstone had. Discuss if the sculptures are intentionally different as they were meant for different places.



Make a story...

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



The famous meeting

David Livingstone was a down-to-earth Scottish missionary. How would he react to a journalist, like Henry Stanley who met him in their famous encounter when Stanley said "Dr. Livingstone, I presume." Imagine Stanley's task of persuading Livingstone to come back to Europe. How do you think the conversation would have gone? Make up a short play about the conversation, assuming it took place beside the Victoria Falls.

Livingstone Discovers Victoria Falls, 1855

In early November 1855, Livingstone went on an expedition to see the waterfall that the native people called “smoke that thunders.”

His diary reports what he saw:

“After twenty minutes sail from Kalai we came in sight, for the first time, of the columns of vapour appropriately called ‘smoke,’ rising at a distance of five or six miles, exactly as when large tracts of grass are burned in Africa. Five columns now arose, and, bending in the direction of the wind, they seemed placed against a low ridge covered with trees; the tops of the columns at this distance appeared to mingle with the clouds. They were white below, and higher up became dark, so as to simulate smoke very closely.

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