

Mary Anning: The Girl Who Cracked Open the World (pages 1–11)

Debora Pearson

Year 4, Autumn Term, Week 1




Text Outline

A biography of Mary Anning, who hunted fossils as a girl and went on to make important scientific discoveries. Children will learn that Mary grew up by the coast in Lyme Regis, Dorset and how this landscape, along with her father's passion for fossil finding, inspired her interest in fossil collecting and in scientific enquiry.

Day 1

Activity	Comprehension Strategies
Children familiarise themselves with the following words by completing the activities in their workbooks: curiosities, chisel, gull, skull, fossil, exposed, numb, haul, plink-plonked, ancient, stubborn, independent, lurked, gaping, sockets	Clarifying

Day 2

Activity	Comprehension Strategies
Children pre-read the text for the week's work (either independently, in pairs, or by having the text read to them by a TA or using the eBook narration). Using their workbooks, children write their thoughts about the three key questions and generate their own questions. The three key questions are:  How does Mary find fossils?  How does Mary feel about being a fossil hunter?  Why do some people find fossils interesting?	Summarising Connecting Activating Prior Knowledge Questioning

Day 3

Teacher discussion: see reverse of card.	
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Day 4

Activity	Comprehension Strategies
In pairs, children revisit the questions discussed in Day 3 and reflect on how their thinking has developed by writing in their workbooks. The prompt for their notes is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe Mary and explain how she is different from other girls in the town. 	Summarising Connecting

Day 5

Activity	Comprehension Strategies
Children complete a writing activity in their workbooks. The children imagine and write a conversation between Mary and Joseph when they find the skeleton. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support: The support sheet provides half the conversation. Extend: Early finishers move on to think of the consequence of events in Mary's life. 	Summarising Connecting Predicting

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Day 3

Summarising	
Ask one of the children to explain who the text is about and when and where it is set. Ask another to summarise the key events. Ask the rest of the group to add to the summary of the text.	
Clarifying	
Ask children if there were any words they found confusing while reading and help to clarify these words for them by asking questions. For example: What other word is it like? Do the illustrations help you to guess? Can the rest of the sentence help you?	
👁️ Looking Question	Comprehension Strategies to Observe
<p>How does Mary find fossils?</p> <p>Questions to develop dialogue further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does Mary search for fossils? • How did the fossils get into the rock? • How does Mary get the fossils out of the rock? What does she do with them? 	<p>Visualising: Can the children describe Mary searching for fossils in the cliff face?</p> <p>Activating Prior Knowledge: Can the children use their knowledge of fossils to explain what a fossil is and how it is formed in the rock?</p> <p>Summarising: Can the children explain how a fossil might go from hidden in a rock to on display outside Mary's house?</p>
Linked Resources on ActiveLearn Primary	
Use these resources to help children comprehend the text.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph of the cliffs on the south coast of England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph of the Jurassic Coast, Dorset
🔍 Clue Question	Comprehension Strategies to Observe
<p>How does Mary feel about being a fossil hunter?</p> <p>Questions to develop dialogue further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the workshop like? • How does Mary feel when she's out in the cold finding fossils? • What does Mary think about at night? 	<p>Clarifying: Can the children locate vocabulary in the text to help them build a picture of how Mary feels?</p> <p>Connecting: Can the children imagine finding a fossil in a cliff? Can they describe how they would feel?</p> <p>Connecting: Can the children identify that Mary's feelings about collecting fossils change after her father's death?</p>
❓ Thinking Question	Comprehension Strategies to Observe
<p>Why do some people find fossils interesting?</p> <p>Questions to develop dialogue further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do fossils tell us about our world? • Should we dig up all the fossils? • Do you find fossils interesting? 	<p>Connecting: Can the children make a connection between the fossil record and our knowledge of prehistoric life?</p> <p>Activating Prior Knowledge: Can the children talk about prehistoric animals they know about?</p>
Predicting	
At the end of the discussion, ask children to predict what they think will happen next in the book by prompting them with the following question: What will scientists say when they see the fossilised skeleton? How will it "crack open the world"?	