

E: How does the title ‘Step into the Stone Age’ relate to the story? The children go back in time and ‘step back’ into the Stone Age.

“Just stay here while I go inside to check if the tour guide is ready for us,” Mrs Webb called out. “And don’t do anything silly Simon McGuinness.” She gave him ‘the look’.

M: What does Lacey mean when she says Mrs Webb gave Simon ‘the look’? The teacher is giving him a warning look to make sure that he will behave.

Our teacher, Mrs Webb, entered the cave exhibition. I had arrived at the Prehistoric History Museum with the rest of Class 4W and we had slowly made our way to the entrance after a few head counts and a toilet stop. It was the first field trip 4W had had in such a long time that everyone was super excited to get going.

S: What does the word ‘prehistoric’ mean in this context? A time before written records began.

E: What was the name of the museum visited by Class 4W? The Prehistoric History Museum.

E: Have you ever visited a museum? What was it like? Personal response.

D: Summarise the content of the second paragraph. Class 4W are on a trip to the Prehistoric History Museum and are waiting for their teacher, Mrs Webb.

We were told that the first stop on our tour was the Stone Age cave exhibition and Mrs Webb went off to do some teacher stuff. We all waited outside the exhibition, some more patiently than others. Simon McGuinness decided to start throwing sweet wrappers at me to pass the time. He was guffawing and yelling at the top of his voice.

S: What does Lacey mean by some people were waiting ‘more patiently than others’? That some children were waiting patiently, whilst others, like Simon McGuinness, were not.

“Quit it, Simon!” I shouted. He carried on throwing the wrappers. My friend Nicole nudged me. “Lacey, Mrs Webb’s been ages,” she said to me. She looked down at her watch to confirm it. “She’s been gone for at least five minutes.” “Five minutes, that’s nothing. Do you remember how long she went on about column multiplication the other day? Don’t worry, she’ll just be chatting to the tour guide.” I replied. I threw all of the wrappers back at Simon. He didn’t look impressed.

Cautiously, Nicole and I decided to check our phones while we waited (which we weren’t supposed to bring with us), but after another five minutes even Simon was starting to get worried.

S: Why did the girls look at their phones ‘cautiously’? Because they were not supposed to bring their phones with them.

“Come on, I want to get going. This is soooo boring,” he moaned. “Do you think we should go and check on her?” Nicole whispered.

“Yeah, let’s take a quick look,” I replied. We told the others to wait for us and entered the exhibition.

“Awww, worrying about Mrs Webb lost? You’re such a teacher’s pet, Lacey. Why don’t you lose yourself too while you’re in there,” Simon teased.

M: Simon McGuinness is a bully. Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. Yes. He throws sweet wrappers at Lacey and calls her a teacher’s pet; he tells her to get lost.

The exhibition looked fascinating and so realistic, but we were shocked to find that neither Mrs Webb or the tour guide were inside the exhibition when we entered. All the space contained was a range of historical artefacts held in large plastic cases with descriptions of their functions in tiny font.

E: How were the prehistoric artefacts contained in the exhibition? In large plastic cases with descriptions.

D: Why do the artefacts need descriptions? So people know what they are called and can understand what they were used for.

D: What does the word ‘realistic’ mean in this context? Like it was real and true to life.

“Well, this trip just got a whole lot weirder,” Nicole said. I agreed with her. This was bizarre. Where was Mrs Webb?

Nicole and I had one more unsuccessful look around and I noticed a tunnel entrance hidden behind a prehistoric tool display on the left-hand side. “Nicole, look at this.”

“We haven’t got time to look at the artefacts. We need to find Mrs Webb.”

“No, listen. There’s a tunnel back here. This has to be it.”

Nicole raced around and looked at the tunnel entrance. I was crouched down peering inside to see if I could see our missing teacher. “Lacey, come on. I don’t think she’d have gone in there. Can you really see Mrs Webb crawling through a tunnel?” I had to admit, the idea was pretty funny.

“But what other choice is there? She must have gone in there, there’s no other way she could have left the exhibition without at least one of us seeing her. Let’s go inside and take a look. You never know, she might be hurt or something.” Nicole’s expression told me she was still not convinced.

“Come on, what else can we do? Let’s just take a short look around.”

“Ok then, five minutes and no more... and if it ruins my new trainers you’re going to have to buy me a new pair,” she said rolling up her sleeves and crouching down.

On our hands and knees, we started to crawl slowly through the tunnel. It was narrow at first but soon opened out into a wide cavernous space. It was dark inside and sinister shadows curved up the walls. Carefully, we moved forward...on and on and on. The darkness became more and more intense so that I couldn’t even see my hand in front of my face.

S: Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the word ‘sinister’. Something which makes a person feel that something harmful or evil is going to happen.

M: Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the word ‘cavernous’. Large, vast, with dark depths; giving the impression it is like a cavern in shape and size.

I could hear the slow drip...drip...drip of water falling from the roof of the tunnel and was sure I could hear the snuffling of rats somewhere in front of me.

M: The writer uses repetition at points in the story. What effect does this have on the reader? (C7)

It builds tension and suspense.

Suddenly, Nicole let out a little squeal. “You okay back there?” I shouted back. My voice echoed off the walls.

“Yes,” she said through gritted teeth. “I dropped my phone. It’s ruined. I wish I hadn’t brought it now, I’ve only had it two weeks. Let’s just keep going. It can’t be much further.” But she was wrong. The tunnel stretched on and on for what felt like miles.

“I thought you said five minutes,” Nicole shouted. She coughed as dust caught in her throat.

“What’s that?” I shouted. “Up ahead. It looks like a light of some kind.”

“You better be right, Lacey.” Nicole didn’t sound hopeful.

The source of light was getting larger and larger as we drew closer to it. I could now see that it was the exit of the tunnel. There was a cave on the other side too. We’d finally made it. I could hear Nicole sigh with relief behind me.

Slowly, I stepped out of the tunnel and looked at my new surroundings. Nicole followed close behind and dusted herself off as she checked her trainers. All around us were strange sorts of markings and pictures on the walls. They showed people hunting animals with spears and arrows. There were animal skins and what looked like the remains of a fire in the corner. But for everything we could see, we couldn’t see Mrs Webb anywhere. I hoped nothing bad had happened to her.

S: What evidence did Lacey and Nicole find in the cave that showed they were in a Stone Age cave?

Cave paintings on the walls, animal skins on the floor and a fire.

Suddenly, my ears filled with a strange sound: it sounded like an elephant trumpeting. Shocked and confused, I raced to the mouth of the cave which led to an outside space and looked around.

“Nicole, you’re not going to believe this.” I yelled. She was still moaning about the state of her trainers and phone. I gestured for her to come over, all the time not letting my eyes move away from the scene outside. She stepped towards me.

“Oh...my...goodness...” she said, her mouth agape. We stared at the enormous woolly mammoth as it stomped outside the entrance to the cave. The ground shook with each step the creature made. There were no buildings to be seen anywhere, only trees and mountains all around. We huddled back inside the cave.

E: What type of creature was stomping past the cave? A woolly mammoth.

D: Why does the ground shake when the mammoth walks by? It is so heavy and with every step it makes the ground shudder.

S: When the creature stomps past, how do they know they have travelled back in time? Woolly mammoths are now extinct.

“I can’t believe this. We’ve gone back in time. We’re in...” I started, panting loudly.

“THE STONE AGE!” Nicole and I screamed together.

We had stepped back in time. We had to find Mrs Webb...

M: Why does the writer choose to end with ellipsis? It leaves the story on a cliff-hanger and keeps the reader guessing about what will happen next.

E: What type of text is this? A mystery story; narrative.

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Step into the Stone Age – Y4/P5/G3 – Teacher Version Guided Reading resources [here](#).

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S: What is the purpose of the text? To entertain.

S: What do you predict might happen next in the story? Personal response. Answers must refer to the text.

M: Could you give examples of facts about Stone Age life that can be found in the story? The Stone Age was in prehistoric times, woolly mammoths existed in that time, Stone Age people decorated their walls with cave paintings and animal skins.

D: Did you enjoy the text? Give reasons for your answer. Personal response. Answers must refer to the text.

D: What is your favourite part of the story? Explain your answer. Personal response. Answers must refer to the text.

D: Would you like to visit the Stone Age? Explain your answer. Personal response.

Step into the Stone Age

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Step into the Stone Age – Comprehension

Section A

1. How does the title 'Step into the Stone Age' relate to the story?
2. What was the name of the museum visited by Class 4W?
3. Have you ever visited a museum? What was it like?
4. How were the prehistoric artefacts contained in the exhibition?
5. What type of creature was stomping past the cave?
6. What type of text is this?

Section B

7. Summarise the content of the second paragraph.
8. Why do the artefacts need descriptions?
9. What does the word 'realistic' mean in this context?
10. Why does the ground shake when the mammoth walks by?
11. Did you enjoy the text? Give reasons for your answer.
12. What is your favourite part of the story? Explain your answer.
13. Would you like to visit the Stone Age? Explain your answer.

Section C

14. What does the word 'prehistoric' mean in this context?
15. What does Lacey mean by some people were waiting 'more patiently than others'?
16. Why did the girls look at their phones 'cautiously'?

17. Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the word 'sinister'.
18. What evidence did Lacey and Nicole find in the cave that showed they were in a Stone Age cave?
19. When the creature stomps past, how do they know they have travelled back in time?
20. What is the purpose of the text?
21. What do you predict might happen next in the story?

Section D

22. What does Lacey mean when she says Mrs Webb gave Simon 'the look'?
23. Simon McGuinness is a bully. Do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.
24. Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the word 'cavernous'.
25. The writer uses repetition at points in the story. What effect does this have on the reader?
26. Why does the writer choose to end with ellipsis?
27. Could you give examples of facts about Stone Age life that can be found in the story?

Whole Class Guided Reading – Teaching Guide

- The text is for the children to read. Give each pair a copy of the text (without questions) to read individually or as a whole class. This text has been aimed at Year 4 (Wales)/Primary 5 (Scotland)/Grade 3 (Australia).
- The teacher should use the teacher version. It shows you where to pause after each section and provides questions for you to ask. The colours refer to our levels so that you can direct specific questions at specific students in terms of difficulty (their version does not have these colours to show them which is which).
 - Beginner – (Red)
 - Easy – (Blue)
 - Tricky – (Orange)
 - Expert – (Green)
- The children can record their answers to the questions at the end of the shared read/discussion or in a different session by using the comprehension sheet. The questions have been re-grouped into abilities so that you can assign sections to specific children.
 - Section A – Beginner
 - Section B – Easy
 - Section C – Tricky
 - Section D – Expert