



Session 1 - Close Read

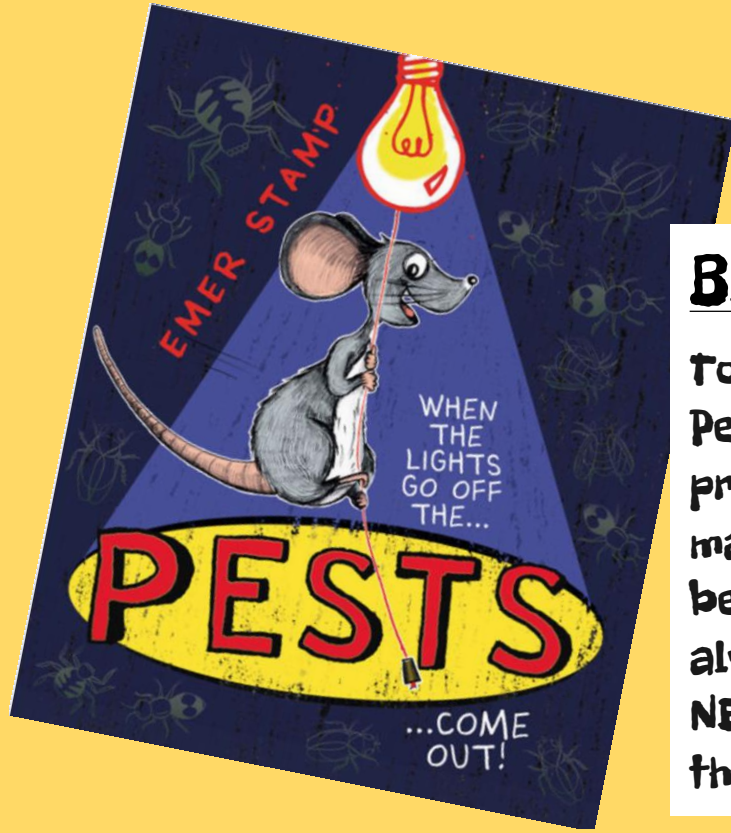
Teacher Notes

The purpose of a close read activity is to gain an understanding of the text by reading it multiple times and making sure we really study what the author is trying to tell us.

(All close read texts are age appropriate.)

Close Read Instructions:

- 1) Read the blurb about the text to see where it is taken from.
- 2) Look at the vocabulary highlighted. Do you know what the words mean? The vocabulary box will help you.
- 3) Read the text to yourself and think:
What did I just read?
What did it say?
 - 1) Now read the text again with a grown-up.
 - 2) Read the questions and now reread the text again to find the clues for your answer.
 - 3) Answer the questions in writing.



Blurb

Today's extract is from the book **Pests** about a mouse called **Stix**. He probably lives behind your washing machine, but you wouldn't know it, because his grandma taught him to always stay out of trouble and **NEVER** let the humans know he's there.

She says we must ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS 'Keep It Tidy'.

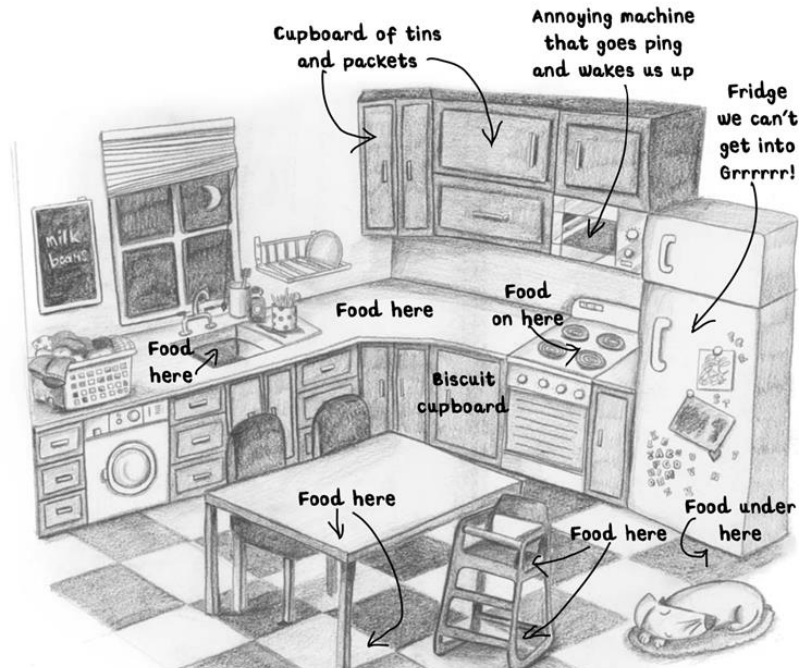
The Four Rules of Keeping It Tidy:

1. Never tear open packets.
2. Never chew holes in cardboard or plastic containers.
3. Never poop in places mans will see.
4. Never let your nails grow so long they scratch on the floor.

I've had these **drummed into me** every day since I can remember.

So, all day we hide and sleep, tucked away in our little nest. Then, when night falls – once we're sure the **coast is clear** and the mans are fast asleep – we creep out of bed and down the back of the washing machine and out into ... the kitchen!

My grandma chose the washing machine to live behind because it's warm and it's safe (no mans ever look behind their washing machine) and, most importantly, it's near food.



Vocabulary Box

drummed into me - told again and again until I can't forget (like a drumbeat rhythm stuck in your head).

coast is clear - what someone who is keeping a look-out says to tell you that it's safe to come out of your hiding place. It's what smugglers used to say!

Questions

1. Read the 4 rules of keeping tidy. They are not just about keeping tidy, why else might Stix's grandma have made these rules?
1. Why did his grandma choose their home to be behind the washing machine?
1. Draw a picture of your kitchen labelling all the places a mouse might:
 - a. find food
 - b. choose to live
 - c. find things scary or annoying.



Session 2 - Sentence Writing

Teacher Notes

The purpose of this session is to practise some precise grammar skills in sentence writing. The skill we are looking at today is to use adjectives (describing words) effectively. The purpose of using adjectives is to make our descriptions clearer and to 'paint' a specific picture in the reader's mind. We suggest that no more than two adjectives are used to describe something (where two are used, a comma may be used to separate them). To use adjectives effectively, they must add something - there is little use in using *tall* to describe a skyscraper or *green* to describe grass.

How many adjectives can you find in this extract?

They had to cross the river on the stone bridge. Will looked back down at the old mill as he and Mum climbed the cobbled street on the other side. The tall trees that grew along the riverbank blocked the view, but a warm breeze parted the branches for a second. Was that a face in the top-floor window? Ghost-white, it was looking down at the rushing water. Then the thick leaves hid the building again.

Answer:
stone
white

rushing

old
thick

cobbled

tall

warm

ghost-

Copy out each sentence two times. Add different adjectives each time to change the meaning of the sentences. The first one has been done for you.

1. The old man walked down the deserted lane with his faithful dog.

2. The fit, young man walked down the grassy lane with his playful dog.

2. Inside the room, _____ woman sat on her _____ chair.

3. They watched as the _____ ship sailed across the _____ sea.

4. Suddenly, the _____ puppy wagged his _____ tail.

5. Together, the _____ children crept down the _____ passageway.

6. _____ clouds drifted across the _____ sky towards the _____ forest



Hints:

- You can use either one or two adjectives in each place. If you use two, try to put a comma (,) in between them.
- Colours are okay to use as long as you use another adjective with them (e.g. oozy, green slime)



Session 3 - Reading Comprehension

Teacher Notes

Typically reading comprehension extracts are longer than those used for Close Read exercises. The purpose of the reading comprehension is, as the name suggests, to develop and demonstrate an understanding of the text. Your child should be encouraged to read the text twice before attempting to answer the questions. They should refer to the text as they are answering the question using the techniques of **scanning** (searching the text for a key-word) and **skimming** ('hopping' over the text not reading every word in order to locate the part where the answer may lie).

Close Read Instructions:

- 1) This text is about a famous explorer - Christopher Columbus - who we will be looking at in History sessions.
- 2) Read the text.
- 3) Now read the text again with a grown-up.
- 4) Read the questions and now reread the text again to find the clues for your answer (look for key-words in the question and use **scanning** and **skimming** to help you find them in the text.
- 5) Answer the questions in writing.

Christopher Columbus

Christopher Columbus is best known for being an explorer. He was also a navigator and colonizer. He was born in 1451, in Genoa, Italy.

Christopher Columbus' life

Christopher Columbus learned to sail in a wooden ship with sails and his biggest ship was less than 23m long. He learnt to find his way at sea by using the stars, the sun and a compass. Christopher Columbus' dream was to go to China and he needed money in order to do this. The king and queen of Spain gave him the money he needed to buy ships.

His famous adventures

He set sail from Europe, across the Atlantic Ocean, on 3rd August, 1492, along with his sailors. They did not know where they would land, it was a voyage into the unknown. They set sail with three ships: Santa Maria, Niña and Pinta. The journey took them longer than expected and they were running out of food and water. After 36 days, one man spotted land – it was in the Bahamas. He sailed on to Cuba and discovered new lands. They called it 'The New World'. They arrived in America in 1492. Christopher Columbus did not discover America, as the Vikings from Europe had

Interesting facts!

- Christopher Columbus' first trip at sea was when he was 13 years old.
- Christopher Columbus completed four voyages across the Atlantic Ocean.
- Christopher Columbus had a wife and two children.
- The sailors ate stew made from salt, meat and bones.
- The sailors had to sleep on the deck of the ships.

already landed in America 500 years before, but he did not know this. He did start regular contact between Europe and America though. Christopher Columbus also brought back tomatoes and potatoes from America. Before he had been there, no one in Europe had ever tried them! On Christmas night in 1492, one of his ships hit a reef and it was damaged. He had to leave it there with 40 men on board. When he came back for them, they were dead. He sailed again in 1502 and ended up in Central America. His ships had holes in them so he had to wait a year to sail home. He was very ill when he got home and died on 20th May, 1506, in Spain.



Now look on the next page for the questions...

Christopher Columbus Questions

Answer the questions below in full sentences.

1. Where was Christopher Columbus born?

2. How long was his biggest ship?

3. How did he find his way at sea?

4. How did Christopher Columbus get the money to go on his trip?

5. How many voyages to America did he complete and across which ocean?

6. Did he have a family?

7. What were his ships called?

8. Which countries did he find on his voyages?

9. Did Christopher Columbus discover America?

10. How do you think he felt when he discovered "The New World"?

When you have finished,
show your grown up and
check your answers with
them (on the next page).

Christopher Columbus **Answers**

1. Where was Christopher Columbus born?
He was born in Genoa, Italy.
2. How long was his biggest ship?
His biggest ship was less than 23m long.
3. How did he find his way at sea?
He learnt to find his way at sea by using the stars, the sun and a compass.
4. How did Christopher Columbus get the money to go on his trip?
The king and queen of Spain gave him the money he needed to buy ships.
5. How many voyages to America did he complete and across which ocean?
Christopher Columbus completed four voyages across the Atlantic Ocean.
6. Did he have a family?
Yes, he had a wife and two children.
7. What were his ships called?
The three ships were called Santa María, Niña and Pinta.
8. Which countries did he find on his voyages?
He found the Bahamas, Cuba and Central America.
9. Did Christopher Columbus discover America?
Christopher Columbus did not discover America, as the Vikings from Europe had already landed in America 500 years before, but he did not know this.
10. How do you think he felt when he discovered "The New World"?
(Answers will vary) E.g. I think Christopher Columbus would have felt really excited, overjoyed and amazed when he found 'The New World'.

Session 4 - Writing Task

Teacher Notes

This is an open-ended writing task with a picture as the prompt. Hopefully, it provides scope to practise using some great adjectives. The writing need not be a whole story, it could be just part. The initial task just gets the children to discuss what they definitely **know** from looking at the picture, what they **think** they might now (i.e. infer) and what they **wonder** (this is where the story-making ideas start forming).

Once your child has had a go at writing the story, ask them to proof-read it, this is where they look at any spellings which they think may not look right, check for grammatical errors (capital letters and full stops) and whether the sentences actually make sense. Have fun!

Instructions:

- 1) On the next page is a picture that we would like you to use to write a story.
- 2) The first task is to look copy the table onto a piece of paper and write down what you **know** for sure by looking at the picture, what you **think** you know and what you **wonder** (who could the girl be, where could they be going, how did she train that tiger, what has she got in her hand). Don't forget to look really closely at the picture.
- 3) Then have a go at writing part of a story based on the picture.
- 4) When you have finished, go back and check you writing for spellings, CL, FS and sense.



What I <u>know</u> from looking at the picture	What I <u>think</u> I know	What I <u>wonder</u>

Now here is your chance to write part of the story based on the picture.

Here are some key words that might help.

tiger
striped
warrior
wounded
bandage

mountains
lanterns
distance
Tibet
mysterious
forest
clearing

rode
travelled
quest
journey



Session 5 - Improving Writing

Teacher Notes

This activity gives your child an opportunity to read an existing piece of writing, to correct and to improve it. There are errors in spelling, punctuation (missing capital letters, question marks) and grammar (tense, singular/plural agreement) and general sense. In addition to this, your child could be encouraged to add improvements or replace weak adjectives (e.g. *nice*, *big*, *happy*).

Instructions:

- 1) Read my version of the story.
- 2) There are mistakes, can you copy the writing but correcting the mistakes (some of these have been done in a different colour to help you).
- 3) Can you improve my writing by using better adjectives
- 4) Challenge: Can start some of the sentences off in more interesting ways?

tibet was a larger country than Hina had imagined. it had taken almost three weeks for there journey across it. She had **worry** about toran's leg the hole time. He had been **limp** badly and the blud from his wound was beginning to show threw his bandage. They left the big dark forest behind them and looked across at the big mountins to the north. had they really **manage** cross them. it seemed hard to imagine now. the sun was beginning to rise. And hina new that the lanterns that hung from the corners of her rug wood soon go owt. It was going to be another hot day. they **was** warm. Toran seemed lost in his thoughts.

Hina heard a sound to her left
and twisted round to peer into the
distants. Wot cud it have been

Key

 - spelling

wrong tense

wrong singular/plural

