

First reading

Look together at the front cover of *Kensuke's Kingdom*. Ask the children what sort of story they think this will be. (Adventure, exciting, scary.) Ask: *What does the picture convey?* (A sailing boat in danger.) Next, read the back cover blurb. Pick out the words 'a modern day Robinson Crusoe'. Do the children know what this refers to? (*Robinson Crusoe* is an adventure story by Daniel Defoe, in which the central character is marooned on a desert island.) Ask: *What is the main 'hook' in the blurb that makes the reader want to read the story?* (To find out what happens to Michael and who leaves him food.) Look next at the map (facing the title page). Can the children deduce from this what 'Kensuke's Kingdom' refers to? (The island where Michael is marooned.) Note that these questions may need to be adapted depending on which edition of the book you are using.

Chapters 1 and 2

Read the first two paragraphs of Chapter 1 together and ask the children what questions they raise. (How did Michael disappear? How did he come back from the dead? Why has he had to keep his story secret for ten years?) Continue reading to the end of Chapter 1. Ask the children what happens to change Michael's life. (His parents are made redundant; they decide to sail round the world.)

Read to the end of Chapter 2. Ask: *Which two things does Michael find most comforting on the voyage?* (Stella Artois and his football.) What do the children think Michael means when he describes the football as 'a sort of talisman'? (It will bring him luck and keep him safe.) Tell the children to keep in mind question 9 on the bookmark (page 12), and together discuss questions 1 and 2.

Chapters 3 and 4

Read the entries in the log and the short paragraph afterwards ending 'After that it's just empty pages.' Why do the children think Michael's log ends so suddenly? Ask the children to answer

question 7 on the bookmark.

Continue reading for a few more pages until the line ending '...without a care in the world' in Chapter 4. Ask the children to summarise what has happened. How do they think Michael has reached the island? Remind them how he felt the football was his talisman – how has this come true? (It kept him afloat.)

Read until 'We had survived.' Ask: *How is Michael feeling at this point?* Can the children suggest three things he will need to survive on a desert island? (Water, food, shelter.) Together discuss question 12 on the bookmark. Ask the children how long they think someone can survive without food (a few weeks) or without water (just three or four days).

Read to when Michael finds the food left for him (to '...fearful at this revelation or overjoyed.'). Ask: *What does Michael's discovery mean?* (He is not alone.) Ask the children to consider question 3 on the bookmark. Read on to the end of Chapter 4. Ask: *What is Michael trying to do?* (Send a smoke signal to boats so he can be rescued.) Ask what the surprise at the end of the chapter is and what we are left wondering. (The man who has helped him is now putting out his fire – why?) Together discuss question 6 on the bookmark.

Chapters 5 and 6

Read Chapter 5 until the line ending '...unless he was out of his head and completely mad.' Ask the children what they have learned about Kensuke so far.

Continue to the end of Chapter 5. Invite the children to list the main problems Michael faces. (Insect bites; sunburn; depending on Kensuke for food and water.) Ask: *How does he feel towards Kensuke and why?* Ask the children to address question 13 on the bookmark.

Read Chapter 6. Ask the children to suggest answers to question 4 on the bookmark. Ask: *Why was Kensuke trying to stop Michael swimming? How does Michael interpret it, and what is the real reason?*

Extract 3

- Read Extract 3 from Chapter 5 together. Ask the children to summarise Michael's first impression of Kensuke, listing some key descriptive adjectives ('old', 'thin', 'angry'). Ask: *Why does Stella react as she does to Kensuke?* (Stella recognises that Kensuke has brought them food.)
- Encourage the children to underline all the adjectives describing Kensuke. Can they explain the meaning of 'diminutive', 'agitated', 'ancient' and 'skeletal'? Ask them which details emphasise that Kensuke is old. (His hair, his skin.) Ask: *What do the words used to describe his breeches imply?* ('Tattered' – that he has had them a long time; 'bunched at the waist' – that he is thinner than he once was.)
- Ask: *What else can we deduce about Kensuke from this first encounter?* (Although old, he is still fit enough to run fast; he has been living an outdoor life on the island as his skin is copper tanned.)
- Ask the children to pick out the verbs that convey Kensuke's emotions ('agitated', 'trembling', 'accusing', 'fury'; 'scuttled', 'gesticulating', 'haranguing'). Ask: *What do these words suggest?* (Anger and fear.)
- Ask: *What might suggest to Michael that Kensuke poses a threat to him?* (The knife, the stick, the angry voice.) *What suggests that he has no need to fear him?* (Stella's reaction to him; the fact that he stops as he reaches Michael; he is out of breath from running.)
- Discover whether the children can translate the Japanese word '*Dameda*'. (Danger.) Ask them to suggest what Kensuke would say to Michael if the two shared a common language.

Extract 4

- Read Extract 4, a non-fiction text about the island of Lubang, with the class. Explain that the island of Lubang is where the Japanese soldier Hiroo Onoda – the inspiration for Kensuke – survived for more than 30 years after the Second World War ended. Ask the children who they think the text is aimed at. (Tourists; people wanting to learn about the terrain or climate of Lubang.)
- Underline any unfamiliar words ('verdant', 'pristine') and ask the children to provide synonyms (lush and green; clean and unspoiled).
- Refer back to Extract 1, inviting the children to compare and contrast Michael's description of the island with this description of the real-life island and its terrain.
- Challenge the children to find similarities between Lubang and the fictional island. (It is hot and verdant; it has unspoiled white beaches; steep slopes; thick forest.) Now focus on the differences. (Michael's island is much smaller and uninhabited.)
- Ask them to highlight features of the island that appear in the novel: the cave where Kensuke has made his home; the forest; the fruit that Kensuke leaves for Michael; the rainstorm, and so on.
- Focus on the style of the extract and invite comments on the difference between a factual text aimed at visitors or researchers and Michael's own personal impressions of the island where he finds himself marooned. The non-fiction text is objective, methodical and comprehensive in recording facts and figures, whereas Michael's description is subjective ('looked perhaps', 'no more'), uses simile ('like a peanut'), metaphor ('a green jewel') and personal detail ('not so high as mine', 'so far as I could see') and repetition for emphasis ('Sea. Sea. Sea').

1. The sea journey

Objective

To draw inferences, such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives.

What you need

Copies of *Kensuke's Kingdom*, enlarged world map, coloured sticker dots or felt-tipped pen, photocopiable page 29 'The sea journey', interactive activity 'Map the diary'.

Cross-curricular link

Geography

What to do

- Read Chapter 3 together. Using an enlarged map of the world, ask volunteers to plot each stage of the voyage, using the sticker dots or felt-tipped pen. They can refer to the text and illustrations to help them.
- Ask the children to identify on the map the passages where Michael and his family will be at sea for long periods. Ask: *How does Michael feel when the boat is at sea? How does he feel each time they spot land?*
- Now ask them to identify locations that have different sea conditions, for example, stormy or calm.
- Ask the children to complete the interactive activity 'Map the diary' as a shared task, or work in pairs.
- When they have finished, challenge them to find three things that Michael has never seen before, at sea and on land. Write their suggestions on the board. Discuss how they think this journey might prepare Michael for his experience on the island. (Monotonous diet; bad weather, and so on.)
- Hand out photocopiable page 29 'The sea journey' for the children to complete in pairs, referring to the book to help them.

2. Animal characters

Objective

To summarise ideas from more than one paragraph.

What you need

Copies of *Kensuke's Kingdom*, interactive activities 'Orang-utan quiz' and 'Orang-utan newspaper article'.

Cross-curricular link

Citizenship

What to do

- Read Chapter 4 from 'I sat up...' to 'But I couldn't be at all sure I was right.' Ask what difference it makes to Michael when he sees Stella Artois, and why?
- Challenge them to work in pairs and consider the ways in which Stella is important to the plot. Ask: *Why would the story not happen at all without her? (She causes Michael to fall overboard.) How else would the plot change without her? (The Coke bottle.)*
- Bring the class together and write on the board the headings 'Plot', 'Character' and 'Setting'. Ask the children to work in pairs and consider how Stella contributes to each of these aspects. Write their suggestions on the board.
- As a shared activity, do the same for the other animals. For example, the orang-utans bring the killer men to the island (plot); they show how Kensuke lives in harmony with the island (character); they add to the noises and creepy atmosphere (setting).
- Allow the children time to find out more about orang-utans and conservation programmes, using books or the internet, before they attempt the interactive activity 'Orang-utan quiz'. They can then use the interactive activity 'Orang-utan newspaper article' to draft an article on orang-utan conservation for a newspaper.

Kensuke's return

- Plan an alternative ending for the story.

What does Michael say to Kensuke to persuade him to go home?

What does Kensuke say to Michael to explain why he has decided to return home?

How does Kensuke get home?

What happens when he arrives home and who greets him?

How does he feel?

How do Kensuke and Michael stay in touch?