

Improving Your Reading with Summarising Sheba: Our Teachers Are Superheroes



Despite the things they had in common, the two friends had very different appearances. Benji, with his dark, frizzy hair and skin the colour of caramel, was the shorter of the pair. Freya stood a few inches taller, with fiery red hair and freckles scattered across her nose and cheeks. Their families had been friends for years before Freya and Benji were born, and they had grown up around each other.

“Don’t be so ridiculous!” Freya scoffed dismissively when Benji told her about his theory while walking home that afternoon.

“Just think about it for a moment,” he beseeched her. “Wouldn’t it be amazing? Our teachers could actually be superheroes! Like some secret crime-fighting duo or something! One of them is always dashing off here or there at lunchtimes or whenever they’re not teaching us.”

“Superheroes are just for comic books,” replied Freya.

“No, they’re not!” insisted Benji. “They just don’t like to be known by their secret identities. I even saw something on the news the other day. Some guy had run out of a shop after stealing a bunch of stuff from the shelves. The shop owner had phoned the police but thought the guy had already got away. Then the news reporter said police found the thief around the corner, tied up with all the stuff he had stolen right there next to him. There was a note stuck on his chest saying: ‘Stealing isn’t cool. Don’t be a dinkus.’ It wasn’t the police who had caught him, and the thief was so confused that he said he couldn’t even remember what happened.”

“‘Don’t be a dinkus’? That’s pretty funny. But it’s hardly likely to be Mr Jay or Miss Higgins, is it?” asked Freya.



The next day, Freya hardly gave another thought to their conversation. Benji, on the other hand, was constantly on the lookout for clues. He kept a close watch on his teachers all morning, and he was rewarded at lunchtime: Miss Higgins received a phone call and Mr Jay gave her a friendly nod as she left.

“Your turn today!” Mr Jay said with a smile.

Both classes were combined again for the start of the afternoon while Mr Jay read the beginning of a story. The classes sat patiently, perched on tables and packed onto the carpet, and listened while they digested their lunch. After about 20 minutes, Miss Higgins returned quietly and sat at the side until they reached a suitable place to pause.

“We’ll leave it there for now,” Mr Jay decided, closing his copy of the book as they reached a place where two sections of the chapter were separated from each other by three asterisks. “Here’s a quick trivia question: does anyone know what these three asterisks are called, where we just stopped reading?”

There was a short silence, and it became clear that this question was beyond the classes’ knowledge. Eventually, Miss Higgins raised her hand with a grin.

“Well, I know you already know!” Mr Jay laughed. “Go on then, Miss Higgins.”

“It’s a dinkus!” replied the other teacher.

“Indeed it is,” said Mr Jay. “A funny old name, rarely used nowadays, but I like it!”

Amidst the mass of children, two jaws dropped open in astonishment.

1. Number the following people 1-5 to show the order in which they first appear in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- ☐ the shop owner
- ☐ Mr Jay
- ☒ 1 Benji
- ☐ Miss Higgins
- ☐ Freya

2. Summarise what happens in the first paragraph in one sentence.

3. Look at the paragraph which begins with “No, they’re not!” Sum up what happened in this paragraph in 20 words or less.

4. What sticks in your mind the most about the character of Benji?

5. Explain what Benji saw at lunchtime using 20 words or less.

6. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

Statement	True	False
Freya has dark, frizzy hair.		
Benji thought that Freya was a superhero.		
Miss Higgins returned to class after around 20 minutes.		
Mr Jay read a magazine to the classes.		

7. Highlight ten words from this chapter. Using the ten words you picked out, write a paragraph explaining what happens in this chapter.

8. This chapter is called **Suspicion**.

Based on what you have read so far, write a new title for the chapter.

9. Write a blurb for this chapter using 30 words or less.

10. Below are some summaries of different paragraphs from this text. Number them 1-5 to show the order in which they appear in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- ☐ Miss Higgins received a phone call.
- ☒ 1 Freya called Benji ridiculous.
- ☐ Benji tells Freya what he saw on the news last week.
- ☐ Three asterisks are called a dinkus.
- ☐ The children perched on tables and packed onto the carpet.



Answers

1. Number the following people 1-5 to show the order in which they first appear in the text. The first one has been done for you.

3 the shop owner

4 Mr Jay

1 Benji

5 Miss Higgins

2 Freya

2. Summarise what happens in the first paragraph in one sentence.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Despite being good friends, Benji and Freya looked very different.

3. Look at the paragraph which begins with “**No, they’re not!**” Sum up what happened in this paragraph in 20 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: A thief is thought to have been caught by superheroes after stealing from a shop. Everyone was shocked.

4. What sticks in your mind the most about the character of Benji?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The thing that sticks in my mind most about Benji is how confident he is that superheroes exist in real life.

5. Explain what Benji saw at lunchtime using 20 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: At lunchtime, Benji saw Miss Higgins receive a phone call and leave class.

6. Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

Statement	True	False
Freya has dark, frizzy hair.		✓
Benji thought that Freya was a superhero.		✓
Miss Higgins returned to class after around 20 minutes.	✓	
Mr Jay read a magazine to the classes.		✓

Answers

7. Highlight ten words from this chapter. Using the ten words you picked out, write a paragraph explaining what happens in this chapter.

Pupils' own responses dependent upon the ten words they choose from the extract.

8. This chapter is called **Suspicion**. Based on what you have read so far, write a new title for the chapter.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Benji's Idea; Miss Higgins' Call; Benji Suspects.

9. Write a blurb for this chapter using 30 words or less.

Pupils' own responses, such as: As Benji begins to suspect his teachers are superheroes, Miss Higgins says one word which changes everything. Does this mean what Benji thinks it does?

10. Below are some summaries of different paragraphs from this text. Number them 1-5 to show the order in which they appear in the text. The first one has been done for you.

- 3** Miss Higgins received a phone call.
- 1** Freya called Benji ridiculous.
- 2** Benji tells Freya what he saw on the news last week.
- 5** Three asterisks are called a dinkus.
- 4** The children perched on tables and packed onto the carpet.