

Chapter 1 · Fear in the Forest

When Bolts and his gang dare Christian to camp in the woods, Christian agrees. Legend has it that an escaped bear runs free amongst the trees. Will Christian and his friend Alfie stick it out?

THE LONGEST NIGHT

Christina Clover

CONTENT



READ!

- **Reading comprehension questions:** 10 multiple choice questions to test text retrieval and reading comprehension. These questions may also be completed online at www.fictionexpress.co.uk
- **Guided reading:** teacher's notes and a written response worksheet comprising 6 questions which allow for deeper response to the story, looking at personal response, inference and prediction



WRITE!

- **“Inspire!” words** to encourage children to include them in their own writing
- **Writing worksheet:** fiction and non-fiction comparison
- **Spelling worksheet:** spelling tricky words



TALK!

- **Voting options:** discussion points for each voting option
- **Discussion activity:** think about the setting of the story



EXPLORE!

- **Activity:** Venn diagram



Name: _____

1

Why is Christian camping in the woods?

- A. For a Scout badge
- B. As a dare
- C. To study bears

2

What can Christian hear from his tent?

- A. Bears growling
- B. Thunder crashing
- C. The river rushing

3

Why doesn't Christian have many friends at the school?

- A. He isn't very nice
- B. His father is the headmaster
- C. He's new to the area

4

What has Alfie brought with him?

- A. Crushed biscuits
- B. Healthy snacks
- C. A cake

5

Why does Christian's tent collapse?

- A. The ground is too soft
- B. He hasn't put it up properly
- C. Bolts takes it down



Name: _____

6

Why do Bolts and his friends come to see Christian?

- A. To check he's okay
- B. To tease him
- C. To warn him

7

Why does Bolts call Christian 'Gappy'?

- A. He has a gap between his teeth
- B. He has missed a year of school
- C. He always wears a Gap jumper

8

Why does Alfie believe Christian will camp all night?

- A. He's brave
- B. He's an outdoor type
- C. His dad is coming over later

9

What happened when the bear escaped from the zoo?

- A. The bear destroyed the campsite
- B. A man disappeared
- C. A fish shop was destroyed

10

Why did Alfie run to Christian's tent?

- A. He's late
- B. Bolts is chasing him
- C. He's frightened



- 1** Read the first two sentences together. Point out that this story starts in the middle of the action but we are able to quickly understand the situation. Ask: What do we learn about Christian here? (He seems to be cold and scared in the woods at night.) Read the rest of the paragraph to find out more about Christian. (He's camping in the woods on his own for a dare.) Find three adjectives that describe the river. (swollen, swirling, gurgling)
- 2** Still focussing on the first paragraph, ask: What do you think Christian can see, hear and smell? Agree that he can probably smell the damp earth around him; perhaps the smell of trees; he can hear the gurgling of the river nearby; perhaps his badly put up tent is flapping around him and the sound of someone scraping on it. He would be able to see the night getting darker. Dramatically read the sentence starting *Suddenly something...*
- 3** Read to the end of the section (to *Christian shook his head*). Ask: What do you think Alfie is like? Agree that he has freckles, then encourage the children to find evidence for his character, for example: he is brave (he runs through the woods even though he's scared), he's kind (he wants to support his friend and brings him biscuits), he's gullible (he believes in the bear and has fallen for Bolts' trick about the deodorant). He's possibly short, if he wants to grow taller.
- 4** Read the next section, up to *He finally found it and crawled through*. Ask: How does the author build tension here? She describes sounds and shows how scared Alfie is. Find the sounds that Alfie and Christian hear (very big footsteps, stomp...stomp...stomp, low, growling sound) and Alfie's terrified reaction ("*What was that?*", *Alfie's eyes were wide, Alfie started to cry, Alfie let out a high pitched squeal*). Ask: What large animal does Alfie think is attacking the tent? (a bear)
- 5** Read to the end of the chapter. Ask: What is Bolts like? Agree he is a bully. Find vocabulary that creates the impression of Bolts' character, for example: *cronies* (point out that this word is usually used to refer to the sidekicks of a bad character), *sniggering*, *teased*. List the mean things that he does here: calls Christian 'Gappy', lets down the tent, films Christian and Alfie struggling out of the tent, tells a spooky story about the bear to scare them and makes chicken noises.
- 6** Ask: Are Bolts and his friends right to call Alfie and Christian chickens? Point out that although Alfie believes in the bear and seems rather ridiculous, he stands up to Bolts and defends his friend. Ask: What do you think is going to happen next? Ask: Do you think there is really a bear? Do you think there was really a man who disappeared leaving his hat? Ask: What actual danger is hinted at in the first paragraph? (a river swollen by rain)



Name: _____

1

Why is Christian camping in the forest?

2

Describe the area where Christian is camping.

3

What is Alfie like?



Name: _____

4 How does the reader know that Alfie is scared when he hears the footsteps approaching?

5 What mean things does Bolts do in this chapter?

6 Do you think that Christian and Alfie are brave or not? Explain your answer.



Here is some of the challenging or potentially unfamiliar vocabulary used in chapter 1 of *The Longest Night*.

You may wish to explore this vocabulary, to improve children's understanding of the chapter, and inspire and enhance the quality of their own writing. You might like to display the words in the classroom, and encourage children to use new vocabulary as part of the Write! worksheet tasks.

collapsed

damp

dare

froze

quivering

teased

treading

wimp



Name: _____

Read these two passages of text about bears and answer the questions below. One paragraph is from the first chapter of *The Longest Night* and the other is a non-fiction passage about bears in the wild.

"After the bear escaped from the zoo, a local man went missing. They found his hat but not him - they reckon the bear must've eaten him. In fact," he paused, "I reckon you've put up your pathetic little tent right where they found his hat."

Bears are large mammals that live on land. There are eight species of bear, from polar bears and giant pandas to brown bears and sloth bears. Bears have strong legs, long snouts and thick fur. Bears are good at swimming, climbing trees and running.

1. Which passage is non-fiction. Explain how you know.

2. Which passage is fiction. How do you know?

3. Write two things you have learned about bears from the different texts.



Name: _____

These words appear in chapter 1 of *The Longest Night*. Circle the correct spelling of each word.

anser

answer

arnswer

could

cood

culd

decide

deside

dicide

desperatly

desperately

disperately

disappeared

dissapeared

disapered

urth

erth

earth

forward

forword

forwood

heerd

heard

herde

imagining

imagingning

imajining

laufed

laughed

larfed

resente

reecent

recent

thawrt

thorghht

thought



What should Christian do?

A

Follow Bolts and get revenge for frightening them

Do you think Christian should get revenge on Bolts? Give reasons for your answer. What could he do to get back at the gang? Do you think Christian seems the sort of character who would want to get revenge? What do you think will happen in chapter 2 if this is the winning option?

B

Look around the woods for any evidence of bears

Research bears – where they live and how they live. From your research, what evidence might a bear leave behind in the woods? Look back through the chapter for clues of a bear. Can you find any? Predict what will happen in chapter 2 if this is the winning option.

C

Stay in the tent alone when Alfie goes home

Do you think Christian is brave enough to stay in the woods on his own? What clues can you find in the chapter to suggest he might not want to do this? What do you think will happen in chapter 2 if this is the winning option?

→ Which option do you think would be the most exciting one for the next chapter of *The Longest Night*?

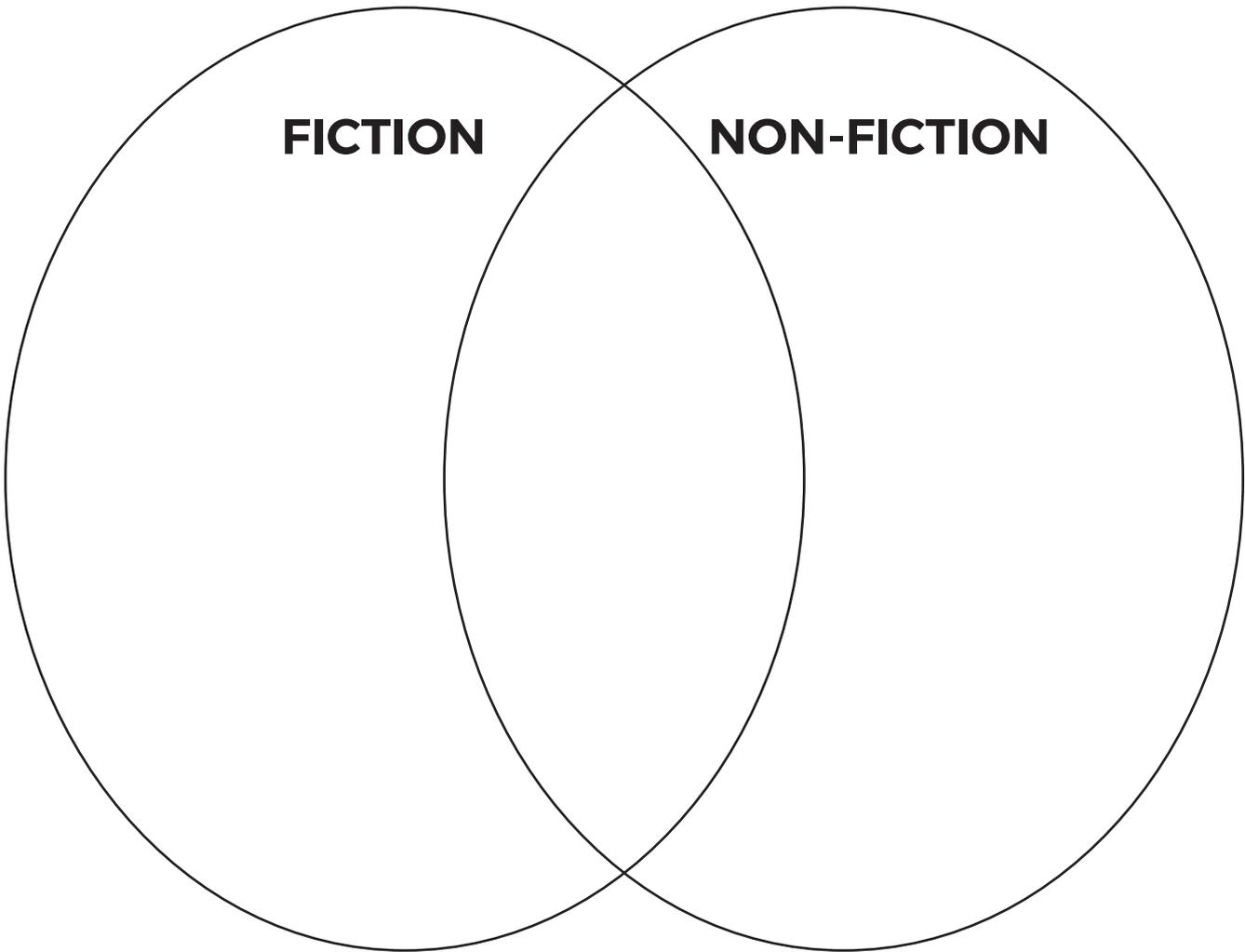
Discussion Activity

In pairs or a small group, discuss the setting of the story. What kind of story do you think this is? Is it a mystery, a horror story, a funny story or an adventure story? Come together as a class to decide that it is quite early to tell, but it could be an adventure or a mystery story. Together, identify any descriptive phrases and adjectives that the author has used to create a spooky atmosphere in the woods. Discuss why the author has chosen to tell a story all about a mysterious bear, a bullying gang and a brave new boy in the setting of a spooky wood. Are there any similarities between the unknown, and sometimes scary woodland setting and the feelings Christian has when starting at a new school?



Name: _____

Complete this Venn diagram to show the features of a fiction story and a non-fiction text. If you think a feature belongs to both fiction and non-fiction, put it in the space where the circles overlap.



- title
- characters
- contents
- diagram
- entertain
- plot
- author
- labels
- words
- dialogue
- facts
- made up
- theme
- can learn from it

READ! Comprehension

1. Why is Christian camping in the woods?
B. As a dare
2. What can Christian hear from his tent?
C. The river rushing
3. Why doesn't Christian have many friends at the school?
C. He's new to the area
4. What has Alfie brought with him?
A. Crushed biscuits
5. Why does Christian's tent collapse?
C. Bolts takes it down
6. Why do Bolts and his friends come to see Christian?
B. To tease him
7. Why does Bolts call Christian 'Gappy'?
A. He has a gap between his teeth
8. Why does Alfie believe Christian will camp all night?
A. He's brave
9. What happened when the bear escaped from the zoo?
B. A man disappeared
10. Why did Alfie run to Christian's tent?
C. He's frightened

READ! Written Response Worksheet

1. Bolts and his gang have dared him to. Christian doesn't want Bolts to think he is a chicken.
2. The earth is soft and damp. The river is swollen and there are strange scraping sounds in the woods.
3. Alfie is a freckly boy who is kind to Christian, who is the new boy at school.
4. He whispers, "What was that?", his eyes are wide and his voice is wobbling.
5. He collapses Christian's tent on purpose and films him trying to get out of it, calls him 'Gappy' and 'chicken', laughs at him and tries to scare him with a story.
6. Yes, they are brave. Christian is determined to stay at the campsite and Alfie sticks up for his friend.

WRITE! Worksheet: Spellings

| | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| anser | answer | arnswer |
| could | cood | culd |
| decide | deside | dicide |
| desperatly | desperately | disperately |
| disappeared | dissapeared | disapered |
| urth | erth | earth |
| forward | forword | forwood |
| heerd | heard | herde |
| imagining | imagingning | imajining |
| laufed | laughed | larfed |
| resente | reecent | recent |
| thawrt | thorht | thought |

EXPLORE! Worksheet: Venn diagram

