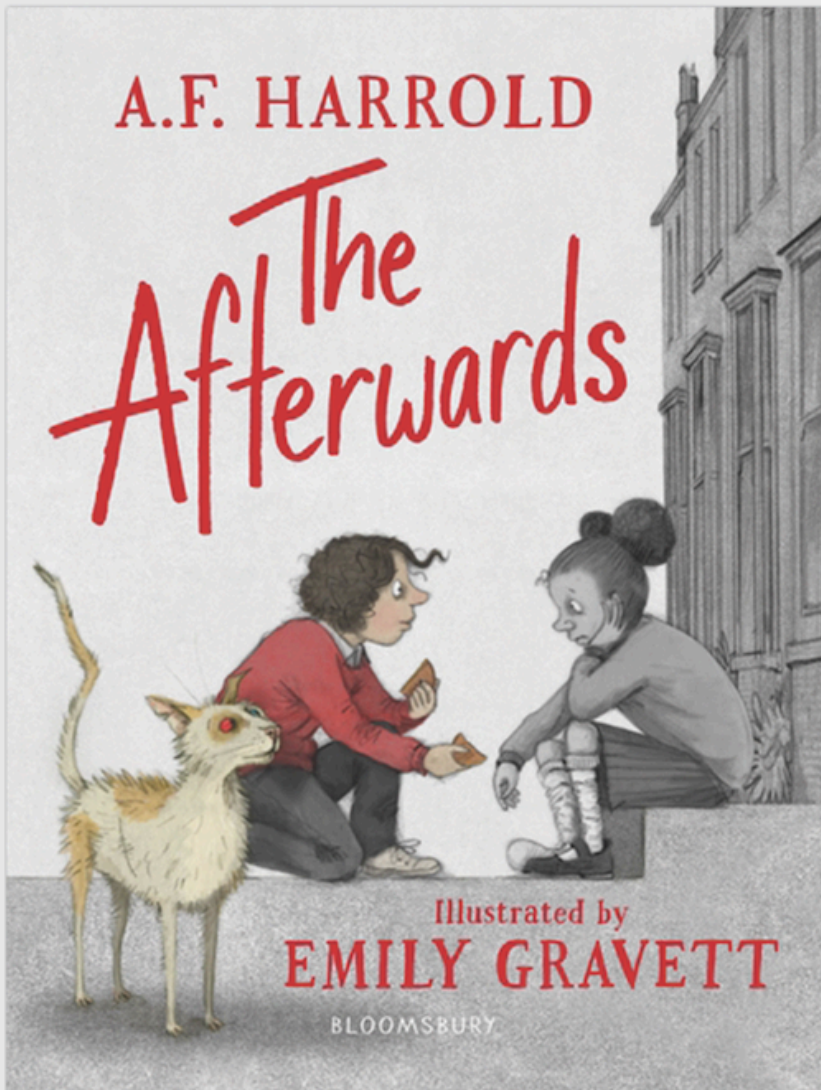


# SCHEME OF WORK



**PERFECT FOR:** Ages 11+; a simple, poetic, eloquently-told tale with powerful and hard-hitting themes; an exploration of what it means to grieve someone you love; lyrical language, beautiful illustrations; and a VERY mysterious cat...

\*Please note: there are sensitive themes in this story. It is advised that you read it before sharing with your class.

## KEY FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES:

English: Reading comprehension; Creative Writing;

Poetry; Writing in Role

Design Technology & Art

Drama, Speaking and Listening

Music

PSHE & Citizenship

Science: Animals including Humans



**SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES****COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS****EXTRA ACTIVITIES****Reading: Comprehension**

- Retrieve details from the text in order to make predictions about characters, settings and events.
- Make inferences about a character from description in the text.

**PSHE & Citizenship**

- Explore the importance of friendship.
- List the different ways that people can show or experience friendship.
- Consider an important friendship in your own life and how it impacts you.
- Explore the meaning of the phrase: 'coping mechanism'.
- Understand the different coping mechanisms people use when they have lost someone close to them.

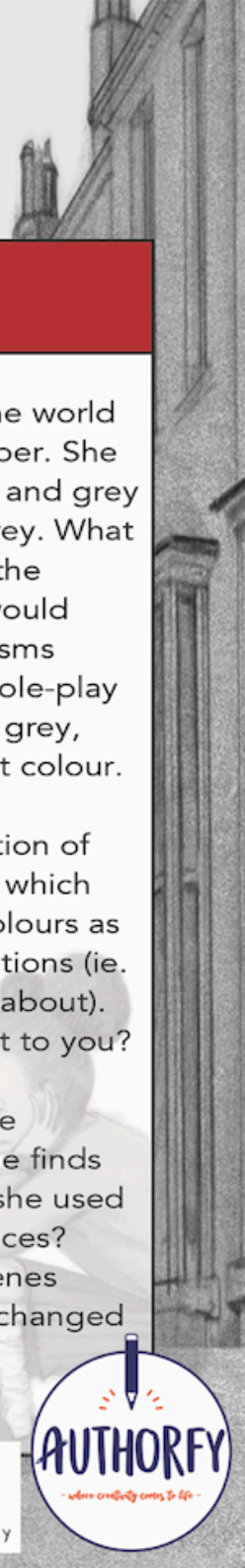
1. What is the significance of the Prologue on pages 1–2? Who do you think the 'old woman' might be?
2. What can you infer about December from the first sentence of Chapter 1? What age might she be? What sort of personality might she have? (page 3)
3. What sort of relationship do you think Ember has with her dad based on the dialogue between them? (pages 5-6)
4. How does Ember feel about it just being 'her and Harry, Harry and her'? How do you know? (pages 6-9)
5. What sorts of things do Happiness and December do together? (pages 11–15)
6. Why doesn't Ember like 'the way the cat looked at her' when she was at the safari park? Where else have cats been mentioned so far in the story? (page 20)
7. In what ways does Ember's dream in Chapter 3 foreshadow the events of Chapter 4?
8. What can you infer about how Mr Dedman feels from the description on pages 28–29?
9. Why does the author choose to write in a different style on page 30? What does this help to show about Ember's feelings here?
10. Why do you think the illustrator Emily Gravett chooses to use darker colours at the end of Chapter 4? (pages 31-33)

Read the Prologue on pages 1–2. What can you predict about the story from this section of the book? Who might the main characters be, for example? What might the setting be? Write a list of ten questions that you would like to ask about the story just from reading the Prologue. Consider why this is this an effective way to begin a story.

Look at the way Ember and Ness's friendship is described on pages 15–18. Draw a storyboard of your own to show what you and your best friend do together in one day. Include drawings of your own using Emily Gravett's illustrations as inspiration.

What is a 'coping mechanism'? How do you think Ember copes with the bad news she receives in Chapter 4? What sorts of things does she do? Who helps her? Write a list to show how she tries to deal with Ness's death. Do you think her reaction change as Chapter 4 progresses?





SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make inferences about character's feelings, setting and mood based on the author's use of colour in the story.</li> <li>- Retrieve and summarise details from the text.</li> </ul> <p><b>Drama, Speaking and Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personify the colour grey.</li> <li>- Act in-role as the colour grey during an interview role-play.</li> </ul> <p><b>Design Technology &amp; Art</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider the importance of colour when expressing feelings or emotion in art.</li> <li>- Create a colour map to show the different associations for different colours.</li> <li>- Create two scenes; one with colour and one without.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What sort of dream is December having at the beginning of Chapter 5? Have you ever had a dream like this? How did it make you feel (page 33)?</li> <li>2. What does Harry mean when he says: 'sometimes you have to guess' on page 35? Do you agree with him?</li> <li>3. Why do you think Harry hurts Ember's hand on page 35? What is he thinking about?</li> <li>4. How do you get a bad feeling about Graham from the way he speaks and how he is described on pages 37–40?</li> <li>5. Why do you think the cat appears on page 43? What do you think it is trying to do? What is significant about Ember's situation here?</li> <li>6. What happens to Ember's world when she walks through the gate on page 47? Where do you think she might be?</li> <li>7. What do you think the woman means on page 49 when she says: 'You would swap <i>this</i>, for <i>that</i>'? What has Graham agreed to do?</li> <li>8. What is different about this black and white world, according to Ember (page 53)?</li> <li>9. What happens to the snail on page 57? What do you think this represents?</li> <li>10. How does Ember show that she is strong and determined at the end of Chapter 8 (page 57)?</li> </ol>	<p>At the beginning of Chapter 7, the world becomes black and white for Ember. She describes it on page 47 as: 'Grey and grey and grey'. Consider the colour grey. What does it make you think about? If the colour grey was a person, what would he/she speak like? What mannerisms would he/she have? Carry out a role-play in which you interview the colour grey, where one of you is in-role as that colour.</p> <p>Colour is so important in this section of the story. Create a colour map in which you map out as many different colours as you can think of and their associations (ie. what they make you feel or think about). Which colours are most important to you?</p> <p>In Chapter 8, Ember describes the differences between the world she finds herself in and the old world that she used to live in. What are these differences? Using pages 53–57, draw two scenes showing how Ember's world has changed – (one in colour, one in black and white!)</p>





## SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

## EXTRA ACTIVITIES

### Creative Writing: Poetry

- Write a shape poem to show movement or feelings, using an example from the story as inspiration.

### Drama, Speaking and Listening

- Create a conscience alley in order to explore a character's feelings when making a difficult choice.

### PSHE & Citizenship

- Explore the process of making a difficult choice.

### Writing in Role

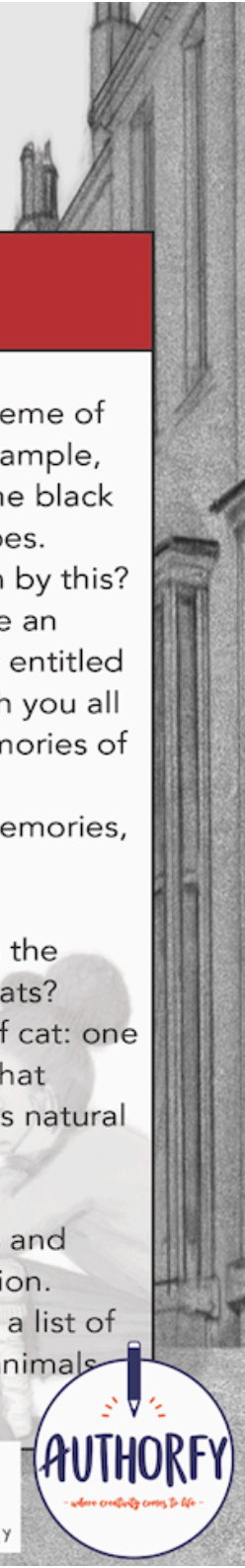
- Empathise with a character by writing in-role as that character.
- Emulate a character's voice and style.
- Retrieve and summarise details from the text.

1. How do you get a sense of Ness's isolation in Chapter 9 (pages 59–60)?
2. What does Ember realise about the 'silent world' in which she finds herself on page 61?
3. How is the description effective: 'Over their roofs a black circle was sinking'? What technique is the author using here (page 62)?
4. Why do you think the woman refers to Ness as 'it' when she says, 'It stays here' and 'It won't be here for long' on page 66?
5. Why does Ember have 'fire in her veins' (page 66)?
6. On page 68 the author organises the words in a spiral effect. What does this help to show is happening?
7. What is the effect of the repetition of the phrase, 'She'd never done anything like this before' on pages 76-77?
8. Why do you think Graham is described as having '[a] dark fire in his brain, twisting like a worm'? What techniques are used here? How does Graham feel? How does he behave according to this imagery? (page 83)
9. What is the effect of the juxtaposition of colours at the beginning of Chapter 11 on page 89?
10. What things does Ember find confusing about the house on page 91? Make a list of three things. Which house do you think she might be in?

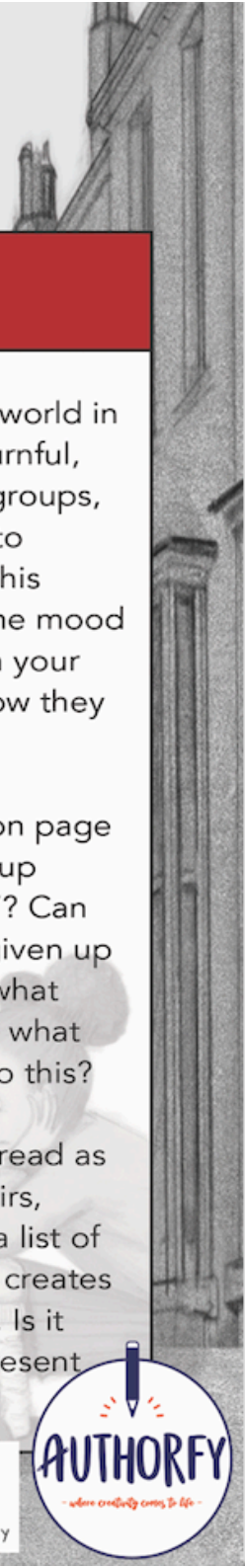
On page 68, the author A. F. Harrold organises the words on the page to look like a spiral. In pairs, discuss how this technique helps to show the movement or feelings of Ember at this point in the story. Write your own shape poem to show a movement that you made recently, or a feeling that you've recently experienced.

At the end of Chapter 10, Ember faces a difficult choice of going on towards the gate, or turning back. As a class, create a conscience alley. On one side of the room should be voices persuading Ember to save Ness. On the other side should be the voice of the cat, telling Ember to turn back. Take it in turns to play Ember walking down the alley; how do you feel?

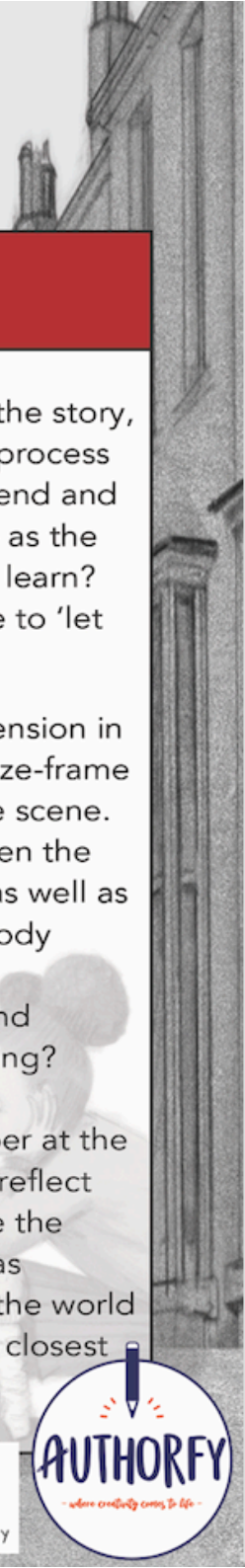
At the start of Chapter 10, Ember writes 'a list of new things she knew, or thought she knew'. What are these things? Imagine you are Ember at this point in the story; write your own list.



SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retrieve information from the text according to a particular theme or idea.</li> <li>- Analyse an important theme or symbol in the story.</li> </ul> <p><b>PSHE &amp; Citizenship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore the theme of memory and understand why memories are important.</li> </ul> <p><b>Science: Animals including Humans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Carry out research into the habits and behaviours of a particular species of cat.</li> <li>- Create a profile for a species of cat, including its habitat, food, appearance and different strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>- Understand the similarities and differences between animals and humans.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does the author mean by the phrase: 'The silence of the world smothered her' on page 94? What technique is being used here?</li> <li>2. Why do you think 'spiders crawling across [Ember's] skin' when Ness mentions Mrs Milosz? (page 96)</li> <li>3. What is Ember trying to do in Chapter 12? Why does she feel frustrated? Pick out key words and phrases from pages 97–102.</li> <li>4. Who do you think Mrs Todd is? What is her significance (page 108)?</li> <li>5. What sort of character is the cat? What questions would you ask the cat if you could (pages 118–121)?</li> <li>6. What does the cat mean when it tells Ember that all she's seen 'are echoes' (page 120)?</li> <li>7. In Chapter 14, the cat lists the differences between humans and other animals. What are these differences (pages 120–121)?</li> <li>8. How has Ember's <u>mood</u> changed on page 125? Why has it changed?</li> <li>9. What do you think the phrase, 'dose of self-consciousness' means on page 130, judging from the context? How does this relate to what the cat told Ember on pages 120-121?</li> <li>10. What happens to Ember at the end of Chapter 14? Why do you think this happens (pages 132–133)?</li> </ol>	<p>In this section of the book, the theme of memory is very important. For example, on page 120, the cat describes the black and white world as 'Echoes. Echoes. Echoes.' What does the cat mean by this? How might a memory be a bit like an echo? As a class, create a display entitled 'Echoes. Echoes. Echoes' in which you all share some of your favourite memories of your friends. You can bring in photographs, write about your memories, or draw them.</p> <p>The cat is an important symbol in the story. What do you know about cats? Create a profile for any species of cat: one that you know or that you like. What features does it have? Where is its natural habitat? What does it like to eat?</p> <p>The differences between humans and animals are important in this section. What are the differences? Create a list of comparisons, showing the ways animals and humans are similar/different.</p>



SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Music</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use musical instruments to convey a mood or emotion described in the story.</li> <li>- Play and perform in solo and ensemble contexts.</li> </ul> <p><b>PSHE &amp; Citizenship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore the idea of sacrificing things for other people.</li> <li>- Understand the different contexts when we might sacrifice things for others.</li> <li>- Discuss the concept of fear and why it is important to understand this emotion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Retrieve information from the text to summarise a particular theme or idea.</li> <li>- Identify how a book can create an emotional response in the reader.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What does the author mean by the phrase, 'the we're-together-again-ness of them' on page 135? Why is this an effective description?</li> <li>2. What are December's mixed emotions on page 139? Pick out key words and phrases. Do you <u>empathise</u> with her here? Why or why not?</li> <li>3. The narrator describes a 'mournful, dispiriting sound' on page 139. What sort of sound might this be?</li> <li>4. What differences does Ember feel inside herself now that she is in the same world as Ness (pages 137-141)? Make a list of key words and phrases.</li> <li>5. Why is the phrase, '<i>Be Brave. Go on</i>' written in italics on page 150? What does this help to show?</li> <li>6. What is the effect of all the different questions listed on page 150? How do these questions make you feel as a reader?</li> <li>7. What decision does Ember make on page 156? How does she make her decision?</li> <li>8. What word do you think Ember might be looking for when she says: 'What did they call it? When you give up something to help someone else?' (page 156)?</li> <li>9. How does the author create <u>tension</u> or <u>suspense</u> at the end of Chapter 19 (pages 162-163)?</li> <li>10. Do you feel frightened or scared reading Chapter 19? Why or why not?</li> </ol>	<p>When Ember crosses into Ness's world in Chapter 16, she describes a 'mournful, dispiriting sound' (page 139). In groups, can you use musical instruments to recreate the sound described in this passage? How can you capture the mood at this point in this story? Perform your pieces to the class and discuss how they make you feel.</p> <p>What word is Ember looking for on page 156 when she describes '[giving] up something to help someone else'? Can you think of ways that you have given up something to help someone? In what situations is it good to do this? In what situations should you not try to do this?</p> <p>The end of Chapter 19 might be read as slightly frightening or scary. In pairs, discuss why this might be. Write a list of reasons that this part of the story creates fear or nervousness in the reader. Is it because Ember is also scared? Present your ideas to the class.</p>



SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p><b>Reading: Comprehension</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify key themes, events and characters in the story.</li> <li>- Retrieve information from the text in order to summarise a theme.</li> <li>- Divide an idea/theme in the story into storyboard sections.</li> </ul> <p><b>Drama, Speaking and Listening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Interpret a scene in the story through a freeze-frame.</li> <li>- Convey relationships and feelings in a scene using body language, position, facial expression, props and sound effects.</li> </ul> <p><b>Writing in Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Empathise with a character by writing in-role as that character.</li> <li>- Emulate a character's voice and style.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why do you think Chapter 20 is so short? Why has the author made this decision?</li> <li>2. What is effective about the description: 'a voice of cobwebs and smoke' (page 167)? What can you <u>infer</u> about the character that this sentence describes?</li> <li>3. When Ember first addresses her mum, it takes 'a few seconds, years, for the word to cross the gap between them' (page 168). What does this mean?</li> <li>4. What happens to Ness on page 175? How does Ember feel in this moment? How do you know?</li> <li>5. The narrator describes Ember as having 'a knot she couldn't untie' on page 184. What does this mean? What is the 'knot' that the narrator is referring to?</li> <li>6. Why do you think Ember's mum asks her to stay? What are her motivations for asking this (pages 186–187)? How does Ember feel about staying?</li> <li>7. What does the cat do for Ember? Why do you think the cat does this? (pages 186–189)?</li> <li>8. How does the <u>mood</u> change at the end of Chapter 25? Why does it change?</li> <li>9. Ember starts to cry on page 193. Do you think this is a good thing? Why or why not?</li> <li>10. Do you think the story has a hopeful <u>ending</u>? Why or why not (page 197)?</li> </ol>	<p>When you have finished reading the story, create a storyboard showing the process of Ember's grief – for both her friend and her mum. How does she develop as the story progresses? What does she learn? How does she eventually manage to 'let go'?</p> <p>Choose your favourite scene of tension in the story. In groups, create a freeze-frame to show your interpretation of the scene. Consider the relationships between the characters in your chosen scene as well as their feelings; how can you use body position, body language, facial expressions, props and even sound effects to convey what is happening?</p> <p>Write a diary entry in-role as Ember at the end of the story. How would she reflect on what has happened? What are the most important things that she has learned about herself and about the world around her, including the people closest to her?</p>