

***How to Train your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell**

Year 3 and 4

Reasons for selection and synopsis

Can Hiccup pass the Dragon Initiation Programme with a toothless, lazy dragon and fight the terrifying Sea Dragon before it gobbles up every Viking on Berk? Will Hiccup ever learn to be a hero? And what exactly is a hero?

This is a hilarious, fast paced story with wonderful illustrations and exciting scenes – perfect for children in Year 3 and 4 or any classes studying the Vikings.

Before reading...

Ask the children to look at the front cover. What do you think the book will be about? What things can you see on the front cover?

What sort of story will it be? Who might enjoy it?

Now read the blurb – where any of your predictions correct? How do the reviews on the back persuade you to read the book?

Give children time to explore the illustrations of the characters and the map, so they can familiarise themselves with the setting of the story.

Reading Vipers

Vocabulary
Infer
Predict
Explain
Retrieve
Sequence or Summarise



As a group, create a **semantic** map by noting down as many words that you can think of relating to the word '**hero**' and then find common connections between them. Use a spider diagram to help you sort your ideas.

The following questions are designed as prompts only – allow the children to come up with their own questions and ideas. They will be much more engaged this way!

A Note from Hiccup and Chapter 1

Vocabulary	<p>What does the word 'preposterously' mean? (pg 15)</p> <p>Why does the author repeat the word 'bleak' on page 16? What effect does it have?</p> <p>Which words and phrases tell you that a dragon's snore is very loud?</p>
Infer	<p>What impression do you get of Gobber the Belch? Can you use evidence from the text?</p> <p>What sort of voice do you think Gobber has and why?</p> <p>What might Hiccup be thinking and feeling when he is chosen to command the team?</p> <p>What does the verb 'sneered' (pg 24) tell you about Snotlout?</p> <p>How is Hiccup different to the other children? Give examples.</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the end of the Chapter. What do you think will happen next?</p>
Explain	<p>Can you write a letter to explain why you should be chosen for the Dragon Initiation Programme?</p> <p>Explain the advantages and disadvantages of owning a Basic Brown dragon.</p>
Retrieve	<p>Who is telling the story?</p> <p>Why is there no evidence nowadays of dragons having ever existed?</p> <p>Who is Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you summarise what you've learnt about Vikings so far?</p> <p>Can you summarise Chapter 1 in one sentence?</p>

Chapter 2

Vocabulary	<p>Find a word or phrase that suggests Dogsbreath is tall/big.</p> <p>Can you find a word on page 31 that means the same as 'dangerous'?</p> <p>What does the word 'ominous' mean?</p>
Infer	<p>What are your first impressions of Snotlout?</p> <p>How might Hiccup be feeling inside the cave?</p> <p>Why do you think Fishlegs tries to trap a Nadder?</p>
Predict	<p>Read up to, 'And there it stayed for a few heart-stopping moments, until...' What do you think will happen next?</p> <p>Read to the end of the chapter. What do you think will happen to Hiccup next? Will he be exiled?</p>
Explain	<p>Being frightened is not the same as being a coward. What does this mean?</p> <p>Can you explain who Loki is?</p> <p>Can you design and make a dragon basket and write an explanation text, describing how it works.</p>
Retrieve	<p>Why did no-one ever see Hiccup's hair?</p> <p>What colour is Hiccup's hair?</p> <p>Can you use the information in the text to draw and label a picture of a Gronkle?</p> <p>Who is responsible for all the dragons waking up? Why?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you re-tell this chapter from Fishlegs' point of view?</p>

Chapter 3

Vocabulary	<p>What is a gorge?</p> <p>What does the word 'primeval' mean?</p> <p>What does the word 'defiance' mean?</p> <p>Can you find and copy and words or phrases that show Gobber was actually worried about the boys?</p> <p>Which words and phrases describe Berk?</p> <p>What does the word 'fortifications' mean?</p>
Infer	<p>What does the adverb 'painfully' (pg 45) suggest about the boys?</p> <p>What does the verb 'pouring' (pg 45) suggest about the movement of the dragons?</p> <p>Describe the relationship between Hiccup and Fishlegs.</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the end of the chapter. What sort of dragon do you think will be in Hiccup's basket?</p> <p>How do you think Snotlout will react to Hiccup's small dragon?</p>
Explain	<p>Can you explain the joke on page 50 about Wartihog not being able to read?</p> <p>Explain what 'heroes or exile!' means.</p> <p>What do you think makes a hero? Discuss your ideas with a partner.</p> <p>Explain how the author builds tension on page 56.</p>
Retrieve	<p>How old is Hiccup?</p> <p>Who is Professor Yobbish?</p> <p>What are the boys forced to eat and for how long?</p> <p>Who is Old Wrinkly?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you e-tell this chapter from Gobber's point of view?</p>

Chapter 4

Vocabulary	<p>What does the word 'viciously' (pg 62) mean?</p> <p>What does the word 'solemn' (pg 63) mean? Use a dictionary to write a definition of the word.</p> <p>Can you find an example of alliteration on page 65?</p> <p>Find a word that shows the Great Hall was very noisy.</p>
Infer	<p>How are Snotlout and Hiccup similar? How are they different?</p> <p>Why does Snotlout suggest 'Sugarlips' and Babyface' as a name for the dragon?</p> <p>What does the phrase 'went very white in the face' suggest about how Fishlegs is feeling?</p> <p>Who do you think Fishlegs defends Hiccup in front of Snoutlout?</p>
Predict	<p>What might have happened if Hiccup had refused to challenge Snotlout?</p> <p>What methods do you think Hiccup will devise for training his dragon?</p>
Explain	<p>Snotlout is a bully. Discuss.</p> <p>Can you write a biography for Professor Yobbish?</p> <p>Can you design a new front cover for Professor Yobbish's book? Explain why you chose your particular design?</p>
Retrieve	<p>What names does Snotlout suggest for Hiccup's dragon?</p> <p>Hiccup's dragon has razor sharp teeth. True or false?</p> <p>Use the information in the text to draw and label a picture of Snotlout.</p> <p>Name two other books written by Professor Yobbish.</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you summarise the contents of Professor Yobbish's book in one sentence?</p>

Chapter 5

Vocabulary	<p>What does the word 'quarrelling' (pg 78) mean?</p> <p>Find and copy a word on page 80 that is closest in meaning to 'other'.</p>
Infer	<p>What does the verb 'shovelling' suggest about Stoic?</p> <p>Why does Old Wrinkly turn his laugh into a cough?</p> <p>What does the simile 'as flat as glass' suggest about the sea?</p> <p>Can you describe the relationship between Old Wrinkly and Hiccup?</p> <p>What does the adverb 'gloomily' suggest about Hiccup's feelings?</p> <p>Why is Hiccup reluctant to admit he can talk to dragons?</p>
Predict	<p>What role do you think Old Wrinkly will play in the rest of the story?</p>
Explain	<p>Explain to a partner what you think Bashyball is.</p> <p>Explain Old Wrinkly's views on leadership and what makes a good leader. How does this differ to the Viking's beliefs about leaders?</p>
Retrieve	<p>What is the name of Hiccup's mother?</p> <p>What must Hiccup do by Thor'sday Thursday?</p> <p>What have the boys started calling Hiccup?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you re-tell this chapter from Old Wrinkly's point of view?</p> <p>Can you order these chapter headings from what you've read so far? <i>A Chat with Old Wrinkly, Heroes or Exiles, Inside the Dragon Nursery, How to Train your Dragon</i></p>

Chapter 6 and 7

Vocabulary	<p>Find and copy any words or phrases that suggest the Sea Dragon is very big.</p> <p>The word 'ravenous' is closest in meaning to...</p> <p>Which words and phrases suggest that the underwater animals are afraid?</p> <p>The word 'indignantly' is closest in meaning to...</p>
Infer	<p>What does the phrase 'underwater desert' (pg 82) suggest?</p> <p>If you were making a film of Chapter 6, what sort of music would you choose as a soundtrack and why?</p> <p>How do we know Hookfang and Newtsbreath mean to do Toothless harm?</p> <p>What does the phrase 'uncharacteristic anxiety' suggest about Stoic?</p>
Predict	<p>What role do you think the Sea Dragon will play in the rest of the story?</p>
Explain	<p>Can you explain why 'Hello Toothless' (pg 83) is written in a different font?</p> <p>Try writing your own sentences in Dragonese. Can a partner work out what they mean?</p> <p>Fishlegs is intelligent and quick thinking. Do you agree? Disagree? Use examples.</p> <p>Do you think it is important for the Vikings to be able to speak Dragonese?</p>
Retrieve	<p>Why has the Sea Dragon been asleep for so long?</p> <p>What language does Toothless speak?</p> <p>How can you tell when a dragon is scared or angry?</p> <p>Why does Toothless bite Hiccup?</p>
Summarise	<p>Re-tell Chapter 7 from Stoic's point of view.</p>

Chapter 8

Vocabulary	<p>What does the word 'sodden' (pg 96) mean?</p> <p>Can you find and copy two phrases on page 100 that show Hiccup is fed up with Toothless?</p>
Infer	<p>What impression are you given about life on Berk? Would you want to live there?</p> <p>What impression do you get of Toothless?</p> <p>What does the verb 'sauntering' (pg 100) suggest about Snotlout and Dogsbreath?</p>
Predict	How do you think Toothless is going to deal with the other dragons?
Explain	Explain how the boys' dragons share similar characteristics with their masters.
Retrieve	<p>Why does Hiccup start being so nice to Toothless?</p> <p>What does Fishlegs name his dragon and why?</p> <p>How are dragons different to cats and dogs?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you number these events 1-4 in the order that they happened?</p> <p><i>Toothless poos all over Hiccup</i></p> <p><i>Hiccup tries yelling at Toothless, but is ignored</i></p> <p><i>Dogsbreath and Snotlout laugh at Hiccup</i></p> <p><i>Hiccup builds a mud-wallow for Toothless</i></p>

Chapter 9

Vocabulary	<p>Can you think of an antonym for the word 'stubborn'?</p> <p>What do you notice about Hiccup's spelling of 'motivashun' and 'desparate' (pg 107)?</p> <p>Can you find and words or phrases that describe Toothless when he is hunting? What image do they create in your mind?</p>
Infer	<p>What does the verb 'shuddered' (pg 105) suggest about Toothless?</p> <p>What does the phrase 'ancestral memory' (pg 111) suggest about Toothless's style of hunting?</p> <p>Why do you think it is important for Hiccup to show that Toothless is under control?</p> <p>What does the adjective 'piddly' (pg 115) suggest about how Old Wrinkly feels about the test?</p>
Predict	<p>What do you think will happen in the initiation test?</p>
Explain	<p>Can you explain the title for this chapter? Can you think of another?</p> <p>Tests are the only way to show how well you're doing. Do you agree? Disagree?</p>
Retrieve	<p>Hiccup writes down six possible ways to train a dragon. What are they?</p> <p>Use the information in this chapter to draw and label a picture of a Monstrous Nightmare.</p> <p>How does Hiccup convince Toothless to catch a mackerel?</p> <p>How long can a dragon stay under water for?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you re-tell this chapter from Fishlegs' point of view?</p>

Chapter 10

Vocabulary	<p>Find and copy any words or phrases that suggest the celebrations are busy and popular.</p> <p>The word 'ominous' (pg 120) is closest in meaning to...</p> <p>Which phrase tells you that the crowd is shocked when they see the size of Toothless?</p> <p>Can you find a word on page 137 which means the same as 'send away'?</p>
Infer	<p>Why do you think there is an 'Ugliest Baby' contest? What does this suggest about the Vikings?</p> <p>What does the phrase 'listening round-eyed' suggest about Hiccup and the stories he is hearing?</p> <p>Hiccup's face is pale and tense before the initiation. What does this suggest about how he is feeling?</p> <p>What does the simile 'like a leopard about to spring' (pg 131) suggest about Fireworm?</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the bottom of page 122. What do you think might happen between Fireworm and Killer?</p>
Explain	<p>Can you explain why the author has included a programme of events in this chapter? What effect does it have?</p> <p>How does the author make you feel sorry for Hiccup in this chapter?</p> <p>Explain how the weather and the setting add to the atmosphere in this chapter.</p>
Retrieve	<p>What time does the Axe-fighting display take place?</p> <p>Which event is taking place at 10.30am?</p> <p>What must spectators bring along to the Hammer-throwing event and why?</p>
Summarise	<p>What happened at the beginning of this chapter? What happened at the end?</p>

Chapter 11

Vocabulary	<p>Find all the words and phrases in this chapter that mean 'big'.</p> <p>Use a dictionary to write a definition for the following words: modesty, barbarians, simultaneously, peril</p>
Infer	<p>What do the words 'hurled' and 'raged' suggest about the storm?</p> <p>How do we know that Stoic feels bad about banishing his son?</p> <p>What might Hiccup be feeling when he sees the Sea Dragon?</p> <p>How does Old Wrinkly feel about Stoic's decision to banish Hiccup? Use evidence from page 156 to support your ideas.</p> <p>Draw a thought bubble and write in it what Hiccup might be thinking when Fishlegs reveals he can speak Dragonese.</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the bottom of page 145. What do you think has happened to the domestic dragons?</p> <p>Read to the end of page 149. What do you think will happen next?</p>
Explain	<p>Can you research what the Vikings believed about Valhalla? Explain what you have found out to a partner.</p> <p>The author describes the Sea Dragon as being twenty times as large as a T-Rex. How does this help the reader understand its size?</p> <p>Why does the author repeat 'there was another impressive silence'? What effect does it have?</p> <p>Choose three adjectives to describe Gobber. Explain to a partner why you chose those words.</p>
Retrieve	<p>How do the Vikings try and deal with the dragon on the beach?</p> <p>What happens to Gobber on the beach?</p> <p>Why are the Vikings not allowed to speak to dragons?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you summarise this chapter in one sentence?</p>

Chapter 12

Vocabulary	<p>Can you explain the meaning of the word 'primeval'?</p> <p>Can you use the word 'malevolent' in a sentence of your own?</p> <p>Can you find an example of alliteration on page 165? What effect does it have?</p>
Infer	<p>Can you find any words or phrases on page 159 that show the reader how Hiccup is feeling?</p> <p>Which words and phrases show that the dragon has bad breath?</p> <p>What are your first impressions of the dragon?</p> <p>What might the Vikings be thinking and feeling at the end of this chapter?</p>
Predict	<p>Read up to the part where Hiccup tells the dragon his name. Why do you think the dragon shivers? Where might he have heard the name before?</p>
Explain	<p>Does the dragon remind you of any other characters you know from other stories? Why?</p> <p>Can you explain what the dragon means when he says, 'We're all snatching precious moments from the peaceful jaws of time'?</p>
Retrieve	<p>What did Stoic offer to do and why?</p> <p>What is the name of the dragon?</p>
Summarise	<p>What happened at the beginning of this chapter? What happened at the end?</p>

Chapter 13

Vocabulary	<p>The word 'fiendishly' is closest in meaning to...</p> <p>Use a dictionary to find the meaning of the following words: sneered, bracken, expectantly, encircling</p>
Infer	<p>The author compares Mogadon and Stoic to 'furious walruses'. What does this suggest about them?</p> <p>What does the adverb 'disdainfully' (p 172) suggest about Thuggory's feelings towards Snotlout?</p> <p>Why do you think Thuggory laughs 'slightly hysterically' when he sees the Purple Death?</p> <p>Re-read the part of this chapter where the dragons are hiding in the bracken. Which dragon do you think is in charge and why?</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the bottom of page 179. What do you think Hiccup's plan will involve?</p>
Explain	<p>Explain how you felt when Thuggory threatened Snotlout on page 172.</p> <p>Do you agree with Fireworm's plan?</p>
Retrieve	<p>Who spots the other dragon?</p> <p>Where is the other dragon resting?</p> <p>What is Hiccup's plan?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you re-tell this chapter from Thuggory's point of view?</p>

Chapter 14

Vocabulary	<p>What does the word 'coaxed' (pg 180) mean?</p> <p>Look at page 185. Why has the author used capital letters for 'ANYTHING' and 'THAT'?</p> <p>Find and copy any words or phrases that suggest Fireworm is a lot smaller than the Green Death.</p>
Infer	<p>What impression are you given about the adults in this chapter?</p> <p>Why do you think Snotlout is so critical of Hiccup's plan?</p> <p>What does the author mean when she says running through heather is like running through treacle?</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the end of the chapter. What do you think will happen next?</p> <p>Who do you think would win in a battle between the Green Death and the Purple Death?</p>
Explain	<p>Can you write a set of instructions for a partner, explaining how to make Feather Bombs?</p> <p>Can you explain the saying 'brains over brawn'? What does it mean? How does it apply to this story so far?</p>
Retrieve	<p>What do dragons suffer from and why?</p> <p>Why does the Green Death keep missing when he tries to catch Fireworm?</p>
Summarise	<p>Can you draw a story map to show the main events in this chapter, including key words and pictures?</p>

Chapter 15

Vocabulary	Can you find any words or phrases that describe the battle between the dragons? What effect do they have?
Infer	If you were turning this chapter into a scene for a film, what music would you choose for the soundtrack and why? Can you find a phrase on page 192 that suggests the boys were frightened?
Predict	What do you think the Green Death will do next?
Explain	Fireworm is a hero. Do you agree? Discuss your ideas. Can you explain why the boys were making the dragons angry on purpose? How does the author engage the reader at the end of the chapter?
Retrieve	Why do Sea Dragons usually avoid fighting each other?
Summarise	Can you write a newspaper report describing the battle between the dragons? Remember to include a headline with alliterations!

Chapter 16 and 17

Vocabulary	<p>Find and copy any words or phrases in Chapter 16 that suggest the Green Death is injured and dying.</p> <p>Find and copy three words which describe the dragon's mouth. What effect do they have?</p> <p>Can you find and copy a simile on page 200? What effect does it have?</p> <p>The word 'optimist' (pg 202) means...</p>
Infer	<p>Read up to where the Green Death hisses, 'Where is he?' (pg 196) Who do you think he is referring to?</p> <p>What might Hiccup be thinking and feeling as he falls into the dragon's mouth at the end of Chapter 16?</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the end of Chapter 16. What do you think will happen next?</p>
Explain	<p>Imagine you have been swallowed by the dragon. Can you write your own song?</p>
Retrieve	<p>Hiccup's shirt gets caught on a shark bone sticking out of the dragon's throat. True or false?</p> <p>How does the dragon's digestive juice affect Hiccup?</p>
Summarise	<p>Use a series of freeze-frames to show the events in Chapter 16. Think about body language and facial expression.</p>

Chapter 18, 19 and Epilogue

Vocabulary	<p>Which words and phrases tell us that the dragon's tooth was deadly?</p> <p>What does the word 'extinguish' (pg 223) mean?</p> <p>Look at Stoic's letter to Professor Yobbish. Can you find any spelling mistakes? What do they suggest about Stoic?</p> <p>What is a bard?</p>
Infer	<p>Why do you think Toothless rushed to save Hiccup?</p> <p>What might Toothless be thinking and feeling when he hears Stoick cry out 'N-N-NOOOO!'</p> <p>Toothless goes to lick the face of Hiccup on page 215. Why do you think he does this?</p> <p>Why do you think Hiccup is called 'Hiccup'?</p>
Predict	<p>Read to the bottom of page 210. Why can't the Green Death blow fire?</p> <p>What might happen to the dragons sleeping under the sea in the future?</p>
Explain	<p>Can you explain what happens during a Viking funeral?</p> <p>What do you think the moral to this story is?</p> <p>Have your feelings towards Toothless changed? Explain your ideas using evidence from the story.</p>
Retrieve	<p>How does Toothless save Hiccup?</p> <p>What is Hiccup named by the tribe and why?</p>
Summarise	<p>How does Hiccup become a hero? Can you summarise the key events that led to his transformation?</p> <p>Have you seen the film version of this book? Can you summarise the similarities and differences between the book and film?</p>