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DARWIN'S DRAGONS

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CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER RESOURCES

CREATED BY: Scott Evans

thereaderteacher.com



chickenhousebooks.com

Chapter

Comprehension Questions

Writing Opportunities

Cross Curricular Opportunities

Front cover

(Illustrated by Gordy Wright)

Ask children the following when looking at the front cover:

- What do you think the book will be about?
- What things can you see on the front cover?
- Why do you think the book has the title *Darwin's Dragons*?
- What kind of story will it be? What genre do you think it belongs to?
- Who might enjoy it? Based on the cover, who might you recommend it to? Why?
- Now read the blurb – were any of your predictions correct?

Write what children can observe (*I can see ...*); what they can infer (*I think ... because ...*); and what they want to question about the cover (*I wonder if/what ...? etc.*).

ART • Draw alternative covers for the book, maybe featuring Charles Darwin himself.

Message from Chicken House

Ask children the following when looking at the front cover:

- What do you think the book will be about?
- What things can you see on the front cover?
- Why do you think the book has the title *Darwin's Dragons*?
- What kind of story will it be? What genre do you think it belongs to?
- Who might enjoy it? Based on the cover, who might you recommend it to? Why?
- Now read the blurb – were any of your predictions correct?

After reading the story, write your own messages of reflection about the book to other readers in the school to recommend it to them.

DRAMA/COMPUTING • Record your messages and attach them to books in the classroom or school library, using QR codes for other children to scan to see video recommendations.



Chapter

Comprehension Questions

Writing Opportunities

Cross Curricular Opportunities

Quotes by Charles Darwin and James Redding Ware; Map of the Voyage of the HMS *Beagle* and 'A Note about this Story'

- Who is Charles Darwin? What do you know already about him?
- Why do you think the author has chosen these quotes to start the book?
- What do you think the quotes mean?
- What interesting information do you learn from the Map of the Voyage of the HMS *Beagle* and 'A Note about this Story'? Why do you think they have been included? How do they help the reader?

Find other quotes by Charles Darwin. Investigate their meanings. Write your own quotes to describe the book.

Write a non-chronological report about Charles Darwin. Include key dates, biographical information and events about his life.

HISTORY • Research why Charles Darwin is now seen as a significant person in the fields of natural history and science. Create a spider diagram of facts, ideas and themes linked to evolution and Charles Darwin. What do you already know?

COMPUTING • Create a presentation about evolution and/or Charles Darwin and present it to the class.

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- What do the words 'studious' and 'buccaneer' mean? (page 1)
- Find a phrase on page 2 that shows Syms feels happy after receiving praise from Darwin.
- Why does Syms call Darwin 'sir'? (page 4)
- Does Syms like Mr Darwin? Use the information in this chapter to describe the relationship between them. What can you infer about their relationship, using evidence from the text?
- Find at least two examples of similes and metaphors to describe things in this chapter (like an acorn in its cap, sky was suddenly the colour of a bruise, air smelt of copper pennies). Why do you think the author uses these? Are they effective?
- How does the author use a combination of humour and action in this opening chapter to get our attention?

Darwin asks his assistant, 'Could the shell design force this behaviour, or could it be the other way around?' What do you think? Do you agree or not? Write a short answer to this question. Try to justify your answer with what you already know about evolution.

GEOGRAPHY • Research the Galapagos Islands. Explore and find out more about why the Galapagos Islands are unique, the different types of plants and animals that live there, and the conservation efforts to keep the islands protected.



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2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is Syms glad he sealed the case with wax? (page 7) Look at the description of Charles Darwin in this chapter. Pick out three details which tell you about his personality. Predict what will happen to Syms next after the disappearance of Mr Darwin, the rope, the rowboat and the <i>Beagle</i> (page 10). 	<p>Write the events of this chapter from the perspective of Charles Darwin.</p>	<p>ART • From the descriptions of the weather that begin the chapter to the action of the boat overturning, illustrate the scene.</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does the rain remind Syms of? (page 11) What is the mood like in this chapter when Syms realizes he can see land? Pick out any words and phrases that support your opinion. How does he feel when he sees the iguanas? Why is this significant? Can you identify a moment on page 14 when the atmosphere changes? Why and how does it change? 	<p>If you were washed ashore alone upon an island, write an explanation of the three things that you would take with you if you had a choice and why.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • Learn more about the landforms of volcanoes and islands, how the Galapagos Islands were formed by volcanoes, and what causes volcanoes to erupt.</p>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What advice does Syms use, and from whom does this advice come from? What do you think the phrase ‘<i>Stay bricky</i>’ means? (page 16) Explain what the saying ‘Open eyes lead to an open mind’ means. (page 16) Imagine you are Syms experiencing the new island in this chapter. What can you see, hear, taste, touch and smell? How do you feel? 	<p>Write a short piece of advice that you would give Syms, a friend or yourself if you found yourself shipwrecked upon an island.</p> <p>Write the beginning of the next chapter in the style of the story after Syms is plucked from the ground and swept up into the air. What do you think will happen next?</p>	<p>PE/OUTDOOR • In this chapter, Syms mentions that he needs to find shelter. Build a shelter in the school grounds from natural materials.</p>



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5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why might Syms think he is imagining these events and feeling like he is 'off [his] chump'? (page 19) Find as many words and phrases as you can to show the anxiousness that Syms is experiencing during this chapter. How do these words create a sense of urgency? Why does he repeat the phrase '<i>Stay bricky</i>' from the previous chapter? (page 20) 	<p>Create an Emotions Graph to plot Syms's changing thoughts and feelings throughout the last chapters. You may wish to refer to key events such as: the rowboat overturning; trying to save his master; arriving on the island; encountering the sky beast.</p>	<p>MUSIC • Create a soundtrack for this scene, where Syms is in the clutches of the sky beast. Research music from films with similar scenes.</p>
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does the author create tension and intrigue within this chapter? What images of the sky beast can you see as you read it? What does the sky beast remind you of? How does it link to the title of the chapter of the book and the Spanish name of the island? 	<p>What are your first impressions of Syms from this part of the book? Summarize him in three words, and explain your word choices. Does he remind you of any other book or film characters? Write short chapter summaries for each of the six chapters so far.</p>	
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find a phrase on page 29 that shows that a lot of time has passed. Why do the sounds of the Sally Lightfoot crabs remind him of his Sunday School teacher's clicks of disapproval? (page 30) What does this suggest about the character of Syms? What does Syms find in the sea? How does this act as a source of comfort? 	<p>Syms talks about the motion of being aboard the <i>Beagle</i>. Imagine you were on board. Write a 'day in the life' diary entry describing a day on the <i>Beagle</i>.</p>	<p>HISTORY • Research the HMS <i>Beagle</i>. Find out why it is famous, and about its voyages of exploration.</p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What effect does the last sentence of this chapter have on the reader? 		<p>MUSIC • Syms talks about sea shanties that were performed aboard the <i>Beagle</i> with them men. In groups, compose a shanty thinking about pace, rhythm and the number of syllables in a line.</p>
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a stand-off? Can you act one out with a friend? (page 34) Why does Syms throw dirt at the sky beast? (page 35) Why does he soon regret this? (page 36) How does the author use the description of the landscape to make it seem as if Syms is unwelcome on the island? Why does the author choose to end this chapter with a question? 	<p>Write a setting description of the volcanic island.</p>	<p>ART • Using the up-close description of the sky beast, sketch what it looks like.</p>
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the 'summit' of the volcano? (page 38) Why does the author choose to include the scene about tea, and his memories of his da? What does it mean if someone has the 'collywobbles'? (page 42) 	<p>Syms frequently has flashbacks about his da. Write some questions that Syms might ask his da for advice, now that he is on an island. Write the answers that his da might give as advice.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • Learn more about the formation of fumaroles, lava fields and magma.</p> <p>DRAMA • Role-play the conversation that Covington is having between his head and his heart, using his voice and his inner thoughts on page 41. How can you show his feelings through your tone, body language and expression?</p>



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10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the stick snapping 'predictable'? (page 44) • Explain what the saying 'God loves a trier' means. (page 44) • Why does Syms think about how Robinson Crusoe survived? What three items did he have? 	<p>After the Conscience Alley activity (next column), write a paragraph exploring your decision and explaining your feelings about the dilemma you face.</p>	<p>PHILOSOPHY • Look at page 45. What should Syms do with the case of the fiddle? Should he use it to collect rainwater or use it as firewood? As a class, create a Conscience Alley. One side of the class should be voices persuading Syms to use it to collect rainwater, the other side should persuade him to use it as firewood. Take it in turns to play Syms, walking through the alley of voices.</p>
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean if something is 'camouflaged'? (page 48) • Why does it appear as if the lizard is listening to Syms playing? (page 49) • What would Syms do to feel better if he'd been missing his father dreadfully? (page 51) • Why does the author choose to include the time when Syms had been locked in his aunt's coal cellar? What does this insight reveal about the character of Syms? 	<p>Rewrite the meeting from the point of view of the lizard. What would it be thinking when watching Syms playing? Why might it have bitten him? Could it have been something else?</p>	<p>ART • Practice colour mixing in order to create shades and tints of the colour green to match the colour of the lizard. Can you create Pistachio Green?</p>
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who or what was the culprit who bit Syms? • Give at least two defining features of the centipede (page 52). • How does the bite affect Syms? 	<p>The author describes the lizard as being like 'a bull about to charge' (page 52). What does this mean? Can you write a simile of your own to describe how the lizard feels?</p>	



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean if something 'meets its maker'? (page 54) • Look at page 55. Why is the text styled using <i>italics</i>? What does this passage reveal about Syms's life? 		
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What thing does Syms mean when he describes a 'prickly pear'? (page 57) • Using a dictionary, define the words 'morsel', 'parched', 'porpoise' and 'delirium'. • Why does Syms think that the lizard is like a pet? (page 58) 		<p>SCIENCE • Learn more about cacti and how they have adapted to survive without water. Link it to your understanding of evolution.</p> <p>MATHS • Investigate the capacity of how much water a large cactus can hold.</p>
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a 'street waif'? (page 61) • Why is Syms in debt to the lizard? (page 62) • Why is the scene where Syms touches the beast significant? What does it show about how their relationship is growing and developing as the story progresses? Try to use evidence from the text. 		<p>SCIENCE • Syms mentions the finches he has seen, learn more about Darwin's finches, and how finches in the Galapagos Islands have become adapted to suit the different environments in which they live.</p>
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what a 'silhouette' is (page 65). • Syms says that this creature is 'from story, from myth'. What creatures does the sky beast remind you of, from stories or myths you may know? 	<p>Do you think Syms should trust and follow Farthing? Write an escape plan for Syms to find shelter or return home.</p>	



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you think Syms keeps chasing the green lizard? Syms describes the sky beast as a dragon (page 70). Do you think this is the right choice of word to describe it? Which other words could you use? How does the author use humour to describe the death of Syms should it happen on page 71? 	<p>As this chapter ends on a cliff-hanger, write your own 100-word short story that ends on a cliff-hanger.</p> <p>After the last sentence of this chapter, write the next chapter opening.</p>	
17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does it mean if something is 'engulfed in darkness'? (page 73) Explain what Syms means when he says that his fall had been 'no accident' (page 76). Do you think the lizard had led him to safety? Why can Syms smell sulphur? (page 77) 	<p>Thinking about Farthing, write a short description of the lizard as if you are Syms recording it in your handbook, to report back to Mr Darwin.</p>	<p>PSHE • Scratch is important to Syms. What makes something important to you? Draw a diagram of an object that means a lot to you and, in a caption, explain why.</p>
18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does the word 'wretched' mean? (page 79) Why is it effective here? Can you think of any other words the author could have used to describe this? Syms is very angry. Is it really himself he's angry with in this chapter? Explain your answer. How do the feelings of Syms change in this chapter from anger to worry to being scared? 	<p>Write a setting description of these tunnels, making them sound as sinister as you possibly can.</p>	<p>DRAMA • Re-enact the tunnels scene through drama and freeze-frame. Don't use any dialogue.</p>



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19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be brave enough to go charging into the tunnel? • What does his aunt's way of dealing with the sparrows in the chimney suggest about her character? (page 84) • What does the word 'haphazardly' mean? (page 85) What word class is it? (adverb) • Predict what is in the cave with Syms. 	Write what happens next to Syms as he sees what is in the cave around him.	
20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What items does Syms see? • How does Syms know that humans have been in this cave before? (page 89) • What does Syms surprisingly find behind the chest? (page 91) 	Write an instructional plan about how Syms can use the boat to escape the island and get away from the beast.	
21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find a word on page 94 that means the same as 'someone who rebels against authority'. (<i>mutineer</i>) • Why does Syms play the dead buccaneer a song on his fiddle? • What had Syms's da died of? 	Did Syms have the right to steal the boat? Write a balanced argument.	
22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean if an animal 'guards their territory'? (page 98) • What do the gashes across the sea lion's muzzle and the claw marks across his chest show? (page 99) • True or false – Syms seems comfortable being with sea lions. Discuss. 	Write your own description of coming face to face with the sea lions.	



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does Farthing help Syms with the sea lions? Do you think Syms should keep following Farthing? Predict what Syms falls into. 	Summarize in a sentence how Syms feels about finding Farthing alive after the fire.	
24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does it seem as if Farthing has brought Syms here? What does Syms mean by calling Farthing his 'lizard friend'? How important is their relationship now? Why is Syms surprised when Farthing follows him at the end of the chapter? 	Write a survival guide about how Syms has survived so far on the island, including how the animals have helped him.	
25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does the word 'maudlin' mean? (page 109) What does Syms use to fix the seams of the boat? (page 112) Syms says that he would never know what the lizard was thinking (page 112). Can wild animals have thoughts and feelings? Discuss. 	After discussion, write an inner monologue explaining the thoughts and feelings of Farthing.	SCIENCE • Learn more about why some objects float and others sink, and link to the buoyancy of boats. Investigate the best materials to use in the construction of model boats.
26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define 'forage'. (page 114) What literary technique does the author use in this sentence '...coaxing and cajoling and finally charming a tiny tongue...'? (page 115). (Alliteration) 		



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27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do the verbs 'sweating', 'stumbling' and 'careered' tell you about how Syms is thinking and feeling in this chase? (page 120) • How does Lindsay Galvin add pace to the story in this chapter through language, vocabulary, dialogue and action? How does it make the reader feel? • What do you think a 'dragon's lair' is? (page 121) 	<p>Write down all the key words and phrases in this chapter. Now summarize this chapter in a maximum of five full sentences.</p>	<p>MUSIC • Use music to soundtrack the events of this chapter. Think about the types of instruments to use and their pitch, dynamics and tempo to try to make it as suspenseful as you can.</p>
28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Syms is standing on is described as 'a carpet of bones'. Why is this effective? • What does it mean if something is 'juttred' out? (page 126) • Read up to 'It was golden, shot through with marbled lines of black.' (page 127) Predict what the object is. 	<p>Using the sentences 'The light streaming down from it allowed me to look more closely at what I was standing on. I shuddered. A carpet of bones', write a continuation of this chapter in your own words.</p>	<p>SCIENCE • Take part in an owl pellet dissection like the animal droppings mentioned in this chapter.</p>
29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syms says that on their expeditions they only took what they needed from birds' nests. Do you think this is right? Should they have taken anything at all? Discuss. • Find the phrase that shows how large the eyes of the dragon are on page 130. (<i>'Dinner plate eyes'</i>) • Why do you think the lizard chose to save the dragon's eggs? • Could the lizard and the dragon be friends? 	<p>Write a balanced argument about Charles Darwin and his men taking eggs from nests. Were they right or wrong to do so?</p>	<p>ART • Treature your own dragon eggs using a range of materials including drawing pins.</p>



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does Syms feel about his dad's death? How do you know? What does Syms use to transport the eggs? (page 134) Find words and phrases towards the end of the chapter that show that the noise is too much to bear. 	Write a character description of the dragon.	
31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does the author choose to end this chapter with the sentence 'The sea was calm... but the island was raging!?' (page 138) 		
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the 'prow' of the rowboat? (page 139) How does Syms know that his rosin treatment of the boat has worked? Why does Syms feel that he must protect the eggs? Who used to call him Sonny Syms? Why is this relevant? 	Complete a Role on the Wall activity. Draw an outline of Syms. On the inside, write all his thoughts and feelings from the last few chapters. On the outside, record any questions you might like to ask him. Imagine you are Syms and write his answers in a different colour.	ART • Syms rows away from a scene where an angry volcano is shooting molten rock into the air and erupting in horrifying splendour. Using reds, oranges, yellows and any other colours you think necessary, create a fiery and atmospheric illustration of the scene.
33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The words in italics in this chapter are words that Syms's fiddle, Scratch, might say to him. Try saying some of these aloud. What do you think Scratch's voice sounds like? How can you capture its personality through your expression? What gives Syms reason to hope? 		



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is somebody's 'survival instinct'? (page 147) • Why does Syms soon change his mind about attacking the dragon with the knife? (page 147) 	Summarize in three words how Syms would have been feeling in the boat whilst it was burning around him.	
35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In what ways does Syms think he might die out there? • What does it mean if somebody had 'hallucinated'? (page 150) • Whose arms do you think hauled them out of the ocean together? (page 153) 	Write what you think happens next to Syms after he is saved by these voices.	
36	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did Syms not settle until the lizard was by his side? (page 154) • What does Farthing's hoot-growl signify? (page 154) • What does Charles Darwin call the newly-found lizard species? • What is an 'ordeal'? (page 157) 	Imagine you are Charles Darwin hearing Syms tell you that the animal that laid the eggs is a dragon. Write a diary entry showing your shock and surprise at hearing this.	
37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Mr Darwin think that Syms is concussed at the beginning of this chapter? (page 158) • Why does Syms think that something has been put into his water at the end of this chapter? (page 161) 		SCIENCE • This chapter talks about the eggs hatching. Learn more about what is inside an egg and the hatching process.



Chapter

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Writing Opportunities

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- What does 'savoury' mean? (page 162)
- What has changed between Syms and Mr Darwin?
- Why did Syms call the lizard Farthing? Use evidence from page 164 to support your answer.
- Why does Mr Darwin change from calling the lizard *it* to calling it *her* on page 164?

Pretend you are Syms about to tell Mr Darwin about all the adventures you've had since the last time you saw him. Write a short recount about your experiences.

39

- Why does Mr Darwin not interrupt or take notes? (page 166)
- Why does Syms stammer whilst he is telling Mr Darwin about his story? What does this show?
- Define the words 'anatomy', 'physiology' and 'magnitude'.
- Do you believe in dragons?
- Why does Mr Darwin say to Syms about omitting some of his story to the crew?

Syms says that 'Dragons just weren't believable.' Write a persuasive piece of writing arguing that dragons are real and believable.

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- What does the call 'Land ho!' mean? (page 174)
- How was Syms kept busy by Mr Darwin in the captain's cabin? (page 174)
- Why would a loss of hearing make Syms walk wobbly? (page 175)

Imagine you are aboard the *Beagle*. Write an eyewitness account of what you saw in both Tahiti and New Zealand as if you are writing in the ship's logbook.

GEOGRAPHY • Explore the locations of Tahiti and New Zealand. Compare the two places. What is similar? What is different?



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
41	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does Syms mean when he says 'I guess I was not his usual customer'? (page 179) • Why is the city of Sydney a strange sight for Syms? (page 179) • What is 'The Bush'? (page 180) 	<p>When Syms plays the new fiddle, he is taken back to a good memory. Write down your favourite memory and explain why it is.</p>	<p>MUSIC • Music can often make us think of positive and negative emotions. Think about what music makes you happy and explain why, using musical vocabulary.</p>
42	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a 'specimen'? (page 182) Why does it need to be preserved and stored? • It says in this chapter that Mr Darwin suffers with ailments and chest palpitations; what does this show about him? • How does Syms show Mr Darwin he is a 'better student than he is a teacher'? (page 184) • Why might Mr Darwin want Syms to sketch the bird right now? (page 185) • Predict what new little one Mrs Harvey is talking about. 		<p>HISTORY • Research about fossils and how these have helped in our understanding of evolution throughout history. Learn more about significant fossil finders like Mary Anning.</p>
43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why would Mr Darwin be frowning at Mrs Harvey? What does this show? (page 187) • What is 'vermin'? • What does Syms think may have hatched? • Which punctuation mark is used within the final sentence of this chapter? What is its effect? (page 189) 		<p>ART • From the description provided, draw the hatchling.</p>



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
44	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is Syms puzzled by the fact that Darwin thinks Farthing is the mother? What is a Komodo Dragon? Why does Mr Darwin make sure that he calls them lizards at the end of this chapter? 	Write a diary entry from the perspective of Mrs Harvey, to tell her side of the story.	DRAMA • Work in small groups to act out the exchanges between Syms, Mr Darwin and Mrs Harvey during this chapter.
45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does Mrs Harvey call the hatchlings 'giant newts'? (page 196) What is a 'runt in the litter'? (page 197) Do you think it is right that Mr Darwin keeps carcasses of animals, pinned and labelled for research purposes? 	Imagine you are Mrs Mary Anne Whitby. Write notes, from her perspective, about what you see of the hatchling when you arrive.	COMPUTING • Use the Zoological Society of London's website to find out more about the charity, which was founded in 1826 and is devoted to the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats.
46	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does Syms do to help the hatchling? (page 198) How does Mrs Whitby help too? What is an 'alto'? (page 199) Using the last line of this chapter, predict what you think Syms will call the new hatchling. 		SCIENCE • Investigate how sounds are made when objects vibrate. Find out more about how the ear detects sounds and how different sounds are made in relation to pitch.
47	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does Syms call the new hatchling Sixpence? What is a 'sheen'? (page 201) What makes a reptile a reptile? 		SCIENCE • Look at life cycles and the act of metamorphosis. Research how a caterpillar turns into a butterfly and a



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should Syms trust Mr Darwin? Discuss. 		tadpole turns into a frog. Create your own model of a dragon's life cycle from egg to hatchling to adult dragon.
48	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does it mean for someone to take their 'customary place'? (page 206) Where was the largest collection of wildlife in the world? Why is the word 'dragon' in inverted commas? (page 208) 		SCIENCE • Learn more about the orangutans that live in Borneo, and about how the main threat to their survival in the wild is the massive expansion of palm oil plantations.
49	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The orangutan's movements are described as 'lumbered'. Act this out with a friend to show your understanding of this verb. What does it mean when the orangutan 'mimics' behaviour? (Page 211) 	Should Jenny, the orangutan, be kept in a cage by Mr Darwin? Write your opinion and link it to animals in captivity and zoos in the world today.	
50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do we know Farthing is excited to see Syms when he arrives at the cage? (page 213) What do most of the dragons' names have in common? (page 213) Describe in your own words what a 'rancid stench' is (page 216). Predict why you think Queen Victoria has arrived at the end of the chapter. 	Do you think the animals should be in London or back in the Galapagos? Do you think Mr Darwin is more concerned with his reputation or the dragons? Write a short summary to these questions, using evidence from the text to support your thinking.	SCIENCE • Learn more about adaptation and how animals have adapted to their environments. Link it to theories of natural selection and evolution.



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
51	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does Queen Victoria call them 'my' dragons when it was Syms who found them? What does it mean to be 'staking a claim'? (page 219) What is a 'retinue'? (page 222) 	What are your first impressions of Queen Victoria? Summarize her character in this chapter in a maximum of three sentences.	HISTORY • Research Queen Victoria and her interest in owning exotic and intriguing animals.
52	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How has the relationship between Syms and Mr Darwin changed? Why are the dragons behaving differently in this chapter? What does the word 'manoeuvred' mean? (page 227) 	Write a poem to convey Syms's feelings at witnessing Quartz dying.	
53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does Farthing do to try to get Syms to still do something about their situation? (page 229) What is 'treason'? (page 230) Read up to the top of page 231. Predict why they have been brought to a mine. 		MATHS • Using a Venn diagram, compare and write about the similarities and differences between the environments of the mine and the Galapagos Islands for the dragons.
54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe in three words how Syms feels about being asked for his opinion by the queen. How has the dragons' behaviour changed since being relocated to the setting of the mine? (page 236) How does Syms feel about Quartz's death? (page 237) 	Answer Queen Victoria's question as if you were Mr Darwin. Are the dragons worth more to science alive, or dead? Write a short essay discussing this.	



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why does Mr Darwin seem indifferent about the death of Jenny? Why are the dragons becoming repetitive in their patterns of behaviour? What do you think Mr Darwin's <i>Big Idea</i> work is? 	Write the letter that Syms wrote to the queen. Read the reply he received, and base your letter on that.	HISTORY • Find out what happened to traitors of the queen and the monarchy during that era.
56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why was Syms relieved to see that the guard was Hallam, the eldest of the guards? (page 247) How did Syms trick the guard? 	Summarize what has happened in this chapter in a sentence.	
57	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does it mean to be 'smuggling' something away? (page 250) Why would Farthing not leave her sister? 		
58	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which river would the dragons be escaping into? (page 256) Why does Syms have a quiver in his voice? (page 257) 	Would it have been better if Syms had not taken the eggs in the first place? Write an answer to his thoughts during this chapter.	SCIENCE • The dragons have consistently been described as intelligent throughout this story. Find out about the intelligence of animals and why they are.
59	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think it means for the queen to show 'clemency'? (page 259) Why is Mr Darwin helping Syms to escape London? (page 262) 		MATHS • Wings are mentioned in this chapter. Take your own wingspan of your arms and compare that to other animals' wingspans.



Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross Curricular Opportunities
60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How many years later is this part set? Who is Emmeline Covington? (page 267) 	Write a short story about what happened to Syms Covington during the last twenty-five years.	
61	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does it mean if a material is 'rippling'? (page 273) How would you feel if you were Emmie in the tent? Do you think she believes in dragons? 	Write a summary of this part of the story (Part Seven) so far, by creating a dream Emmie might have of the dragons.	
62	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the name of the finch that Emmie spots? (page 277) What is the name of the book that Mr Darwin has had published since Syms left him? (page 277) 	Write the letter from Mr Darwin that Syms is reading and keeps in his breast pocket.	HISTORY/SCIENCE • Learn more about the seminal book, <i>The Origin of Species</i> , published by Charles Darwin, which detailed his theories of evolution and how it has influenced science ever since.
63	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did the dragon appear to look like? (page 280) Why does Syms remove his rifle, knapsack and hat, and put out both his hands with the palms facing up before approaching the dragon? (page 281) How does Syms tell the dragons apart from others? (page 282) 	<p>Imagine you are a reporter seeing the same sight as Syms and his daughter. Write a newspaper report about this dragon.</p> <p>Summarize how Syms feels about being reunited with Farthing in a short paragraph.</p>	ART • From the description provided in this chapter, draw and paint the golden dragon.



Chapter

Comprehension Questions

Writing Opportunities

Cross Curricular Opportunities

64

- Find as many verbs as you can to describe Farthing's movement during this chapter.
- How many dragons did Emmie spot through the spyglass behind her father? (page 286)

Write a paragraph, from Syms's perspective, about what it would feel like to be flying on the back of Farthing.

Summarize the whole story in less than 100 words.

As this is the end of the book, write your own continuation of the story about what might happen next to Syms, Emmie, Farthing and the rest of the dragons.

After reading ...

Use the reading list on page 304 to learn more about Charles Darwin and evolution.

Using the biographies in the back of the book, learn more about the people & places involved in the story.

Read the interview with Lindsay Galvin & find out how her fascination with the past and interest in science have helped her to write this book.

Using the timeline on pages 300-303, create your own timeline of the life of Charles Darwin.

