# HOMEWORK TASK 1: CLOSE READING - FICTION

## “Don’t Open Your Eyes”

Diesel’s parents had talked about getting a proper house with a proper garden for years and years. She had shared the dream for as long as she could remember. She had pictures in her memory box that she had drawn when she was five years old – with trees that looked like green lollipops, and human beings that were triangles or rectangles, with round heads and crooked legs sticking out at odd angles – titled Our New House. The house in those pictures – a triangle on top of a square, with a curly pig’s tail of smoke sticking out of a chimneypot – had never happened. There had always been something in the way, either not enough money or no houses of the right kind to be found. Now the dream was real.

She looked down from the window of her new bedroom into their new back garden. It had a long rectangle of tufty lawn, untidy flower borders; and a greenhouse at the bottom. The garden of the empty house next door was more interesting. She could see into it over the wall. There were full-grown trees growing there, far too big for a back garden. Through their branches she could see things lurking, like shipwrecks on the green seabed of grass and weeds. Old furniture, and wasn’t that a supermarket trolley? And maybe parts of a motorbike? She decided she would investigate. It didn’t look as if it would be hard to climb over.

(From Don’t Open Your Eyes by Ann Halam)

1. What had Diesel’s parents talked about getting for years?

2. What word is repeated in the first sentence? What does this suggest about Diesel’s feelings about her previous home?

3. What does Diesel keep in her memory box?

4. Describe the trees and the people in her pictures.

5. Which two shapes made up the house in her pictures?

6. What do these pictures suggest to you about Diesel’s age?

7. What does Diesel look at from her garden?

8. Which adjective describes the flower borders and what do they suggest to you about the garden?

9. Why do you think Diesel is more interested in her neighbour’s garden?

10. “Through their branches she could see things lurking, like shipwrecks on the green seabed of grass and weeds.” Look at the word choice and the simile in this sentence. What do they suggest to you about Diesel’s feelings towards the garden?

11. What does she decide to do at the end of the passage?

# HOMEWORK TASK 2: CLOSE READING - FICTION

## “Carrie’s War”

“Carrie’s War‟ is a story about two children – Carrie and her brother, Nick – who are sent to live in the countryside during the Second World War.

Nick threw up all over Miss Fazackerly’s skirt. He had been feeling sick ever since they left the main junction and climbed into the joggling, jolting little train for the last lap of their journey, but the sudden whistle had finished him.

Such a noise – it seemed to split the sky open. “Enough to frighten the dead,” Miss Fazackerly had said, mopping her skirt and Nick’s face with a handkerchief. He lay back limp as a rag and let her do it, the way he always let people do things for him, not lifting a finger.

“It’s all his own fault. He’s been stuffing his face ever since we left London. Greedy pig. Dustbin.”

He had not only eaten his own packed lunch – sandwiches and cold sausages and bananas – but most of Carrie’s as well. She had let him have it to comfort him because he minded leaving home and their mother more than she did. She thought now that it was just one of his acts to get attention and sympathy. Sympathy and chocolate! He had eaten all her chocolate, too!

Carrie loved Nick, loved him so much that sometimes it gave her a pain, but she hated to be told to look after him. And she was bored with him at the moment. That dying-duck look as he struggled to get his case down from the rack! “Leave it to me, silly baby,” she said, jumping up on the seat. Dust flew and he screwed up his face. “You’re making me sneeze,” he complained.

Carrie looked at Nick. She looked at his white face and the traces of sick around his mouth and wanted to shake him. No one would take home a boy who looked like that, so pale and delicate. They would think he would get ill and be a trouble to them.

She said in a low fierce voice, “Why don’t you smile and look nice,” and he blinked with surprise, looking so small and so sweet that she softened. She said, “Oh it’s all right, I’m not angry. I won’t leave you.”

## Questions

1. How was Nick feeling when they left London?

2. What does Miss Fazackerly do for him and what does this tell you about Nick’s personality?

3. Look at the second paragraph. How do you know that Nick is used to people doing things for him? Quote to support your answer.

4. What does Carrie say to the teacher about Nick and what does this reveal about her feelings about what he has done?

5. Carrie shares her lunch with Nick. What can you say about her relationship with her brother from this?

6. Who is the older of the two children? Provide evidence from the passage to support your answer.

7. Why is Carrie angry with Nick when they arrive?

8. What does Carrie tell him to do?

9. What are her reasons for this and what does this tell you about her personality?

10. How do you think they are feeling at this point?

# HOMEWORK TASK 3: CLOSE READING – NON-FICTION

## The Duck Billed Platypus

The platypus may look funny but he is one extraordinary creature. When the Duck-Billed Platypus was found in the 1800s he was stuffed and sent to England. The scientists thought it was a joke! They thought that someone glued the body

of a beaver and the bill and feet of a duck onto it, but they were very wrong! The platypus may look funny but he is one extraordinary creature.

The Duck-Billed Platypus’ coat is very special. It is dark brown in colour and very thick. It is so thick it enables the platypus to swim in water as cold as zero degrees Celsius. The Duck-Billed Platypus claws are also very special. They are about a quarter of an inch in length and are dark black. The Platypus uses his claws to dig out their homes. He also uses his claws to pick up the fish, larva, and insects that he eats. The claws turn out when he walks and retract when he takes pressure off his feet.

The male platypus weighs about 2 kg and is about 50 to 65 cm long. One of the very important things about a male platypus is his leg. The important thing is that the male platypus has a little brown spur on the back of its leg that holds poisonous venom. When the platypus is challenged or threatened it throws venom out of this spur on to the intruder. The poison is so strong that it can kill a dog. The female platypus is a lot like the male platypus. She is 43 cm long and is 0.9 kg in weight. She also has a spur but it falls off in her first year. The female platypus has extra shoulder bones for digging. The platypus lays about three eggs every year

The platypus lives in burrows along the riverbank. The burrows can be eighty-five feet long. The female platypus makes two burrows, one for regular living and another for hatching the babies.

## Questions

1. When was the Duck-Billed Platypus first discovered?

2. What was the reaction to it and why?

3. Describe the benefits of the Duck-Billed Platypus‟ coat.

4. Why are their claws important to them?

5. What stands out to you about the male Duck-Billed Platypus‟ leg?

6. Why do you think this is helpful to him?

7. Describe the female Duck-Billed Platypus.

8. In what ways is she different from the male?

9. How many eggs does a female Platypus lay each year?

10. What do you know about the habitat of the Duck-Billed Platypus?

# HOMEWORK TASK 4: CLOSE READING – FICTION

## “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory”

Mr Wonka rushed on down the corridor. THE NUT ROOM, it said on the next door they came to.

It was an amazing sight. One hundred squirrels were seated upon high stools around a large table. On the table, there were mounds and mounds of walnuts, and the squirrels were all working away like mad, shelling the walnuts at a tremendous speed.

“These squirrels are specially trained for getting the nuts out of walnuts,” Mr Wonka explained.

“Why use squirrels?” Mike Teavee asked. “Why not use Oompa Loompas?”

“Because,” said Mr Wonka, “Oompa Loompas can’t get walnuts out of walnut shells in one piece. They always break in two. Nobody except squirrels can get walnuts whole out of walnut shells every time. It is extremely difficult. But in my factory, I insist in whole walnuts. Therefore I have squirrels do the job.”

“Hey, Daddy!” shouted Veruca Salt suddenly, “I’ve decided I want a squirrel! Get me one of those squirrels!”

“Don’t be silly, sweetheart,” said Mr Salt. “These all belong to Mr Wonka.”

“I don’t care about that!” shouted Veruca. “I want one. All I’ve got at home is two dogs and four cats and six bunnies and two parrots and three canaries and a green lizard and a turtle and a goldfish and a cage of white mice and a silly old hamster! I want a squirrel!”

“They’re not for sale,” Mr Wonka answered. “She can’t have one.”

Veruca threw open the door and rushed into the room.

The moment she entered the room, one hundred squirrels stopped what they were doing and turned their heads and stared at her with small black beady eyes.

She reached out her hand to grab the squirrel but, as she did so….in that first split second, there was a sudden flash of movement and every single squirrel around the table took a flying leap towards her.

Twenty five caught hold of her right arm and pinned it down.

Twenty five more caught hold of her left arm and pinned it down.

Forty nine more caught hold of her legs and pinned them down.

And the one remaining squirrel climbed onto her shoulder and started tapping her head with its knuckles.

## Questions

You are now going to make up ten questions on this passage. You will then swap with a partner and answer the questions that s/he has made up.

Focus on:

1. What happens in this part of the story?

2. Who is involved?

3. What do you learn about the different personalities?

# HOMEWORK TASK 5: CLOSE READING – FICTION

## “Journey to Jo’Burg”

In this novel, a young girl, Naledi, and her brother, Tiro, travel to Johannesburg in South Africa looking for their mother. Their baby sister is ill and they have to get money from their mother so that they can save her. They are black children in a white, racist world, so they are badly treated by everyone they meet.

There it stood, a great pink house with its own grass-lawn and trees in front, even its own road leading up to the front door. The two children stopped at the wide iron gates, looking up to it. The gates were closed, with a notice on them: “BEWARE OF THE DOG”.

“Are we allowed to go in?” Tiro whispered.

“We must go in,” Naledi replied, opening the gate a little.

Nervously, they slipped in and slowly walked up the drive to the large front door. Before they dared to knock, they heard a fierce barking from inside which made them grip each other’s hands, ready to run back to the street. Then they heard a sharp voice inside call out, in English, “Joyce, see who it is!”

## The door opened…

As Mama gasped, the children flung themselves at her and she clasped them in her arms, hugging them. Tears welled up in her eyes as the children sobbed against her.

“What is wrong? What is wrong?” Mama cried softly.

“Who is it Joyce?” came a brisk voice from behind. The dog was still barking.

“Be quiet, Tiger!” ordered the brisk voice, and the barking stopped.

Mama stifled her sobs.

“Madam, these are my children.”

“What are they doing here?” asked the white lady.

“Madam, I don’t know. They haven’t told me yet.”

“Dineo is very ill, Mama,” Naledi spoke between sobs. “Her fever won’t go away. Nono didn’t want to trouble you, but I told Tiro we must come and bring you home.”

Mama gasped again and held her children more tightly.

“Madam, my little girl is very sick. Can I go home to see her?”

“Well, Joyce, I can’t possibly let you go today. I need you tonight to stay in with Belinda. The Master and I are going to a very important dinner party…”

She paused.

“But I suppose you can go tomorrow.”

“Thank you, Madam.”

“I hope you realise how inconvenient this will be for me. If you are not back in a week, I shall just have to look for another maid, you understand?”

“Yes, Madam.”

Questions

1. What do Naledi and Tiro think of the house? Quote to support your answer.

2. What do the children do at the gates?

3. Why do you think they do this?

4. Look at the paragraph beginning with, “Nervously…”

Quote four words or phrases that suggest the children were scared and nervous.

5. What do the words “sharp voice” suggest about the woman inside the house?

6. Look at the paragraph describing Mama’s reaction. What does this tell you about the relationship she has with her children?

7. Quote four words or phrase that reveal the white woman’s personality.

8. How does Naledi feel as she tells her mum about Dineo?

9. How do you know this?

10. “Mama gasped again and held her children more tightly.” What is Mama’s reaction to the news?

11. How does Mama’s boss react to the news? Quote to support your answer.

# HOMEWORK TASK 6: CLOSE READING - FICTION

## “Frankenstein’s Aunt”

In this passage, Hanna Frankenstein arrives at her nephew, Victor Frankenstein’s castle. He has hidden away since he created the Monster and no one has seen him for many years.

They drove through a narrow ravine where tree roots reared out of the mud like gnarled hands. The screeching of the cart’s crooked wheels, the glip-glop of hoofs in the mud, the splashing of the pouring rain and the almost incessant growl of thunder made all normal conversation quite impossible. They had to shout at each other, and Aunt Frankenstein had to shout the loudest, because Igor was slightly deaf.

“Is it possible to live up there at all?” she bawled.

“Igor lives there,” said Igor.

That was a surprise to Hanna Frankenstein, not altogether a pleasant surprise. She made a swift calculation in her head as to how much it would cost to send Igor to the dentist.

“Oh, so you still live there, do you, Igor? In what part of the castle, may I ask?”

“In the kitchen,” screeched Igor. “It’s warmest there.”

The next moment, the rain-whipped air was sliced in two by a terrible flash of lightning almost simultaneously with a tremendous clap of thunder. The horse reared up on its hind legs, neighing wildly, and Igor was only just able to stop it bolting. Aunt Frankenstein drew angrily on her cigar, which refused to burn properly in the rain, fierce raindrops coming right through her umbrella and falling like mist all over her. She was soon soaked through to the skin and longed to get indoors, but when she saw the ruined castle up there in the next flash of lightning, she wondered what „indoors‟ would really mean.

They arrived. The cart stopped with a jerk and the squeaking stopped too, the silence afterwards almost foreboding, the stone walls of the castle rising glistening wet out of the darkness. The thorny jungle of briars climbed high up the walls like greedy claws, the rain bustling down into the undergrowth.

“Looks as if Sleeping Beauty had slept here,” muttered Hanna Frankenstein trying to light her cigar.

## Questions

1. Write down all of the reasons why it is difficult for Hanna Frankenstein to have a conversation. Give as much detail as you can.

2. Why does she have to shout when addressing Igor?

3. Where does Igor sleep and why does he sleep there?

4. Describe, in as much detail as you can, the weather in this part of the story.

5. What does the phrase, “fierce raindrops coming right through her umbrella” suggest to you about the weather?

6. What is surrounding the castle? Describe in detail.

7. What does Hanna think of when she sees the castle?

8. What does this make you think of?

9. What do you think the castle will look like inside?

# HOMEWORK TASK 7: CLOSE READING - FICTION

## “James and the Giant Peach”

The news that a peach almost as big as a house had suddenly appeared in someone’s garden spread like wildfire across the countryside, and the next day a stream of people came scrambling up the steep hill to gaze upon this marvel.

Quickly, Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker called in the carpenters and had them build a strong fence around the peach to save it from the crowd; and at the same time, these two crafty women stationed themselves at the front gate with a large bunch of tickets and started charging everyone for coming in.

“Roll up! Roll up!” Aunt Spiker yelled. “Only one shilling to see the giant peach!”

“Half price for children under six weeks old!” Aunt Sponge shouted.

By lunchtime, the whole place was a seething mass of men, women and children all pushing and shoving to get a glimpse of this miraculous fruit. Helicopters were landing like wasps all over the hill, and out of them poured swarms of newspaper reporters, cameramen, and men from television companies.

But while this excitement was going on outside, poor James was forced to stay locked in his bedroom, peeping through the bars of his window at the crowds below.

“The disgusting little brute will only get in everyone’s way if we let him wander about,” Aunt Spiker had said that morning.

“Oh, please!” he had begged. I haven’t met any other children for years and years and there are going to be lots of them down there for me to play with. And perhaps I could help with the tickets.”

“Shut up!” Aunt Sponge had snapped. “Your Aunt Spiker and I are about to become millionaires, and the last thing we want is the likes of you messing things up and getting in the way.”

Later, when the evening of the first day came and the people had all gone home, the Aunts unlocked James’s door and ordered him to go outside and pick up all the banana skins and orange peel and bits of paper that the crowd had left behind.

## Questions

1. “The news that a peach almost as big as a house had suddenly appeared in someone’s garden spread like wildfire across the countryside”. Pick out the technique used in this sentence.

2. Why do you think this is a good image? (What comes to your mind when you think of a wildfire?).

3. Name the two aunts. What do their names make you think of?

4. How much did the Aunts charge the people to see the peach?

5. “Helicopters were landing like wasps all over the hill”. What technique is used here?

6. Why is this a good image? (what image comes to your mind when you think of a wasp?).

7. What do the Aunts think of James? Quote three examples from the story that make you think this way.

8. Why do you think they keep James locked away from the outside world?

9. When does he finally get out of the house and why is he allowed out?

10. Write down your feelings about James and back up your answers with evidence from the story.

# HOMEWORK TASK 8: CLOSE READING – NON-FICTION

## Alexander Graham Bell

Alexander Graham Bell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland on March 3, 1847. When he was only eleven years old, he invented a machine that could clean wheat. Graham studied anatomy and physiology at the University of London, but moved with his family to Quebec, Canada in 1870.

Bell soon moved to Boston, Massachusetts. In 1871, he began working with deaf people and published the system of Visible Hearing that was developed by his father. Visible Hearing illustrated how the tongue, lips, and throat are used to produce vocal sounds. In 1872, Bell founded a school for the deaf which soon became part of Boston University.

Alexander Graham Bell is best known for his invention of the telephone. While trying to discover the secret of transmitting multiple messages on a single wire, Bell heard the sound of a plucked string along some of the electrical wire. One of Bell’s assistants, Thomas A. Watson, was trying to reactivate a telephone transmitter. After hearing the sound, Bell believed he could send the sound of a human voice over the wire.

After receiving a patent on March 7, 1876 for transmitting sound along a single wire, he successfully transmitted human speech on March 10th. Bell’s telephone patent was one of the most valuable patents ever issued. He started the Bell Telephone Company in 1877.

Bell went on to invent a precursor to the modern day air conditioner, and a device called a “photophone” that enabled sound to be transmitted on a beam of light and which today’s fiber optic and laser communication systems are based. In 1898, Alexander Graham Bell and his son-in law took over the National Geographic Society and built it into one of the most recognised magazines in the world. Bell also helped found Science Magazine, one of the most respected research journals in the world.

Alexander Graham Bell died August 2, 1922. On the day of his burial, in honor of Bell, all telephone services in the United States were stopped for one minute.

## Questions

1. Where and when was Alexander Graham Bell born?

2. What did he do when he was eleven years old?

3. What does this tell you about him?

4. Who did Alexander Graham Bell work with in Boston and what does this reveal to you about the type of man that he was?

5. What is he most famous for inventing?

6. Explain how he first came up with the idea for this.

7. When did he first see his invention in action?

8. What are the other inventions that Bell is famous for?

9. What magazine did he take over?

10. When did Alexander Graham Bell die and what happened on the day of his funeral?

11. What do you think about this mark of respect?

# HOMEWORK TASK 11: CLOSE READING – NON-FICTION

Bird Brains at Work

by Anita N. Amin

Next time you see a pigeon flying across the sky, look at it carefully! Is it holding a can? Or a camera? Or wearing a backpack? If it’s a carrier pigeon, it just might be a working bird.

You’ve probably heard of working dogs that help police officers, or horses that help farmers. Did you know that carrier pigeons can be trained to help people too? What kind of jobs do these birds perform?

Carrier pigeons can be trained to carry messages to people. The note is placed into a small skinny can. The can is tied to the pigeon’s leg. Then the pigeon flies off to deliver the note. Carrier pigeons are good messengers because they’re fast and can fly long distances. They also have a good sense of direction. They can even reach places that people can’t.

More than 800 years ago, Genghis Khan, an Asian ruler, set up pigeon post offices across his lands! As recently as 2010, Cuba used pigeons to send election results to its mountain people.

From high up in the sky, specially trained pigeons can spot orange life jackets in the ocean. Sometimes it is difficult for humans to spot people lost at sea, especially when the weather is bad. However, pigeons can fly quickly over a large area of water in search of people.

Many years ago, carrier pigeons were used to help our country during wars. “Spy pigeons” had small cameras that were tied to their feet. As a pigeon flew over enemy land, the camera snapped photos of the land below. This would allow our military to see where the enemies were and what they were doing. The pigeons have probably saved many soldiers’ lives. These “spy” birds had a dangerous job. They had to dodge bullets, poisonous gas, and bullies like hawks. During World Wars 1 and 2, the USA and its allies even had huge pigeon armies. Thousands of pigeons served! They were like flying soldiers. A few even received medals for their brave work.

In 2006, a group of scientists used pigeons to study air pollution in California. Special backpacks with miniature cellphones were strapped onto pigeons. As the pigeons flew, machines in the backpacks tested to see what gases were in the air. The cell phones sent information about the air to the scientists.

So next time you see a pigeon, stop and watch it closely. What might look like an ordinary bird to most people, might actually be a hard-working mail carrier, a scientist, a lifeguard, or even a spy!

## Questions

1. Why do people use pigeons to send messages?

2. What did Genghis Khan use pigeons for?

3. What, according to the writer, did Cuba use them for?

4. Explain, in detail, how pigeons have helped the military during times of war.

5. What is surprising about this?

6. What happened to some of the pigeons when the Wars were over?

7. How does the writer describe the pigeons during the Wars?

8. Why is this an effective comparison?

9. Describe the study that took place with pigeons in California.

# HOMEWORK TASK 12: CLOSE READING – FICTION

## “Danny the Champion of the World”

The caravan was our house and our home. It was a real old gypsy wagon with big wheels and fine patterns painted all over it in yellow and red and blue. My father said it was at least one hundred and fifty years old. Many gypsy children, he said, had been born in it and had grown up inside its wooden walls. With a horse to pull it, the old caravan must have wandered for thousands of miles along the roads and lanes of England. But now its wanderings were over, and because the wooden spokes in the wheels were beginning to rot, my father had propped it up underneath with bricks.

There was only one room in the caravan and it wasn’t much bigger than a fair-sized modern bathroom. It was a narrow room, the shape of the caravan itself, and against the back wall were two bunk beds, one above the other. The top was my father’s, the bottom one mine.

Although we had electric lights in the workshop, we were not allowed to have them in the caravan. The electricity people said it was unsafe to put wires into something so old and rickety as that. So we got our heat and light in the same way as the gypsies had done years ago. There was a wood-burning stove with a chimney that went up through the roof, and this kept us warm in winter.

When I needed a bath, my father would heat a kettle of water and pour it into a basin and wash me. For furniture, we had two chairs and a small table, and those, apart from a tiny chest of drawers, were all the home comforts we possessed. They were all we needed.

I really loved living in the gypsy caravan. I loved it especially in the evenings when I was tucked up in my bunk and my father was telling me stories. The paraffin lamp was turned low, and I could see lumps of wood glowing red-hot in the old stove and it was wonderful to be lying there snug and warm in my bunk in that little room. Most wonderful of all was the feeling that when I went to sleep, my father would still be there, very close to me, sitting in his chair by the fire, or lying in the bunk above my own.

## Questions

1. Describe in detail the caravan in which Danny lives.

2. What does Danny say about the caravan’s possible history?

3. Why does the caravan no longer move?

4. What does Danny compare the room in the caravan to?

5. What does this tell you about the size of the caravan?

6. Why is there no electricity in the caravan?

7. How do Danny and his father keep warm in the winter?

8. Describe the furniture that they have. What is Danny’s opinion of this?

9. What does Danny love most about living there?

10. Which word in the last paragraph shows this?

11. How does Danny feel knowing that his father is so close to him at night? What does this suggest about their relationship?

# HOMEWORK TASK 13: CLOSE READING – NON-FICTION

Alexander the Great stood with his army on the western shore of the Tigris River. He and his men had marched north from Tyre, crossing acres and acres of blackened land. Darius III had had his “Immortals” burn to the ground the long wheat grass that had been growing there. He had hoped to slow the advance of Alexander and his mighty fighting force.

Darius‟ strategy had done little to delay the progress of the Greek forces. They prepared now to ford the Tigris, and to continue onward toward the village of Mosul. They knew that Darius III and the Persian warriors were camped nearby on the plain of Gaugamela. They remained unaware of Darius‟ newest tactic.

When Alexander and his men reached the plain of Gaugamela, they found that the ground had been made level. The Persian chariots stood in formation, ready to attack across that flat surface. Darius expected his scythed chariots to propel themselves forcefully into the Greek forces, with their curved blades ripping at the flesh of both horses and men.

The chariots began their rapid drive toward the army of Alexander the Great. The Greek general, having made a quick assessment of the situation, ordered the ranks of the Greek fighters to split apart. This manoeuvre left the Persians moving forward, without having anyone to mow down. Because they travelled at great speed, the Persians could not get turned around. Caught between enemy lines, many Persian chariot drivers fell victim to the spears and arrows of their Greek opponents.

Still, Darius was not ready to surrender. He spotted places where his men could outflank the Greeks, sneaking around behind the enemy ranks. Some enemy units met the fate that Darius had intended, that of being run over by the Persian chariots. None of this, however, seemed to faze Alexander the Great.

The Greek general ordered the Companions, the cavalry, to form a wedge. The point of the wedge charged directly at Darius. The Persian King fled, leading to a collapse of whatever resistance he had managed to muster. Alexander the Great again emerged as the victor.

Alexander’s first impulse was to direct his men on a chase after the fleeing Darius. He chose, instead, to go south to Babylon, where he allowed his men to have one month of rest. From there Alexander headed his army east, toward the treasures that lay in central Persia.

Questions

1. Where did Alexander the Great and Darius III have their second meeting?

2. What pointed object did the flanks of the Greek Companions resemble when they charged at the Persians?

3. Who won the battle on the plain of Gaugamela?

4. How did Darius III hoped to beat Alexander?

5. After defeating Darius III, where did Alexander take his men?

6. Where did he intend to go after this?

7. What River did Alexander and his men have to cross in order to have their second meeting with Darius III?

7. How did Darius react when he found his chariots surrounded?

# HOMEWORK TASK 14: CLOSE READING – FICTION

“The Son of Neptune: Percy Jackson Returns”

The snake‐haired ladies were starting to annoy Percy.

They should’ve died three days ago when he dropped a crate of bowling balls on them at the Napa Bargain Mart. They should’ve died two days ago when he ran over them with a police car in Martinez. They definitely should’ve died this morning when he cut off their heads in Tilden Park.

No matter how many times Percy killed them and watched them crumble to powder, they just kept re‐forming like large evil dust bunnies.

He couldn’t even seem to outrun them.

He reached the top of the hill and caught his breath. How long since he’d killed them last? Maybe two hours. They never seemed to stay dead longer than that.

The past few days, he’d hardly slept. He’d eaten whatever he could scrounge – vending machine Gummi Bears, stale bagels, even a Jack in the Crack burrito, which was a new personal low. His clothes were torn, burned and splattered with monster slime.

He’d only survived this long because the two snake‐haired ladies – gorgons, they called themselves – couldn’t seem to kill him either. Their claws didn’t cut his skin. Their teeth broke whenever they tried to bite him. But Percy couldn’t keep going much longer. Soon he’d collapse from exhaustion, and then – as hard as he was to kill – he was pretty sure the gorgons would find a way.

He scanned his surroundings. Under different circumstances, he might’ve enjoyed the view. To his left, golden hills rolled inland, dotted with lakes, woods, and a few herds of cows. To his right, the flatlands of Berkeley and Oakland marched west – a vast checkerboard of neighborhoods with several million people who probably did not want their morning interrupted by two monsters and a filthy demigod.

Farther west, San Francisco Bay glittered under a silvery haze. Past that, a wall of fog had swallowed most of San Francisco, leaving just the tops of skyscrapers and the towers of the Golden Gate Bridge.

A vague sadness weighed on Percy’s chest. Something told him he’d been to San Francisco before. The city had some connection to Annabeth – the only person he could remember from his past. His memory of her was frustratingly dim. The wolf had promised he would see her again and regain his memory ‐‐ if he succeeded in his journey.

Should he try to cross the bay?

The wind changed. Percy caught the sour scent of reptile. A hundred yards down the slope, something rustled through the woods – snapping branches, crunching leaves, hissing. Gorgons.

Questions

1. Which phrase is repeated in the second paragraph?

2. Why do you think the writer repeats this particular phrase?

3. How does Percy feel about the “snake-haired ladies”. Quote to support your answer.

4. “His clothes were torn, burned and splattered with monster slime.” What does this reveal to you about Percy’s life?

5. How has he managed to survive the Gorgons to this point?

6. Why does he think that this will not last?

7. Describe, using your own words as far as possible, Percy’s surroundings.

8. Why does Percy feel saddened when he looks at San Francisco?

9. What do you learn about Percy’s past life?

10. Who appears at the end of this extract? How does the writer describe them?

Short Research Task

Find out what a Gorgon was and what it looked like.

You can either draw it in your homework jotter or you can print it out and stick it into your jotter.

# HOMEWORK TASK 15: CLOSE READING – NON-FICTION

## MOUNT EVEREST

At an elevation of 29,028 feet (8848 metres) above sea level, Mount Everest is the world’s tallest mountain. Mount Everest is relatively young, having been formed only 60 million years ago, and it is still growing a few millimetres every year!

Mount Everest is in the mountain range called the Himalayas. The summit ridge of Mount Everest separates Nepal and Tibet. Each place has a special name for this giant mountain. The Nepalese name is Sagarmatha, which means “goddess of the sky”. The Tibetan name is Chomolungma, which means “mother goddess of the universe”. In English, Mount Everest is named after Sir George Everest, the first person to record the height and location of the mountain.

A climb to the summit was attempted by George Mallory in 1922, who famously gave his reason for wanting to climb Everest as “because it’s there.” He attempted to reach the summit again in the company of Andrew Irvine in 1924, but on this trip both climbers disappeared.

The first successful ascent (and descent) of Mount Everest was accomplished by Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay on May 29th, 1953. The first ascent by a woman was on May 16th, 1975, by Junko Tabei from Japan.

Between 1921 and 2007, over two thousand people have climbed Mount Everest, some more than once. Since the first ascent in 1953, more than 600 climbers from 20 different countries have reached the summit. However, over two hundred climbers have died attempting to climb Mount Everest, most commonly from avalanches, but also from falls in crevasses, cold, or high-altitude sicknesses.

Now that you have learned a lot about Mount Everest, you are going to choose another famous landmark and find out the same detailed information.

You could research: The Pyramids The Great Wall of China Stonehenge Acropolis of Athens Colosseum in Rome Statue of Liberty