

***The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes**

Reasons for selection and synopsis

Mankind must put a stop to the dreadful destruction by the Iron Man and set a trap for him, but he cannot be kept down. Then, when a terrible monster from outer space threatens to lay waste to the planet, it is the Iron Man who finds a way to save the world. This is a compelling and exciting story with many excellent opportunities for vocabulary development with Year 3 and 4 children.

Before reading...

Show the children the front cover from the original print of the book with the scrap yard in the background. What can you see? What might this book be about? As an introduction session share the poem 'The Coming of the Iron Man' by Brenda Williams. Use this to establish his size, the ambiguity of his actions and as an overview for what can be a confusing first chapter to the story.

Chapter 1 (p.1-8)

Vocabulary	<p>What do the words 'boiling' and 'booming' suggest about the sea? (P.3)</p> <p>Find and copy a word that tells the reader the Iron Man is on the edge of the cliff. (P.1 - brink)</p> <p>Find one word in the text that tells us the Iron Man's body parts are spread over a large area. (P.3 - scattered)</p> <p>Why has the author chosen the word 'topple' to describe how the Iron Man falls off the cliff? (P.2)</p> <p>'The wind sang through his iron fingers.' – What language technique is this? What does it suggest to the reader? (P.1)</p> <p>'He walked into the <u>breakers</u>.' – Rewrite this sentence replacing the underlined word with another word or phrase that is similar in meaning. (P.7)</p>
Infer	<p>Why did the gulls think the Iron Man's hand was a crab? (P.4)</p> <p>Why did the gull take the Iron Man's ear to its nest? (P.4)</p> <p>What had the seagull picked up? (P.4)</p>
Predict	<p>Why did the Iron Man's eyes turn green as he entered the sea? (P.8)</p> <p>Why did the Iron Man walk into the sea? (P.18)</p>
Explain	<p>Why has the author chosen to repeat the phrase 'nobody knows' in the 2nd paragraph? (P.1)</p> <p>What does the word 'scuttling' suggest about the hand's movement? (P.5)</p>
Retrieve	<p>Where was the Iron Man standing on the first page? (P.1)</p> <p>Give one example of how the author uses a simile to describe the Iron Man's size.</p> <p>What did the gulls mistake the Iron Man's eye for? (P.4)</p> <p>'The two gulls flew into the air with a frightening cry.' – What had frightened the gulls? (P.5)</p> <p>Where had the Iron Man's missing ear gone?</p>
Summarise	<p>Summarise the first chapter in one paragraph.</p>

Chapter 2 (p.11-24)

Vocabulary	<p>'Now they reckoned the Iron Man would come over the top of the cliff.' – Give the meaning of <u>reckoned</u> in this sentence.</p> <p>Find and copy the word that means to look at something steadily for a long time. (P.20 - gazing)</p> <p>'the farmers saw the Iron Man wallowing in their pit.' – What does the word wallowing suggest about how the Iron Man felt? (P.23)</p>
Infer	<p>'Hogarth's mother grew pale' – How was Hogarth's mother feeling? (P.12)</p> <p>What do you think happened to the tractor? – Provide evidence from the text. (P.13)</p> <p>Look at the bottom of page 17. Why do you think the farmers had gathered with great excitement? (P.17)</p> <p>Why did the farmers approach the hole carefully? What did they expect to see? (P.17)</p> <p>How can you tell that Hogarth didn't want to be heard by the way he climbed down from the tree? (P.20)</p> <p>Why was Hogarth feeling guilty? (P.24)</p>
Predict	<p>What do you think the green lights were? (P.12)</p> <p>Who had taken all the farmers' machinery and why? – Provide evidence from the text (P.15)</p> <p>'They would have to do something for themselves.' – What do you think the farmers will do?</p> <p>Why did the farmers have to dig a 'colossal' hole? What did they want to use it for? (P.16)</p> <p>'Hogarth had an idea. In his pocket ... he had a knife' – What do you think Hogarth planned to do? (P.21)</p>
Explain	<p>Why has the author repeated the word 'hush'? What does this suggest to the reader? (P.11)</p> <p>Why has the author used a string of short sentences in the 4th paragraph? (P.12)</p> <p>'As if an Iron skyscraper has collapsed.' – Why does this suggest to the reader? (P.15)</p> <p>'So there lay a beautiful deep trap.' – Why Has the author chosen the word beautiful to describe the trap? (P.19)</p>

	Why has the author used the simile 'rolling it up like spaghetti and eating it'? (P.21)
Retrieve	<p>Why had Hogarth been an unsuccessful fisherman that evening? (P.11)</p> <p>How did the farmers feel once they knew the Iron Man has vanished into the sea? (P.16)</p> <p>Why didn't the farmers call the army or the police to help? (P.16)</p> <p>What caused Hogarth to 'stop breathing.' (P.20)</p> <p>What had caused the Iron Man's eyes to turn red? (P.22)</p> <p>Compare the feelings of the farmers and Hogarth at the end of the chapter. Explain and differences or similarities.</p>
Summarise	In 3-4 bullets points explain the farmers' plan to trap for the Iron Man.

Chapter 3 (p.27-34)

Vocabulary	<p>'Sheep were <u>grazing</u> on the fine grass on the lovely hillock.' – Underline the past progressive verb in this sentence and discuss its meaning. (P.27)</p> <p>Why was the table cloth <u>sagging</u> in the middle? (P.29)</p> <p>Find and copy the word that tells you the Iron Man could not see outside of the pit. (P29 – groping)</p> <p>Hogarth promises not to 'deceive' the Iron Man again. What does he mean? (P.32)</p> <p>'The Iron Man had never eaten such <u>delicacies</u>.' – Explain what a delicacy is in this extract. (P.33)</p>
Infer	<p>How did the farmers feel when they realised the Iron Man had freed himself? (P.31)</p> <p>Why did Hogarth volunteer to help the Iron Man instead of letting the army destroy him? (Link to previous feelings of guilt on page 24.)</p> <p>Why had Hogarth chosen to use a horseshoe in his plan? (P.32)</p> <p>Were the local people frightened of the Iron Man when Hogarth led him through villages? (P.33)</p> <p>Why was the scrap yard the 'Iron Man's heaven'? (P.34)</p> <p>Why was the Iron Man no longer rusty? (P.34)</p>
Predict	<p>After reading page 27 – What do you think will happen next?</p> <p>Do you think it was an 'earthquake in Japan' causing the ground to shake? (P.28)</p> <p>After reading page 32 – where do you think Hogarth is taking the Iron Man?</p> <p>What will happen now? Surely, this is 'happily ever after'? (P.34)</p>
Explain	<p>'Everywhere the grass shook new green points.' – What does this sentence suggest about the grass?</p> <p>Why does the author tell the reader that the family have 'never heard of the Iron Man'?</p> <p>What is the effect of the family being split apart by the crack in the ground?</p> <p>What does the phrase 'chewed it like toffee' suggest to the reader? (P.33)</p>

Retrieve	<p>Why had the family decided to visit the hillock? (P.28)</p> <p>What did the farmers do immediately after they knew the Iron Man was free? (P.31)</p> <p>Find two examples of how the author uses a simile to describe the Iron Man's size. (P.31)</p> <p>How do you know the Iron Man heard Hogarth banging the horseshoe and stone together? (P.32)</p>
Summarise	Box up the story so far using a 5 box structure.

Chapter 4 (p.37-47)	
Vocabulary	<p>Find the word on page 40 that means 'a dark solid shape with a bright light behind it.' (P.40 – silhouette)</p> <p>What does it mean to satisfy something? (P.43)</p> <p>Find and copy a word that means to show sadness or disappointment. (P.45 - lament)</p> <p>Explain the meaning of the noun 'titbit' on page 46.</p>
Infer	<p>What does 'round eyes, busy mouths' suggest about how people felt when they heard the strange news? (P.37)</p> <p>'This speck was seen to be wriggling.' – What is the intended effect of the use of the verb 'wriggling'? (P.39)</p> <p>Why was it 'lucky that the mountains and hills propped up its belly'? (P.41)</p> <p>What had become Australia's new sky? (P.41)</p> <p>Why had the people decided to name the monster the space-bat-angel-dragon?</p> <p>Why did the people 'cry in dismay'? (P.44)</p>
Predict	<p>Why do you think the 'strange thing' stopped? (P.39)</p> <p>What do you think the 'struggling black speck' could be? (P.39)</p> <p>How might the arrival of this terrible creature involve the Iron Man?</p> <p>Do you think the attack on the creature will be successful? (P.43)</p> <p>What do you think the Iron Man's plan is? (P.47)</p>

<p>Explain</p>	<p>Why on page 38 does the author capitalise 'BIGGER/GREW'? What effect does this have?</p> <p>The author uses the verb 'writhing' to describe the creatures movement. What does this word suggest? (P.40)</p> <p>Look at the 3rd paragraph on page 41. Why does the author repeat the word terribly over and over?</p> <p>What does the author mean by 'indescribably terrible'? (P.41)</p> <p>How do the descriptions of the creatures voice suggest that it was very loud? (P.42 – 'shook and rumbled around the earth')</p>
<p>Retrieve</p>	<p>What was the strange news everybody was talking about on page 37?</p> <p>Why did the astronomers have 'worried frowns'? (P.38)</p> <p>Why was the 'star' getting bigger? (P.38)</p> <p>Find and copy 3 metaphors the author has used to describe how quickly the star was travelling towards Earth. (P.38)</p> <p>Where was the shock of the creature landing felt? (P.41)</p> <p>Where did the monster land? (P.41)</p> <p>Why did the creature begin to speak? (P.42)</p> <p>Why did the people of Earth decide not to feed the creature? (P.43)</p> <p>How did the Iron Man compare in size to the space-bat-angel-dragon? (P.46)</p>
<p>Summarise</p>	<p>This chapter was named 'The Space Being and the Iron Man.' Rename this chapter with another suitable title – justify your choice.</p>

Chapter 5 (p.49-62)

Vocabulary	<p>Find and copy the word that tells the reader that the space-bat-angel-dragon was shocked and surprised. (P.51 – astounded)</p> <p>Find and copy the word that suggest the space-bat-angel-dragon thought the Iron Man was behaving unusually. (P.51 – antics)</p> <p>Find 2 adjectives that the author has used to describe the size of the space-bat-angel-dragon.</p> <p>'The space-bat-angel-dragon landed so ponderously.' What does the adverb ponderously suggest about the landing? (P.58 – it was slow/clumsy)</p>
Infer	<p>Why did the Iron Man have to shout his challenge to the space-bat-angel-dragon? (P.50)</p> <p>Why did the space-bat-angel-dragon accept the Iron Man's challenge? Provide evidence from the text. (P.51)</p> <p>What was causing the Iron Man's body to change colour? (P.52)</p> <p>Why was the Iron Man smiling at the space-bat-angel-dragon? (P.52)</p> <p>Why did the space-bat-angel-dragon laugh at the Iron Man? (P.53)</p> <p>'He landed – this time much more heavily.' Why did space-bat-angel-dragon land more heavily this time? (P.54)</p> <p>Why did the space-bat-angel-dragon watch in horror? (P.55)</p> <p>Why was the Iron Man frightened? (P.55)</p> <p>Give one reason why the space-bat-angel-dragon did not laugh on page 57.</p> <p>How does the space-bat-angel-dragon first signal that he has given up? (P.59)</p> <p>In what way was the space-bat-angel-dragon confused about Earth? (P.61)</p>
Predict	<p>The Iron Man has ordered steel girders and fuel oil. What do you think his plan was? (P.49)</p> <p>Why do you think the space-bat-angel-dragon 'couldn't believe his ears' when the Iron Man challenged him? (P.50)</p>

<p>Explain</p>	<p>Why has the author used the verb 'roared' to describe how the speaks to the space-bat-angel-dragon? (P.50)</p> <p>Why has the author used the verb 'scuttling' to describe how the men are moving around? (P.50)</p> <p>What effect does the use of the word 'raged' have? (P.52)</p> <p>From page 61 onwards, the author starts referring to the space-bat-angel-dragon as 'the dragon'. Why has he chosen to do this?</p>
<p>Retrieve</p>	<p>Why did the Iron Man have to be taken to pieces? (P.49)</p> <p>Why did the space-bat-angel-dragon laugh at the Iron Man? (P.50)</p> <p>Why when the space-bat-angel-dragon landed was he 'hardly the same monster'? (P.54)</p> <p>List 3 ways in which the space-bat-angel-dragon was now a changed monster. (P.58)</p> <p>What was causing the booming, wheezing and sneezing sound? (P.59)</p> <p>Why has the world become 'wonderfully peaceful'? (P.62)</p>
<p>Summarise</p>	<p>Create an annotated story mountain for the entire book.</p>