

THE LAST BEAR

BY HANNAH GOLD, ILLUSTRATED BY LEVI PINFOLD

APRIL'S DIARY

'Dad rushed over and gazed at her in horror. There was an edge to his stare that made her want to shrink back inside herself and hide. He took the logbook from her and with dismay, they both stared at the ruined page.

And that's when he finally snapped.

'What have you done?' he bellowed. 'I knew I shouldn't have trusted you. You're just too little for this kind of work. You clumsy, stupid girl!'

As soon as his temper had burst, one of those horrible silences fell upon the cabin and April had the strangest sensation that she was falling.'

(Pages 112-113)

Activity: Read Chapter Eleven. Imagine you are April. You have just experienced the emotional fall-out with your Dad. Now you are back in your room on your own to gather your thoughts and write an entry in your diary. Write about what happened and how you feel.

Use information from the story and your own imagination.

Ideas to include:

- Why was Dad cross?
- What happened in the build-up to Dad shouting at you?
- Why do you really think Dad shouted?
- How do you feel right now?
- What do you think you should do next?

Write your diary on the next page.

KS2 English NC links

Pupils should be taught to:

Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:

- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
- identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning



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BEAR'S STORYBOARD

'It was in this way that Bear told April his story.

Not in words, because polar bears can't speak, but he didn't need words anyway. Sometimes all the words in the world can't tell a story. Instead, as April knew from experience, he told his story in the way that all animals tell their stories. It was just a matter of her sitting down and listening properly. You also needed a healthy dose of instinct, sensitivity and canny ability to fill between the gaps.'

(Pages 185-186)

Activity: Read Chapter Nineteen. Use the storyboard sheet to show the story of Bear (how he came to be on Bear Island on his own). Either draw or make notes in each section. Imagine you are planning on turning the written story into a film or documentary and you need to plan the scenes.

Ideas to include:

- Think about how many boxes there are on the storyboard – this is how many parts you need to split the story into.
- Make notes from the key events in Bear's story, you can always add parts you have forgotten to the beginning or ending later.

Show Bear's story using the storyboard on the next page.

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- Increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions

Understand what they read by:

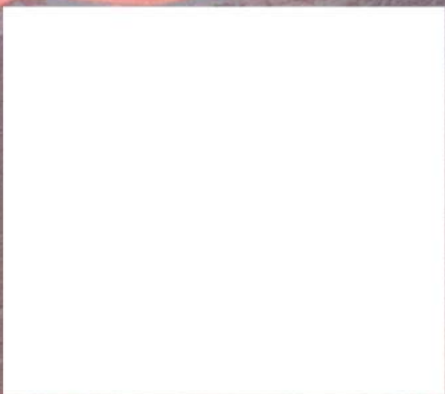
- Identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning



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CLIMATE CHANGE PRESENTATION

'It's not just the polar bears and all the other Arctic animals it's affecting, is it? The weather in the Arctic affects everyone all over the planet.'

'That is true.' Dad looked mildly concerned, but that was about it. Then again, that was how all grown-ups looked when they talked about global warming. A spot of mild concern but nothing to worry about. The fact that the world was in crisis just didn't seem to bother them like it did April.

She bunched her fists and tried to remember some of the statistics she'd read.'

(Page 194)

Activity: Create a presentation about climate change.

Read Chapter Twenty: Trapped. Also read the Author's Note on pages 291 – 296. You can use information from the story as well as research from the Internet to find out about climate change. Create a presentation – it could be a poster, a slide show or a talk to teach others about climate change.

Ideas to include:

- What is climate change?
- What or who does climate change affect?
- What causes climate change?
- Is there anything we can do to prevent or reduce climate change?
- Where does climate change happen?
- How did climate change affect Bear in the story?

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- asking questions to improve their understanding



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COMPARE THE SETTINGS

‘I’m going exploring,’ April announced.

As it was their first proper day, she had waited most of the morning for Dad to suggest a walk or some kind of adventure. But come lunchtime, she’d had enough of her twiddling fingers. She pulled on her wellies, red hat and mittens and glanced his way purposefully.

‘Hmmm?’ He was engrossed in the paperwork his predecessor had left and failed to feel the weight of her stare. ‘I need to get started on the temperatures. You go without me.’ Surrounded by important-looking logbooks, he wafted a hand in her direction which showed he didn’t really mind what she did as long as she didn’t bother him.’

(Pages 41-42)

Activity: Read all of Chapter Four: Exploration. In this chapter, April describes the island as she explores, and she notices how different it is from home. Use the information in the chapter to complete the chart comparing Bear Island with home.

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April's home is...

Bear Island is...

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COMPREHENSION QUIZ

Activity: Test your knowledge of the story. See how many quiz questions you can answer correctly. Use the book to help you find the answers. **Hint:** the question number also refers to the chapter in which you can locate the answer.

Question 1: Where did April's dad work before they went to Bear Island?

Question 2: When was the weather station on the island last staffed before April and her Dad arrived?

Question 3: Why were there two wooden cabins at April's home on the island?

Question 4: What colours were April's waterproof jacket and wellies?

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- asking questions to improve their understanding
- Summarising the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main ideas



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COMPREHENSION QUIZ

Question 5: Whilst staying on the island, what did April normally eat for breakfast?

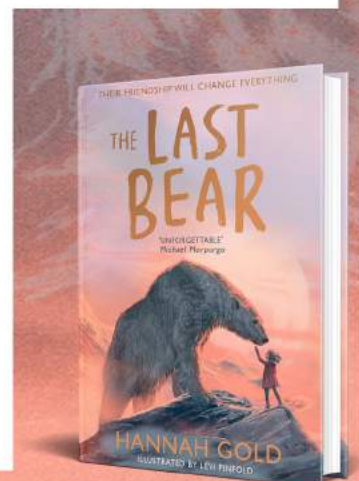
Question 6: When April first met Bear, why was he in pain?

Question 7: Which knife did April take so she could help Bear?

Question 8: What did Bear think of peanut butter?

Question 9: What colour were Bear's eyes?

Question 10: Which was Dad's favourite Mozart tune?



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COMPREHENSION QUIZ

Question 11: What things did April remember about her mum?

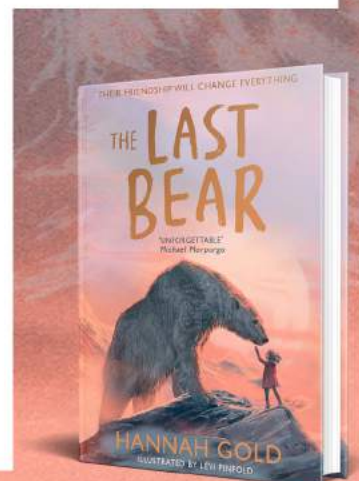
Question 12: What, in April's opinion, is the way to greet a polar bear?

Question 13: How did April persuade Dad that she can stop doing school work?

Question 14: How did April hurt her ankle?

Question 15: What was Bear's cave like?

Question 16: What types of things did April and Bear do during their summer together?



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COMPREHENSION QUIZ

Question 17: What does April keep under her pillow for good luck?

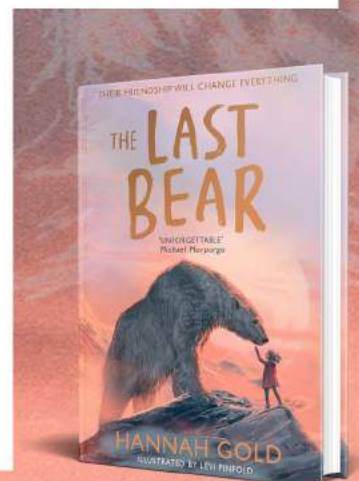
Question 18: What did April see from the top of the mountain?

Question 19: How did Bear end up on the island by himself?

Question 20: What was Dad's reaction when April told him about Bear?

Question 21: What did the upturned boat in Walrus Bay look like?

Question 22: State three things April packed onto the boat before setting off with Bear to Svalbard.



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COMPREHENSION QUIZ

Question 23: What did April say in the note she left for Dad when she set off in the boat with Bear?

Question 24: How did April manage to get the boat into the water?

Question 25: How did April and Bear feel during the storm?

Question 26: How did April feel when she woke up after the storm?

Question 27: Why did the captain try to kill Bear at first when they rescued April in the stormy sea?

Question 28: What is the name of the Norwegian organisation that protects and conserves the area around Svalbard?

Question 29: Where does Dad suggest he and April go to live when they return home?



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LETTER TO GRANNY APPLES

'The midnight sun was something Dad had talked about before they came. It had, in fact, been part of his sales pitch to Granny Apples – that everyone should witness the midnight sun at least once in their lives. And April, lucky April, was going to get nearly a whole summer of it. His pitch had fallen flat because Granny Apples grumbled that, even though their own sun was weak and unreliable, it was still jolly well good enough for her.'

(Pages 93-94)

Activity: Read Chapters Nine and Ten. Imagine you are April. Write a letter to Granny Apples telling her about the midnight sun and about how you have met and helped Bear. Remember that she'll be worrying about you so give her reassurances that you are safe, well and happy.

Use information from the story and your own imagination.

Ideas to include:

- What are you writing to say?
- Why do you want to say that?
- How might things have been different?
- How much detail will you include when describing what has happened?

Write your letter on the next page.

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Dear Granny Apples...



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NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

'Lisé waited for them on shore, a young woman with purple hair and a French accent. Like April, she also wore a red rain jacket, rainbow wellies and a huge grin. April, who had been wearing some of Tör's cast-offs, liked her immediately.'

'So, you're the girl who saved the polar bear.' Lisé gazed at her in awe. 'Everyone here is talking about you!'

April blushed. 'I just did what I had to.'

(Page 273)

Activity: Imagine you are a journalist writing for the Svalbard Times newspaper. Write an article about April, the girl who discovered a lost bear on Bear Island and how she tried to bring him back to Svalbard. Include details about April feeding the bear on peanut butter, almost drowning in the storm, and them both finally being rescued by the captain and his son Tör.

You can use ideas from the story and your own imagination to write your newspaper article.

Ideas to include:

- A catchy article heading
- Who was involved in the event?
- What happened that was interesting?
- Why did that happen?
- Where did it all start?
- When did it happen?
- Quotes from witnesses
- Picture with a caption

Write your newspaper article on the next page.

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THE SVALBARD TIMES

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POLAR BEAR FACT FILE

'He stood on his two hind legs, rearing up like a brilliant white stallion into the sky. With his chin extended forward confidently, he didn't look in pain. In fact, he stood in a way that indicated he knew just how magnificent he was.'

The combination of powerful muscle and raw brute strength took April's breath clean away and she clapped her hands over her mouth to stop herself gasping out loud.

'You're incredible,' she whispered and, without even knowing why, a tear trickled down her face. Not because she was sad. But because it was the only way for the size of the emotion to come out.'

(Pages 60-61)

Activity: Research and create a fact file about polar bears.

You can use information from the story as well as research from the Internet to find out about polar bears. Use the information you discover to create a fact file that could be used to teach others about polar bears.

Ideas to include:

- What is a polar bear?
- Where do polar bears live?
- What do polar bears eat?
- What threatens polar bears?
- How do polar bears behave?
- How are polar bears similar or different to other animals?
- How can we help polar bears?

Create your fact file on the next page.

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VOCABULARY CHALLENGE

*'With nothing to do, she returned to her own bedroom and **flung** open the window, where the cold, hard shock of the outside air made her lungs ache. Dad said it barely got above zero here even at the **height** of summer and she felt glad they had brought so many clothes with them. **Overhead**, the fog had cleared to leave a **dappled** blue sky and she squinted around her in surprise. Although the sun sat low on the **horizon**, it was as bright outside as midday, with not a single sign of sunset. Even whilst the Mozart record played **plaintively** next door, a soft sigh of **contentment** escaped her lips.'*

(Page 39-40)

Activity: Can you explain what the **bold** words in this extract mean? Did you know that reading *The Last Bear* will help you to improve your knowledge of, and ability to use, new and interesting vocabulary? Challenge yourself to find out what all of the words on the next pages mean.

Ideas:

- Talk to a partner or small group about what you think each word means
- Look up each word in the book to read it in context
- Look up each word in a dictionary and note its meaning

Explore the vocabulary on the next page.

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flung

height

overhead

dappled

horizon

plaintively

contentment

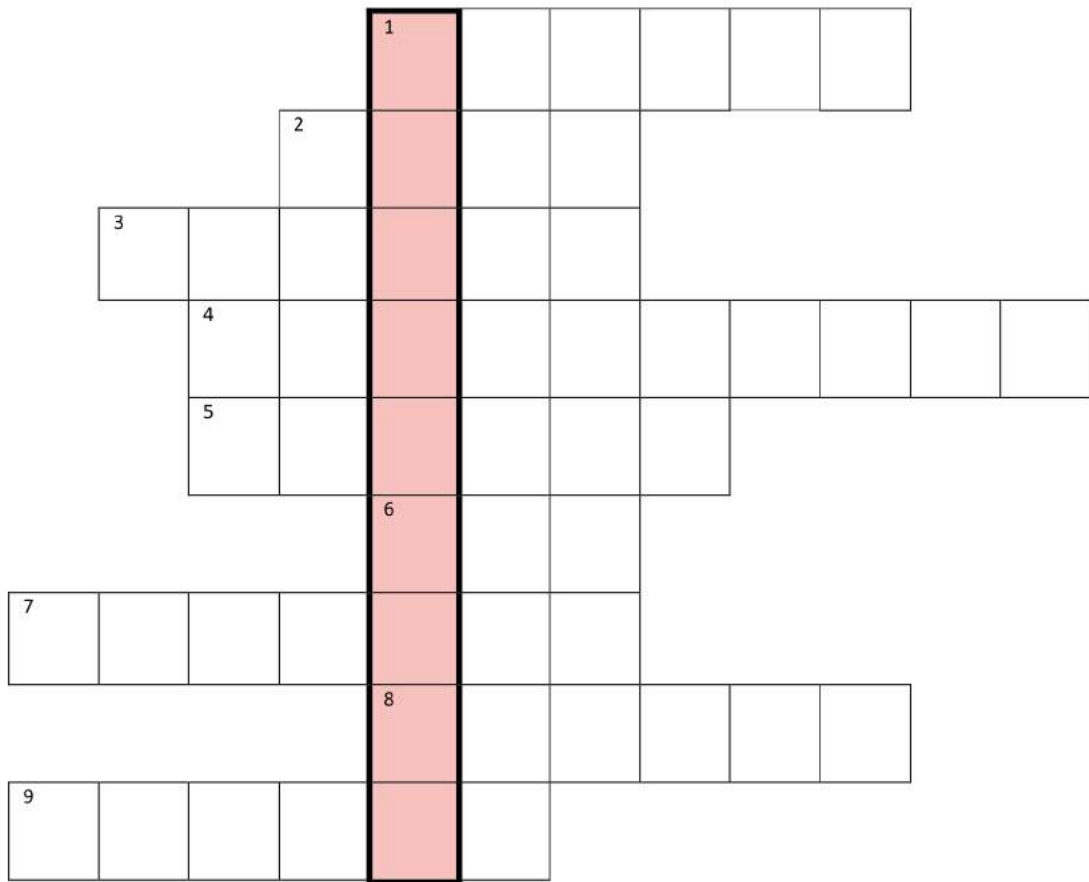


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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Activity: Solve the clues to complete the crossword. Can you find the mystery words in the red boxes?



The mystery words are: _____

1. April fed this type of butter to the bear
2. This is April's surname
3. Granny has a fruity name
4. April gave one of her urban foxes this name
5. The country April and her dad flew to
6. April met the bear at Walrus _ _ _
7. Dad's favourite candies are this flavour
8. April and her dad went to this cold circle
9. Dad always listened to this famous composer's music

