

## Rainforest unit – Y3 Information texts

Prior Knowledge . Check that children;  
are familiar with different forms of non-fiction text;  
understand the layout of texts, including headings, sub-  
titles and bullet points;  
understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction.

Experience - Show the class the double-page spread illustration inside the front cover of The Vanishing Forest and play the audio file [rainforestambience.wav](#) several times as an ambient soundtrack . Can the children spot or hear any clues to help them work out the setting for the books they will be reading in this unit? Use the film Vanishing Species to give further clues.

Use questioning to activate children's prior learning about rainforests and establish what they already know. Summarise and collect the main points they offer as shared notes and add to them with some key *Did you know that....?* facts about rainforests. Use an atlas or globe to show them where the Amazon basin is.

Read The Vanishing Forest Focus on the character of Moawa. What kind of person is he? Encourage children to refer explicitly to the text as they explore the character and his feelings / motivation for helping the nabë. What questions would they like to ask Moawa about his actions? Invite one child to take the role of Moawa and hot seat the character to find out why he has agreed to help the nabë even though they are destroying the habitat of his people. Support children in asking open questions to find out pertinent information, and model the use of effective questions if necessary.

Invite children's collective responses to the text. The story is fiction but in what ways do they think this book provides non-fiction information for readers?

Think of words to describe the rainforest and use *Wordle* software to record ideas, e.g. *dense, green, dark, colourful, steamy, fertile, shadowy, dappled*. Create the word list and decide together which words to write in multiples so they are dominant by size in the final *Wordle*. Which words do the children think should be largest and what colours or fonts will help to convey the mood and feelings they want to create?

Read together Why rainforests matter page 28 How does this part of the text add to the rest of the book? In what way is it different? is it a part of the story or something separate? Why did the author include this extra page at the end of the story?

**Phase outcome** - Children can read to find specific information points in a narrative and refer to examples in the text.

Read The great Kapok tree Invite children to choose their favourite phrases that begin to bring the forest to life for a reader even before the story has started: *everything grows, and grows and grows / colourful parrots / monkeys leap / silent snakes / graceful jaguars*. Encourage children to be specific about why they like a particular phrase.

Groups decide why/how each animal is persuading the logger not to cut the tree. Children record using thought and speech bubbles.

Stop reading before the final page. Ask the class what they think will happen on the next, final page of the story. Will the man continue swinging his axe to cut down the tree or not? Use conscience corridor to explore the issues and use persuasive phrases. Collect/record examples of the words and phrases they used. Edit and add new suggestions to make their reasoning even more effective by changing or adding words.

Read the final page. What did we read about on the previous two pages that may have finally persuaded the man to walk away without damaging the tree? Discuss responses to this text and their comparisons with The Vanishing Rainforest. Which do they prefer and why? Which do they think is the most persuasive? Do the two books have the same audience? Who are they written for? What are their messages?

**Phase outcomes** - Children can identify text features used for effect, including sentence structure and vocabulary. Children can use persuasive language.

Read opening 5 pages of The Shaman's apprentice. Discuss children's responses to the issues raised so far for the villagers. What is traditional life like for them? How do they deal with illness? What are the new problems they are facing now? How can the villagers deal with these problems?

What does the text make you wonder? Using puzzles, patterns, likes, dislikes . children record thoughts on post-its and stick onto quadrant diagram.

Read remainder of text. Mark up the text by highlighting words and phrases that provide information for example, using the highlight tool in a word-processor if reading the text onscreen or a large format, or use a highlighter pen with an acetate over each page of the text.

Show the class the birds-eye view illustration of Kwamala village inside the front cover of the book. The class will take the roles of Tirio villagers. The picture shows the place where they live, Kwamala village. Revisit the information about the Tirio that children have already collected from the text and discuss what life in the village is like. How do people spend their days? What kind of jobs do they take part in? How do the young and old contribute to the community? Split the class into groups, mothers, daughters, fathers, sons. Each group re-reads the text to identify the sorts of things they do during the day.

Jigsaw the groups to form family groups. These will be the family in which they do the village drama.

Children create a *role on the wall* for their own character in the village drama. In role as the Shaman, call a village meeting. Children sit in a circle around you as the villagers. Ask them to tell you in turn, in role, who they are and to tell you something about their day. What have they been doing? Conclude the meeting in role by telling the villagers that you have called the meeting to tell them you are afraid . you believe that change is coming to their lives and it may not be good.

**Phase outcomes** - Children can explore and discuss their personal responses to issues raised in a text.  
Children can demonstrate their knowledge of character and empathy through role-play and other drama conventions.

WRITING:

Model, scribe, support

INDEPENDENT

Provide a bird's eye view of the village as a very large format for display, based on the one at the beginning of The Shaman's Apprentice, as basis for a poster that could be used to persuade people to support rainforest conservation across the world.

During Shared writing, model writing-in-role, as the shaman of the village, to draft your own personal message to the world that will be added to *'The village of Kwamala: A Poster for the World'*.

Model how to choose vocabulary at the point of writing for emotive effect, particularly to persuade the poster's readers around the world that the rainforests should be saved.

Each child drafts their own text for the poster, writing in role. They work with a writing partner who has the same writing targets, to focus on making their text as effective as possible for their audience and purpose.

Encourage them to draw on the orally rehearsed content, sentence structures and vocabulary used in the drama activities. Using a working wall, display materials and phrases created in previous sessions – the Wordle, the persuasive phrases from previous phases.

Model the way that you edit the text to improve its quality and effectiveness for purpose. Working in pairs with their writing partner, children edit their writing to improve it, with an emphasis on its persuasive effect.

Use Guided writing to address particular areas of development/targets.

**Phase outcome:** Children can write in role (first person) to present facts that may persuade a reader.

Children can shape their text using paragraphs, sentence structure and word choice to enhance the persuasive effect.