

## Fiction

## Gangsta Granny/Better Brown Stories

David Walliams/Allan Ahlberg

## Key text features

The texts are both from near the beginning of books and create different portraits of children at home.

- The Teaching text is from *Gangsta Granny* by David Walliams.
- The Practice text is from *The Better Brown Stories* by Allan Ahlberg.

## Reading the Teaching text: Gangsta Granny

- Introduce the text by asking what the children know about David Walliams. Have they seen him on TV? Have they read any of his books? Allow the children to share their experiences.
- Talk about the title of the story. What does it tell you about Granny?
- Explain that Ben has very unwillingly been sent to stay the night with Granny. He is poking around, looking for chocolate biscuits, when he opens a tin and finds it full of diamond jewellery.
- Can the children make predictions about what might happen in the story?
- Read the extract to the children and ask them if they think their predictions will come true.

## Reading the Practice Text: The Better Brown Stories

- Introduce the text by asking whether the children know any other books by Allan Ahlberg. Explain that this is a group of stories about nine-year-old Brian Brown's family.
- Once they have read the story, remind the children that they are now going to work independently to practise the strategies introduced during the teaching session.

## Moving into writing

- Reread this extract from *Gangsta Granny*.
- Use a range of drama techniques to decide what kind of character Granny is. Ask the children to role-play some adventures for her that might explain other pieces of diamond jewellery.
- Ask them to create a plan to show their favourite idea.
- Give the children time to discuss their ideas with a response partner. Together with their response partner, they should orally work up one of their ideas to write.

## Listening Comprehension: Questions and Answers

**Q1:** Why do you think Granny told Ben how poor and hungry she was?

**A1:** Accept answer which recognise that she is trying to make Ben understand why she acted as she did.

**Strategy:** Think about what you already know about the story, including its title. Listen to the whole extract and think about the question.

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**Q2:** How did Granny get into the house?

**A2:** Past the guard dogs, up a drainpipe and in through an unlocked window.

**Strategy:** Consider where in the text the information might be found. Listen carefully to that part. Jot down the words used in the text.

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**Q3:** The book is called *Gangsta Granny*. How does this text support the book's title?

**A3:** Accept answers that recognise that gangsters steal things.

**Strategy:** Listen carefully to the whole text again while you think about the question.

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## Teaching text: Gangsta Granny

## Cracking the questions

Question	Answer	CD/mark	Useful strategies
1. "To Ben, all the diamond rings looked pretty much the same." The words "pretty much the same" tell us what? Tick one. <input type="checkbox"/> Ben loves all the diamond rings equally. <input type="checkbox"/> He's never paid much attention to diamond rings. <input type="checkbox"/> All he cares about is how much he can sell them for. <input type="checkbox"/> Ben is fascinated by the stories behind how Granny came by each of the rings.	He's never paid much attention to diamond rings.	2a 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> <i>give meaning of words in context.</i> <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Scan the text for the sentence.</li> <li>Carefully read the sentences around this one to understand the context.</li> <li>Match the options in the question to your understanding of the words.</li> </ul>
2. Which words in paragraph 1 tell you that Granny was fond of the diamond rings.	"her oldest friends" Also accept: "Such a little beauty".	2g 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> <i>explain how meaning is enhanced through the author's choice of words.</i> <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text to look for the words.</li> <li>Carefully read the relevant section of the text while considering the impact of the words.</li> </ul>
3. How do you think Ben felt when Granny said: "This is the first one I stole, back when I was a nipper."	Surprised – or an appropriate synonym.	2d 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> <i>using inference to improve understanding.</i> <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text to look for information.</li> <li>Carefully read that part of the text, thinking about how Ben is feeling.</li> </ul>
4. (a) What did Granny plan to steal from the house? (b) What did she steal?	(a) Food (b) The diamond ring	2b 2 marks	<b>Question focus:</b> <i>finding information.</i> <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text you'll find the answer.</li> <li>Scan the text for the information.</li> </ul>

Teaching text: Gangsta Granny

Cracking the questions

Question	Answer	CD/mark	Useful strategies
<p>5. At the beginning of the story, Ben thought his granny was boring.</p> <p>(a) Write one word to show how you think he feels about her by the end of this extract.</p> <p>(b) Explain your answer.</p>	<p>Accept ideas of surprise that contrast to boring. E.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interesting</li> <li>• Surprising</li> <li>• Criminal</li> <li>• Cool</li> </ul> <p>Explanations should be linked to the answer to (a). E.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's interesting to have a granny who's a jewel thief.</li> <li>• Most grannies are quiet and well behaved so it's surprising to think of one who is a gangsta.</li> </ul>	<p>2h 2 marks</p>	<p><b>Question focus:</b> <i>make comparisons within the text.</i></p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>• Skim read the whole text, thinking about the question.</li> <li>• When you have answered part (a), think about what made you decide on your answer. Write a sentence to explain why you thought of that word.</li> </ul>
<p>6. What do you think might happen next in this story? Tick one.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Granny will give Ben a chocolate biscuit.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Granny will tell Ben off for poking around in her room.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ben will say that he wants to phone his parents and go home.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ben will ask Granny to tell him more stories about where she got the other rings and bracelets.</p>	<p>Ben will ask Granny to tell him more stories about where she got the other rings and bracelets.</p>	<p>2e 1 mark</p>	<p><b>Question focus:</b> <i>predict what might happen.</i></p> <p><b>Strategies:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>• Skim read the text for the overall meaning of it.</li> <li>• Re-read the options in the question and decide which one you think is more likely.</li> <li>• Carefully re-read the text to confirm your prediction.</li> </ul>

## The Better Brown Stories

Allan Ahlberg

- 1 Brian Brown, who had no dog of his own, nevertheless knew more about dogs than any boy in Snuggleton. His room was full of dog books; in school even the teacher had come to rely on his superior knowledge. At home, Brian did his share of the hoovering and often boiled eggs for the family breakfast. All he asked for in return was a dog or, more particularly, a puppy. His thoughtless parents, however, refused to consider it and his apathetic sister was no help either. Brian endured the situation with dignity. As time went by, he slowly covered the walls of his room with dog pictures, collected cheap sets of dog cards whenever he went to an antique fair ... and waited.
- 11 It was half-past ten on a cool May night ... Brian ate a sandwich at the kitchen table and listened to the radio. Suddenly there was a newsflash: "WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAMME TO REPORT ANOTHER MISSING DOG IN SNUGGLETON." It was the Plumber's Pekinese, apparently. The police were at the scene of the crime in Roman Road. Owners were again advised to check the whereabouts of their dogs and warned to "STAY INDOORS".
- 18 Brian wandered over to the window. His cool yet curiously reckless mind was considering this business of the missing dogs. He drew the curtain aside. Fog, drifting in from the sea, pressed up against the glass and smothered the view. The street lamp was barely visible. Brian listened: faint rumblings from the fridge, gurgling water in the radiator. Outside, a distant throbbing. He switched off the light.



<b>Name:</b>	<b>Class:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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1. Why is it a bit surprising that Brian is such an expert on dogs?

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2b  
  
1 mark

2. Write a question that Brian's teacher might ask him when she is relying on his superior knowledge.

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2d  
  
1 mark

3. Join each character to words the writer uses to describe them.

Brian	apathetic	
His parents	enduring	
His sister	thoughtless	

2b  
  
1 mark

4. "Brian endured the situation."

Which word or phrase is closest in meaning to "endured" in this sentence? Tick **one**.

continued	<input type="checkbox"/>	put up with	<input type="checkbox"/>
enjoyed	<input type="checkbox"/>	endangered	<input type="checkbox"/>

2a  
  
1 mark

5. At the end of paragraph 1, it says that Brian waited. What do you think he was waiting for?

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2e  
  
1 mark

6. Write a word, phrase or clause from paragraph 1 that gives a reason why the police might ask Brian for help.

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2f  
  
1 mark

7. Brian is described as having a "cool yet curiously reckless mind".

What do you think the author meant by this? Tick **one**.

He was calm, clever and brave.	<input type="checkbox"/>
He got angry very quickly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
He got into trouble because he didn't think things through.	<input type="checkbox"/>
He didn't care about anyone else.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2g  
  
1 mark

8. Do you think Brian might have taken the Pekinese? Explain your answer.

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2d  
  
1 mark

9. Write the paragraph number that matches each of these statements.

Introduces the problem in the story.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Begins to explore how the problem might be solved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduces the characters.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gives hints about who might solve the problem.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2c  
  
2 marks

## Practice text: The Better Brown Stories

## Cracking the questions

Question	Answer	CD/mark	Useful strategies
1. Why is it a bit surprising that Brian is such an expert on dogs?	He didn't have a dog.	2b 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> retrieve information. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text to look for the answer.</li> <li>Carefully read the paragraph to find your answer.</li> </ul>
2. Write a question that Brian's teacher might ask him when she is relying on his superior knowledge.	Accept any question that is about dogs. E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How many teeth does a dog have?</li> <li>Which kinds of dog make the best pets?</li> </ul> Do not accept personal questions about why Brian likes dogs or what kind of dog he would like. These questions do not probe his superior knowledge.	2d 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> make inferences from the text. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text to look for information.</li> <li>Carefully read that part of the text, but remember that the answer won't be in the text; you have to understand the characters and write what you think they might say.</li> </ul>
3. Join each character to words the writer uses to describe them. Brian            apathetic His parents    enduring His sister        thoughtless	Brian enduring His parents thoughtless His sister apathetic	2b 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> retrieve information. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text to look for the answer.</li> <li>Carefully read the paragraph to find your answer.</li> </ul>
4. "Brian <u>endured</u> the situation." Which word or phrase is closest in meaning to "endured" in this sentence? Tick <b>one</b> . <input type="checkbox"/> continued <input type="checkbox"/> enjoyed <input type="checkbox"/> put up with <input type="checkbox"/> endangered	Put up with	2a 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> explain the meaning of words in context. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text to look for the sentence.</li> <li>Scan the text to find the sentence.</li> <li>Carefully read that part of the text, thinking about what the sentence might mean.</li> </ul>
5. At the end of paragraph 1, it says that Brian waited. What do you think he was waiting for?	Accept answers that recognise he was waiting for an opportunity to acquire a dog. E.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>He's waiting until his parents give in and get him a puppy.</li> <li>He's waiting for his birthday because he might get a puppy then.</li> </ul>	2e 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> predict what might happen. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Skim read the text for the overall meaning of it.</li> <li>Carefully reread the paragraph mentioned in the question and think about what you already know about Brian.</li> </ul>

Practice text: The Better Brown Stories

Cracking the questions

Question	Answer	CD/mark	Useful strategies
6. Write a word, phrase or clause from paragraph 1 that gives a reason why the police might ask Brian for help.	"knew more about dogs than any boy in Snuggleton." Do not accept "All he asked for in return was a dog or, more particularly, a puppy."	2f 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> identify how narrative content is related. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Carefully reread paragraph 2 to find out how the police need help.</li> <li>Carefully reread paragraph 1, thinking about the ways Brian could help them.</li> </ul>
7. Brian is described as having a "cool yet curiously reckless mind". What do you think the author meant by this? Tick one. <input type="checkbox"/> He was calm, clever and brave. <input type="checkbox"/> He got angry very quickly. <input type="checkbox"/> He got into trouble because he didn't think things through. <input type="checkbox"/> He didn't care about anyone else.	He was calm, clever and brave.	2g 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> identify how meaning is enhanced through the author's choice of words. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text to look for the words.</li> <li>Scan that part of the text, looking for the words in the question.</li> <li>Think of everything else you know about the character.</li> <li>Carefully reread the options in the question.</li> </ul>
8. Do you think Brian might have taken the Pekinese? Explain your answer.	No, because he was at home when he heard the news so he couldn't have been out stealing the dog. Also accept a "Yes" answer if the explanation is logical and clearly relates back to events in the story. E.g.: Yes, because he might have stolen the dog earlier but the police have only just found out.	2d 1 mark	<b>Question focus:</b> make inferences from the text. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Consider where in the text to look for information.</li> <li>Carefully read that part of the text, but remember that the answer won't be in the text; you have to understand the characters and think about what they might do.</li> </ul>
9. Write the paragraph number that matches each of these statements. <input type="checkbox"/> Introduces the problem in the story. <input type="checkbox"/> Begins to explore how the problem might be solved. <input type="checkbox"/> Introduces the characters. <input type="checkbox"/> Gives hints about who might solve the problem.	2 Introduces the problem in the story. 3 Begins to explore how the problem might be solved. 1 Introduces the characters. 3 (Also accept 1) Gives hints about who might solve the problem.	2c 2 marks	<b>Question focus:</b> summarise ideas from more than one paragraph. <b>Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Carefully read the question, marking key words.</li> <li>Carefully read each paragraph separately, considering which statement applies to it.</li> <li>Read all the other paragraphs to check you have given the best answer.</li> </ul>