COMPREHENSION
NINJA

INFERENCE AND BEYOND
UPPER KS2 FOR AGES 9–11

ANDREW JENNINGS

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CONTENTS

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COMPREHENSION NINJA NON-FICTION

A set of six books for ages five to 11 that provide carefully curated resources to teach the key reading comprehension skills. With strong links to the National Curriculum, each book presents 24 high-quality non-fiction texts and photocopiable activities that help embed reading skills and improve comprehension, using strategies and question types such as true or false, labelling, matching, highlighting, filling in the gap, sequencing and multiple choice.

COMPREHENSION NINJA FICTION AND POETRY

Each book in this six-book set contains 24 immersive fiction extracts and poetry texts by acclaimed writers, including Roald Dahl, Michael Morpurgo, Patrice Lawrence, Katherine Rundell, David Almond, Zanib Mian, Joseph Coelho and Polly Ho-Yen. Every text is accompanied by photocopiable comprehension activities to boost reading retrieval skills in Key Stages 1 and 2.

NINJA MATHS RESOURCES

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SARAH FARRELL WITH ANDREW JENNINGS

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FOR CHILDREN AT HOME AND IN THE CLASSROOM
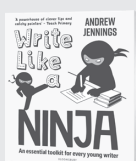
WRITE LIKE A NINJA

A pocket-sized book packed full of all the grammar, vocabulary and sentence structures that children need in order to improve and develop their writing skills. Fully aligned to the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum, this book is designed to be used independently by pupils.
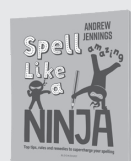
SPELL LIKE A NINJA

This book provides essential tips, lists and advice to support the teaching and learning of spelling in the classroom or at home. Including every statutory spelling pattern in the National Curriculum, this all-in-one quick reference tool enables pupils to learn at their own pace.

FURTHER RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN ONLINE

Head to www.vocabularyninja.co.uk and follow @VocabularyNinja on X (formerly Twitter) for more teaching and learning resources to support the teaching of vocabulary, reading, writing and the wider primary curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

COMPREHENSION NINJA: INFERENCE AND BEYOND

Inference is a natural skill that we use every day without really thinking about it. As we see, hear, experience things and interact with others we form opinions and make assumptions to draw logical conclusions. We might make inferences about how people are feeling, or why they did something based on small clues and behavioural indications that we have observed.

Inference is very similar in reading comprehension. The only difference is that we make assumptions and draw conclusions based on the descriptive words and language that we read, rather than through real life experiences. This is why everyday inference practice is so important. Speaking to people, playing and being around others help us to hone our skills and become more effective at making accurate inferences without even realising it. The good news is, that we can use our real-world inference skills to help us with inference in reading!

First, we need to understand the different comprehension inference question types and exactly what the questions are asking us to do. Then we can learn strategies for how to answer the questions to get those all-important marks. Comprehension Ninja Inference and Beyond will help to build confidence as pupils practice reading between the lines and searching for clues in the text. It contains a wealth of brilliant text extracts and thousands of questions to guide your pupils and embed inference learning.

- Simple questions
- Sentence inference
- This suggests
- Evidence
- Summarise
- Sequence
- Prediction

HOW INFERENCE LINKS TO SATS EXAM PRACTICE

At the end of Key Stage Two, children in Year 6 will complete a reading comprehension paper. This paper is made up of around 38-40 questions with 50 marks available. It's important to understand the format of these questions and the vital role that inference skills play in completing the test successfully. On average 40% of the marks available in the reading test are retrieval-style questions, which involves finding and presenting information from the text. Very straightforward and nearly half the marks in the test. The next 30-35% of the available marks are dedicated to inference-style questions, which are slightly more complex as they refer to information that isn't explicitly stated, but instead implied. If we can master both retrieval and inference, on average we have 75% of the SATs test questions tackled! So how do we start the journey of inference mastery?

Comprehension Ninja: Inference and Beyond is carefully structured and designed to mimic the appearance of inference questions in the Key Stage 2 SATs reading paper. This provides teachers, parents and pupils with the most comprehensive and realistic library of inference style questions, that will enable pupils to experience and improve their inference skills like never before.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book is extremely versatile and can be used in many ways. Here's a few ideas on ways you could use the texts and questions across KS2 to master inference and beyond.

BOOK BREAKDOWN

The book is split into two halves. The first eight texts are for in depth inference practice. The extracts are followed by multiple pages of different question types, great for practicing specific skills. For example, you might wish to focus specifically on 3-mark impression questions over the course of a week or fortnight with the aim of improving that skill. You could look at a different text each day, alongside the corresponding 3-mark questions. Then the next week or fortnight you might focus on a different skill, such as 'summarising'. The children would encounter a familiar text, but the sets of questions would approach the text from different angles and strengthen different comprehension skills. This is a great way to embed inference into your daily, weekly or fortnightly reading routine.

The second half of the book has twelve texts, with shorter, double page sets of questions, that cover all the different question types. These texts and questions are better suited for interventions and ongoing assessments (both formative and summative). They are great for exposing children to all of the question types. You can set a time limit of 15-20 minutes to read and complete the questions to help pupils build the stamina and tempo needed for reading comprehension.

Whole Class Teaching: Use texts and specific question sets to model specific skills within your whole class or guided reading sessions.

Small Group Intervention: Use the front eight or back twelve texts to deliver small group interventions to dive into specific skills, or to assess how competent pupils are with specific question types.

Ongoing Assessment: The back twelve texts can be used to identify gaps in inference, as all inference style questions are covered, allowing for future follow-up lessons that focus on one particular inference skill.

Homework: Simple and easy to photocopy and provide pupils with regular homework activities.

Teacher or Teaching Assistant: The comprehensive nature of the books allows for all members of staff to dip in, access a high-quality text and thousands of questions. Perfect for saving time, while improving pupil performance outcomes.

THE TEXT EXTRACTS

Comprehension Ninja Inference and Beyond contains several different text types that children come across in Key Stage 2 literacy:

Non-Fiction: These informative texts focus on areas across the National Curriculum, but they also introduce historical figures or events that might not have been studied before. This is often the case in KS2 SATs, where non-fiction texts cover both curriculum topics and other more random subjects.

Historical Fiction: We have created some unique texts that blend curriculum subjects but are delivered from different perspectives. Using real world events such as World War II, we have presented fictional characters or perspectives to explore the subject area. These texts are highly engaging fiction and are good springboards for classroom discussion surrounding non-fiction subject areas!

Fiction: We have curated a number of texts with provoking characters, diverse environments and stimulating situations written by well-known children's authors. The aim is to provide texts that are similar in complexity and style to the types of fiction in the KS2 SATs papers.

Poetry: We have included a blend of light-hearted poetry as well as more serious, reflective poems to both entertain pupils and encourage them to 'read between the lines'. Our poets and their extracts are some of the most well-known and celebrated in the literary world.

THE QUESTION TYPES

SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Super straightforward 'how' and 'why' questions direct pupils to specific parts of the text and guide them to make inferences and explain the reasoning behind their answers. Pupils might be asked: 'How do you know?' or 'Why did this happen…?'. These questions offer one mark.

> **NINJA NOTES**
> These questions relate to the actions or emotions of the characters in the text. Sometimes these questions only require one word or a short phrase to answer.

SENTENCE INFERENCE

Sentence inference questions provide an opportunity for pupils to zone in on a specific sentence or word in the text to draw a conclusion. These questions are presented in a variety of styles with pupils asked to either tick boxes or write down their inference in a short sentence. These questions offer one mark.

> **NINJA NOTES**
> When it comes to 'tick the box' questions, ensure that pupils are not just guessing. It's important for pupils to read the questions and make a logical inference based on the information provided. Pupils should focus on the actions and emotions and try to draw on their own experiences to imagine how characters in the text might feel, act or think.

THIS SUGGESTS

This suggests questions are presented in a multiple-choice format. A sentence or short extract is provided, with an inference that needs to be drawn and a few suggested answers. Pupils need to decide on and tick the most logical option. These questions offer one mark.

> **NINJA NOTES**
> These questions often refer to the imagery and language that authors use to create an atmosphere, such as simile, metaphor and personification describing the actions or emotions of a character. Check that pupils understand that 'this suggests' simply means 'this shows that' or 'this means'.

EVIDENCE: TWO MARKS – TWO INFERENCES

These questions direct pupils to specific parts of the text, where they will need to re-read sentences or even a paragraph. The pupil then needs to answer a question and give two ways that something is inferred or presumed. Pupils need to look for clues in the text and provide two pieces of evidence that show or support what the question is asking. Each piece of evidence is worth one mark, with two marks available in total.

> **NINJA NOTES**
> These questions require pupils to look for evidence that supports an inference. The question might ask: 'How can you tell the child was upset? Give two ways'. Pupils need to reflect on their own understanding of what an upset child looks like and then look for clues that suggest this in the text. For example, there may be inferences such as 'they were crying' and 'they couldn't catch their breath'. Both these inferences are worth one mark each. Pupils don't need to write expansive answers that are complete sentences; they just need to provide the evidence.

EVIDENCE: THREE MARKS – THREE INFERENCES

Three-mark evidence questions are very common and straightforward too. Much like the two-mark questions, these questions require pupils to provide three pieces of evidence that support an inference, or to provide three inferences. These questions normally have two lines available for each piece of evidence to be written. These questions often refer to the whole text, meaning the answers can be drawn from anywhere across the whole text, not just a specific paragraph.

EVIDENCE: THREE MARKS – IMPRESSION AND EVIDENCE

Impression and evidence questions require pupils to do multiple tasks for three marks. The question is laid out so that pupils need to provide inferences or impressions and look for supporting evidence. Pupils might be directed to specific areas of the text or to the whole text. An 'impression' is essentially the reader's opinion or what they think, so the answers should be written in the pupil's own words.

SUMMARISE QUESTIONS

Summarise questions are multiple choice and give an opportunity for pupils to demonstrate that they understand the main idea of the text. Pupils are presented with a selection of statements and are required to select the one that best matches or reflects the events, feelings and atmosphere presented in the text. These questions offer one mark.

123 SEQUENCE QUESTIONS

These questions require pupils to sequence information in the order it occurs in the text, from first to last.

PREDICTION QUESTIONS

Prediction questions ask the pupil to think beyond the text and choose the statement that best matches what could happen next. These require pupils to think about what has been implied in the text already to then make a logical prediction or guess about the future. These are multiple choice style questions, offering one mark.

LOST TIDINGS OF BALLYRYAN

OLIVER MALONE

The Middle of the World

The moss felt spongy on the bottom of Senan's boots as he ambled across the outlook.

'Wait there, Madra!' he called ahead. Madra wasn't listening, as usual. Ears down, tail wagging frantically, like an orchestra conductor's baton.

The evening sky was turning pink over the cliff's edges, where the damp, green, bouncy turf fell to a sudden rocky drop, down towards the crashing waves below.

A biting wind whistled past. Senan pulled his collar up around his ears.

'We should turn back now, Madra - it'll be dark sooner than you think.'

Senan's voice seemed to be blown back at him by the wind, and Madra carried on scampering ahead.

Senan knew that dusk could creep up quickly at this time of year. Madra had never been good at paying attention to much other than the scent he'd just picked up. But even if he wasn't listening, Senan quietly enjoyed talking to the clumsy dog all the same. It was a bit like thinking out loud; a way of reassuring himself, and keeping steady footing out on wild walks.

After all, when the wind was up, and the light fading, it could be frightening out on the cliffs. Senan knew that his mam was only a mile or so inland, listening to the radio and cooking stew for his tea. Even so, looking out at the vast sky and the thrashing waves made it feel like he was thousands of miles from anywhere.

A corncrake bird skittered past with tattered wings, its crooning cry made Senan jump.

'Watch where you're going!' he called, but it was off towards the horizon too quickly for his scolding to have much effect. As he glanced back towards the cliff's edge, he realised he'd lost sight of Madra. Silly dog, where had he got to now?

'Madra! Where are you?'

The wind howled again and Senan had to strain his voice. He picked up his pace, the moss underneath now feeling like it was slowing him down. He approached the cliff's edge. Keeping close to the ground, he peered down cautiously. Jagged rocks like shark's teeth jutted upwards from the turbulent green and white foam swish of the water. It made his stomach feel funny. He knew he wasn't supposed to get that close. He'd been told that all his life.

'Madra!' he called again. Suddenly he felt something behind him. He froze. The back of his hand, something cold and wet and soft and…

'Madra! You silly boy, what are you doing?'

He turned and looked down at the chocolate brown dog, pressing a damp, rubbery nose against the back of his hand.

But then his eyes narrowed and he crouched down to look a little closer. There was something in the dog's mouth. Not the usual stick or clump of turf. Something strange.

'What have you got there, Mads? What is it? Drop it, boy.'

Brown eyes looked up at him, puzzled. It seemed that Madra had found something quite extraordinary. In his mouth was something glittering, silver, misshapen. Something that didn't quite look like it belonged along this ragged stretch of coast. Something, for that matter, which didn't look as though it belonged anywhere on Earth, as far as Senan could tell. A delicate, strange thing. Like a piece of soft, thick fabric. Almost liquid and solid at the same time. Senan had never seen anything like it.

'Drop it.'

Madra obeyed, and he let his new find fall onto the dark green moss, with the weight of a feather, and the texture of liquid metal. Though the light was fading fast, its shimmering form seemed almost to glow. Madra looked up. Senan looked back at him. They both looked down at the mysterious object.

'Madra… What… what have you… found?'

✏️ SIMPLE QUESTIONS

Look at the paragraph beginning...

1 'Wait there, Madra!'
How can you tell that Madra is excited?

_____

2 'The evening sky was turning pink...'
Why do you think Senan pulled his collar up around his ears?

_____

3 'Senan knew that dusk could creep up...'
Why does Senan talk to Madra even though the dog doesn't listen?

_____

4 'A corncrake bird skittered past...'
How can you tell that Senan is surprised by the Corncrake bird?

_____

5 'The wind howled again and Senan had to strain...'
How do you know Senan is nervous about being close to the cliff?

_____

6 "Madra!" He called again.'
How can you tell that Senan is scared of what is behind him?

_____

7 'But then his eyes narrowed...'
How do you know that Senan thinks what Madra found is strange?

_____

8 'Madra obeyed, and he let his new find fall...'
Why do you think Senan is fascinated by the object?

_____

9 'Madra obeyed, and he let his new find fall...'
How can you tell that it is nearly night-time?

_____

10 'Madra... What... what have you... found?'
Why do you think Senan is struggling to speak at the end?

_____

⊕ SENTENCE INFERENCE
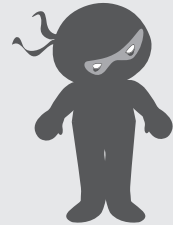
1 'Ears down, tail wagging frantically, like an orchestra conductor's baton.'

What animal is Madra?

_____

2 'After all, when the wind was up, and the light fading, it could be frightening out on the cliffs.'

What sense does this sentence give about the location? A sense of… Tick **one**.

beauty ☐

adventure ☐

danger ☐

humour ☐

3 'He knew he wasn't supposed to get that close. He'd been told that all his life.'

Why might have Senan have been told all his life about the cliff's edge?

_____

4 'But then his eyes narrowed and he crouched down to look a little closer.'
What is Senan's state of mind in this passage? Tick **one**.

excited ☐

worried ☐

exhausted ☐

curious ☐

5 'Madra obeyed, and he let his new find fall onto the dark green moss, with the weight of a feather, and the texture of liquid metal.'

What does the word 'obey' tell you about Madra?

_____

💭 THIS SUGGESTS...

1 '"Wait there, Madra!" he called ahead. Madra wasn't listening, as usual.'

What does this suggest about Madra's behaviour? Tick **one**.

He is always obedient. ☐

He is always distracted. ☐

He is scared of Senan. ☐

He doesn't like walks. ☐

2 'Senan pulled his collar up around his ears.'

What does this suggest about the weather? Tick **one**.

It is warm and sunny. ☐

It is windy and cold. ☐

It is calm and quiet. ☐

It is cloudy and cold. ☐

3 'Senan quietly enjoyed talking to the clumsy dog all the same.'

What does this suggest about Senan's feelings? Tick **one**.

He feels lonely and likes to talk to Madra. ☐

He doesn't care if Madra hears him. ☐

He is annoyed at Madra for not listening. ☐

He doesn't enjoy the walks. ☐

4 'The moss underneath now feeling like it was slowing him down.'

What does this suggest about how Senan feels? Tick **one**.

He feels excited and energised. ☐

He feels scared of the cliff. ☐

He feels confident on the walk. ☐

He feels tired and heavy. ☐

🔍 EVIDENCE – TWO MARKS

Look at the paragraph beginning...

1 'Senan knew that dusk could creep up quickly.' How can you tell that Senan enjoys walking with Madra? Give **two** ways.

1 _____
_____

2 _____
_____

2 'The wind howled again...'
How can you tell that Senan feels uneasy on the cliffs? Give **two** ways.

1 _____
_____

2 _____
_____

3 'Brown eyes looked up at him, puzzled.'
How can you tell that the object Madra found is unusual? Give **two** ways.

1 _____
_____

2 _____
_____

4 Look at the whole text. How can you tell that Senan has a strong connection to Madra? Give **two** ways.

1 _____
_____

2 _____
_____

🔍 EVIDENCE – THREE MARKS

1 How can you tell that Senan feels curious about the object Madra found? Give **three** ways.

1 _____

_____

_____

2 _____

_____

_____

3 _____

_____

_____

🔍 EVIDENCE – THREE MARKS

2 What impression do you get of the cliff setting in the story?
Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Impression	Evidence
_____ _____	_____ _____
_____ _____	_____ _____

3 What impression do you get of Madra in the story?
Give **two** impressions, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

Impression	Evidence
_____ _____	_____ _____
_____ _____	_____ _____

🔮 SUMMARY AND PREDICTION

SUMMARISE

1 What best describes how Senan feels during his walk on the cliffs? Tick **one**.

He starts happy but becomes scared when he loses Madra. ☐

He is excited the whole time. ☐

He feels angry because Madra won't listen. ☐

He is tired and wants to go home. ☐

SEQUENCE

2 Number the following sentences from 1-5 to show the order they happen in the text. The first one has been done for you.

Senan realises he has lost sight of Madra and begins searching. ☐

Madra runs ahead, ignoring Senan's calls. 1

Senan crouches down to examine the mysterious object. ☐

Senan looks out at the sea and thinks about how far he feels from home. ☐

Madra returns with something strange in his mouth. ☐

PREDICTION

3 Having read the whole text, what is the most likely outcome for Senan and Madra's discovery? Tick **one**.

Senan leaves the object behind and forgets about it. ☐

Senan brings the object home to show his mam. ☐

Madra hides the object somewhere, and they can't find it again. ☐

The object turns out to be a normal piece of rock. ☐