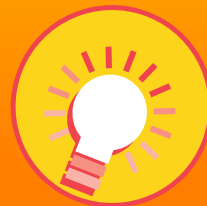


Comprehension Workbook 5

Canyon

Rescue story



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

Canyon

Rescue story

Whitewater rafting



Canyon



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.)

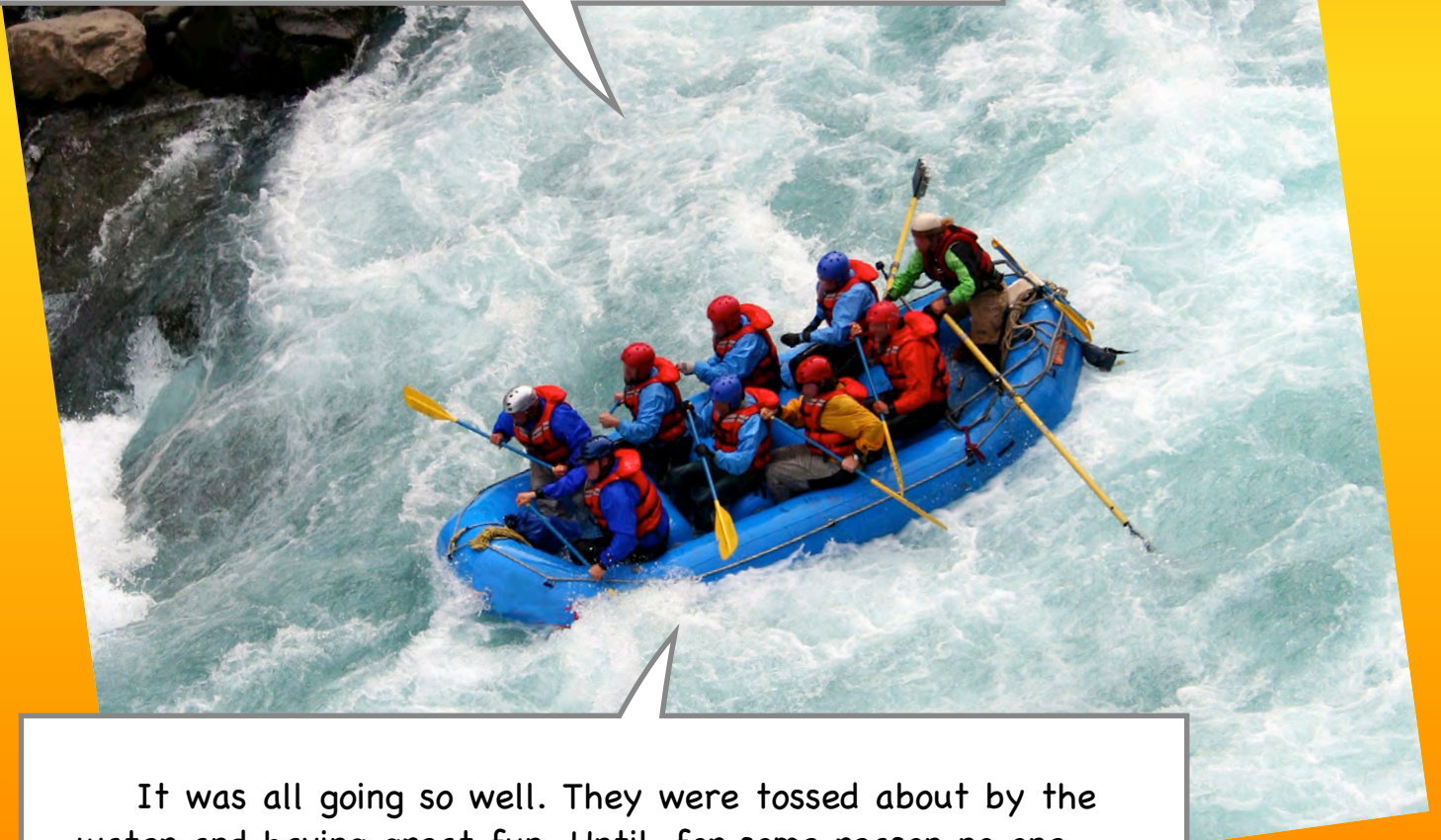
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Rescue from the canyon

It was going to be a fantastic day out. Everyone was geared up with all the proper lifejackets and footwear. The guys in charge were all very experienced. So off they set to make a fun day at whitewater rafting.



It was all going so well. They were tossed about by the water and having great fun. Until, for some reason no one knew, Andy got thown out of the boat and flung into the swirling water.

It shouldn't have happened, but it did. They pulled over the raft as quickly as they could and then Gary swam out to catch Andy who was floating limply and being carried by the water down the canyon. By going to the rescue he was putting his own life at risk. But he didn't think of that, he just plunged into the water and swam.

When at last he pulled Andy onto the bank it was quite clear something was seriously wrong. Andy was not responding to their calls. The end of their rafting trip was still over an hour away, and in any case, they could not risk the stress of Andy being bounced about by the raft.

There was only one chance. Could Gary use his GPS smartphone to summon help? He wasn't sure. He was deep in the canyon and phones don't always work in remote places. But fortunately, he made contact with the rescue services.

When the helicopter arrived just half an hour later, it was obvious it was not going to be an easy recovery. The gorge was barely twice the width of the rotor blades, and in the bottom there was nowhere to land, for the river covered almost all of the floor of the gorge.

Down came the helicopter, its rotors perilously close to the canyon walls. It inched its way down towards a spot a little farther down the river where the water slowed a bit.

Down and down it came until the bottom of the helicopter was literally touching the water.

Now it was the turn of the rafters. They had to get their craft back out into the water and control it sufficiently to get alongside the helicopter. The din from the rotors was terrific. In the canyon it even drowned out the roar of the white water. Using all their skills, they got the raft closer and closer until, miraculously it seemed, they were close enough for the helicopter crew to throw them a line.

With Andy now on board, the helicopter lifted out of the water and up the canyon sides until it was clear.

What a rescue!



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 'flung'.

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

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

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

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'flung' 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: plunged	jumped

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.

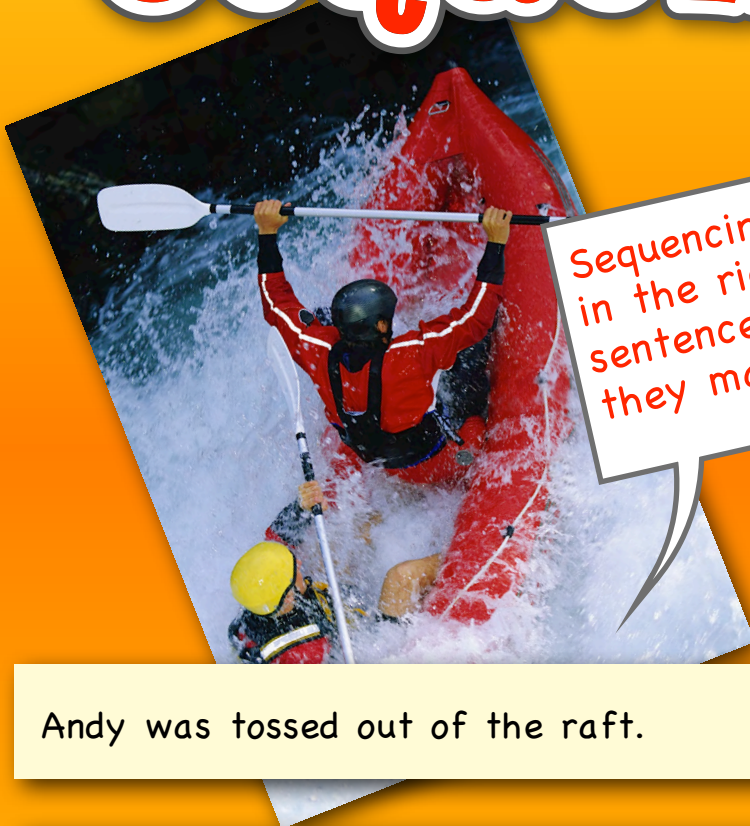
**Finally,
can you rewrite your
summary to make it better?**

- 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.

Andy was tossed out of the raft.

Fortunately Gary was a strong swimmer.

The rotors beat down on the water as the helicopter came closer and closer to the river.

Suddenly something awful happened.

We set off for a fun day whitewater rafting.

Fortunately we had a satellite phone and we could call for help.



Get to the facts

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



Write a sentence to answer each of these questions:

- (a) Who swam into the river after Andy?
- (b) What were the two items of proper gear they had?
- (c) What did the rafters have to do to reach the helicopter?
- (d) How far away was the rafting accident from the trip end?



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 sort of person do you think Gary was?

2 How was Andy lying when they got him on to the shore.

3 What is different between the two words meaning noise: 'din' (the din of the rotor blades) and 'roar' (roar of the water)?

4 Why do you think a lifejacket was useful even in whitewater?



Opinions matter

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

1 Do you think they were well enough prepared?

2 Why do you think the author says "its rotors were perilously close"?

3 Suppose the friends had not been young, but retired people. Would that have made any difference, and would the story have been told differently?

4 What sort of personality do you think the helicopter pilot had?

5 Suppose the phone had not worked. What do you think they would have to have done?

6 When the friends finally got to the end of their trip, there was a police officer waiting by the bank. Suggest what kind of conversation would have occurred.



Talking it through

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



Discussion topic: How would you plan a rescue?

Rescues don't just happen. They need lots of people and equipment. Divide your group into teams. Perhaps you will need a communications team, an ambulance team, a fire and rescue team, a mountain rescue team, and perhaps others. Then think through what you would do. It might be helpful if you made this into a play, starting with the emergency mobile call in the story, but changing it to a cliffside rescue.



Make a story...

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



River of no return

But the phone did not work. What were they to do? They could not go back up river because the water was flowing too strongly. Lucy said to Gary "..."

(Now you complete the story...)

Rescue from the canyon

It was going to be a fantastic day out. Everyone was geared up with all the proper lifejackets and footwear. The guys in charge were all very experienced. So off they set to make a fun day at whitewater rafting.

It was all going so well. They were tossed about by the water and having great fun. Until, for some reason no one knew, Andy got tossed out of the boat and flung into the swirling water.

It shouldn't have happened, but it did. They pulled over the raft as quickly as they could and then Gary swam out to catch Andy who was floating limply and being carried by the water down the canyon. It was just as well he was a strong swimmer, and by going to the rescue he was putting his own life at risk. But he didn't think of that, he just plunged into the water and swam and swam.

When at last he pulled Andy onto the bank it was quite clear something was seriously wrong. Andy was lying limp and not responding to their calls. The end of their rafting trip was still over an hour away, and in any case, they could not risk the stress of Andy being bounced about by the raft.

There was only one chance. Could Gary use his GPS smartphone to summon help. He wasn't sure. He was deep in the canyon and phones don't always work in remote places. But he had a satellite phone and so, fortunately, he made contact with the rescue services.

They would send a helicopter. Great, But when the helicopter arrived just half an hour later, it was obvious it was not going to be an easy recovery. The gorge was barely twice the width of the rotor blades, and in the bottom there was nowhere to land, for the river covered almost all of the floor of the gorge.

Down came the helicopter, its rotors perilously close to the canyon walls. It inched its way down, but not where they were waiting. Instead, the pilot had chosen a spot a little farther down the river where the river widened and the water slowed a bit.

The rotors beat the water down, creating a huge amount of spray. How was he going to rescue Andy? Down and down he came until the bottom of the helicopter was literally touching the water. It was a feat that only the most experienced could try.

Now it was the turn of the rafters. They had to get their beached craft back out into the water and control it sufficiently to get alongside the helicopter. The din from the rotors was terrific. In the canyon it even drowned out the roar of the white water. Using all their skills, the guides got the raft closer and closer until, miraculously it seemed, they were close enough for the helicopter crew to throw them a line.

With Andy now on board, the raft could float clear of the rotors, and then, inch by inch, the helicopter lifted out of the water and up the canyon sides until it was clear.

What a rescue!