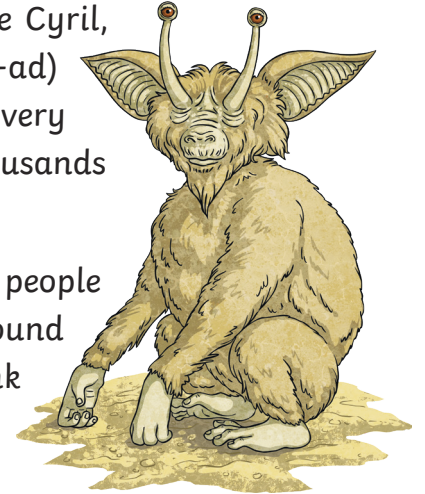


Improving Your Reading with Cassie the Commentator : The Psammead



There were once four children who spent their summer holidays in a white house, happily situated between a sandpit and a chalk pit. One day they had the good fortune to find a strange creature in the sandpit. Its eyes were on long horns like snail's eyes and it could move them in and out like telescopes. It had ears like a bat's ears and its tubby body was shaped like a spider's and covered with thick, soft fur. It had hands and feet like a monkey's. It told the children – whose names were Cyril, Robert, Anthea and Jane – that it was a Psammead (say sam-me-ad) or sand fairy. It was incredibly old; its birthday was almost at the very beginning of everything and it had been buried in the sand for thousands of years.

Part of what made the Psammead so special was its power to give people whatever they wished for. Cyril, Robert, Anthea and Jane now found their wishes come true. However, somehow, they just could not think of the right things to wish for and their wishes turned out very oddly indeed.



1. Why do you think a thorough description of a Psammead has been included in this text?

2. How does a Psammead compare to another fictional creature you know?.

3. In what way does the illustration help us to understand the text?

4. Draw lines to match each part of the extract with the correct quotation from the text.

setting

to find a strange creature in the sandpit

past events

covered with thick, soft fur

action

in a white house, happily situated between a sandpit and a chalk pit

character description

There were once four children who spent their summer holidays

Answers

1. Why do you think a thorough description of a Psammead has been included in this text?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think a thorough description has been included so that the reader is able to clearly imagine what a Psammead looks like.

2. How does a Psammead compare to another fictional creature you know?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that a Psammead looks a bit like the main character from my favourite monster movie because they are both covered in fur.

3. In what way does the illustration help us to understand the text?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The illustration helps the reader to picture exactly what a Psammead looks like and this really brings the story to life for them.

4. Draw lines to match each part of the extract with the correct quotation from the text.

