Year 7
Paper 1A: Fiction texts

THE MACHINE GUNNERS

Differentiated Workbook

In this extract, set in Newcastle during World War 2, a young boy named Chas McGill discovers something extraordinary in the woods near his home.

1   He sniffed. There was a foreign smell in the Wood … like petrol and fireworks.
2   Funny – it wasn't Guy Fawkes yet. Some kids must have been messing about. As he
3   pressed on, the smell grew stronger. There must be an awful lot of petrol. Something
4   was blocking out the light through the branches. A new building; a secret army base; a
5   new anti-aircraft gun? He couldn't quite see, except that it was black.

6   And then he saw, quite clearly at the top, a swastika, black outlined in white. He
7   didn't know whether to run towards it or away. So he stayed stock-still, listening.
8   Not a sound … except the buzzing of flies. The angry way they buzzed off dog-dirt
9   when you waved your hand over it. It was late in the year for flies, thought Chas.

10 He moved forward again. It was so tall, like a house, and now it was dividing into
11 four arms, at right angles to each other …

12 He burst into the clearing. It was the tail of an aeroplane: the German bomber
13 that had crashed onto the laundrette. At least, most of it had crashed on the
14 laundrette. The tail, breaking off in the air, had spun to earth like a sycamore
15 seed. He'd read of that happening in books. He could also tell from books that
16 this aeroplane had been a Heinkel HX 111.

17 Suddenly, he felt very proud. He'd report the find and be on the nine o'clock
18 news. He could hear the newsreader's voice in his head, saying:

19 *The mystery bomber shot down over Garmouth on the night of November 1st*
20 *has been identified as a new and secret variation of the Heinkel HX 111. It was*
21 *found by local schoolboy, Charles McGill of Garmouth High School. There is no*
22 *doubt that – but for the sharp eyes of this young boy - several enemy secret*
23 *weapons vital to the Nazis would have remained undiscovered …*

24 Chas sighed. If he reported it, they'd just come and take it away for scrap metal.
25 Like when he'd taken that shiny incendiary bomb-rack to the Warden's office …
26 they'd not even said thank you. And he wouldn't get in the news because it was
27 a perfectly normal Heinkel HX 111, with typical rear turret mounting one
28 machine-gun …

29 Chas gulped. The machine gun was still there, hanging from the turret, shiny
30 and black!

Q1: Read again **lines 1 to 11**.

List 4 details that suggest something **unusual** is **in the woods**.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

EXTENSION: Now read lines 6 to 11.

  (1) Label the image below with descriptions from lines 6 to 11 ONLY.

  (2) **Write the details down as quotations**, using quotation marks.

3

Q2: Read again **lines 12 to 24**.

How does the writer use language to describe the aeroplane **and** Chas' thoughts and feelings?

What to do:

(1)   **Read the text** below.
(2)   **Fill in the blanks**. Choose the correct word from the *Word Box* at the bottom.
(3)   **Write it out**.

The author uses language in interesting ways to describe the aeroplane and Chas'

thoughts and feelings to the reader. The writer describes the _____

crashing to the ground in an _____ way. The simile:

"The tail, breaking off in the air, had spun to the earth like a sycamore seed"

is clever because it helps the reader to imagine how the tail of the aeroplane twisted

round as it _____ out of control and crashed into the _____.

The writer then describes Chas' feelings as they _____. At first,

he feels **"proud"** of his discovery and imagines himself being talked about on the

_____. However, the writer explains that **"Chas sighed"** because he

realises that the _____ will just come and take the

_____ aeroplane away for **"scrap metal".**

WORD BOX: Use *each* word only *once*.

    change   spun   *adults*   woods

      crashed   *news*   aeroplane   *interesting*

Q3: How has the writer **structured** the text to interest the reader?

What to do:

(1) *Read* the sentences below.
(2) *Number them* in the <u>correct order</u> to show your understanding of the story.

- The climax of the episode is an epiphanic moment. Chas suddenly realises that this kind of German bomber has a machine gun at the rear of the plane. It looks undamaged by the crash because he notices it is still shiny and black.

- The narrative focus then narrows to a description of the swastika that he sees as he moves closer. Chas has a sudden realisation that it is the tail end of a German aeroplane that was shot down during the night.

- The writer begins by introducing the main character and establishing the setting for the reader: the main character is called Chas and action of the story takes place in the local woods. He is curious because he can smell petrol in the woods.

- Next, the narrative focus shifts to interior monologue as the reader hears Chas' thoughts. He imagines his amazing discovery being reported on the evening news.

Q3: Write up

What to do:

(1) *Write out* the text below.
(2) Fill in the blanks. Choose the **correct word** from the *Word Box* at the bottom.

The writer begins by introducing the main _____ and

establishing the setting for the _____. The main character is called Chas

and the action of the story takes place in the local _____. He is curious

because he can smell _____ in the woods.

The narrative focus then narrows to a description of the _____

that he sees as he moves closer. Chas has a sudden realisation that it is the tail end of a

_____ aeroplane that was shot down during the night.

Next, the narrative focus shifts to interior monologue as the reader hears Chas'

_____. He imagines his amazing discovery being reported on the news.

The climax of the episode is an epiphanic moment. Chas _____ realises

that this kind of German bomber has a _____ gun at the rear of the

plane. It looks _____ by the crash because he notices it is still shiny

and black.

WORD BOX: Use _each_ word only _once_.

  thoughts   *undamaged*   **swastika**   *German*   **suddenly**

  character   **petrol**   *woods*   **reader**   *machine*