

## DARTS: a range of text games to develop reading skills

### 1. CLOZE procedure

**Insert missing words thinking about the meaning and style:**

The \_\_\_\_\_ of anacondas live in swamps, marshes, and slow-moving streams, \_\_\_\_\_ in the tropical rain forests of the Amazon and Orinoco basins. They are cumbersome on land \_\_\_ stealthy and sleek in the water. \_\_\_ eyes and nasal openings are on top of their heads. \_\_\_ allows them to lay in wait for \_\_\_ prey while remaining nearly completely submerged.

### 2. Predict

**What do you think the next paragraph will be about? Justify your suggestion.**

Have you ever contemplated coming face to face with a creature whose fur is white as snow? A hyper carnivorous predator that resides in the most solitary and unforgiving environment on our planet today? The polar bear is just such a creature.

### 3. Reorganise and sequence

**a. Reorganise the sentences on the left into a coherent paragraph, considering meaning and structure:**

<p>After a while, the brown bears food source ran low.</p> <p>First, there were only brown bears who had smaller paws and darker fur which allowed them to blend in with their woodland surroundings.</p> <p>This caused them to travel further north in search of nutrition.</p> <p>Some bears were born with white fur, due to a genetic mutation.</p> <p>Here, the weather was colder and, as</p>	<p>First, there were only brown bears who had smaller paws and darker fur which allowed them to blend in with their woodland surroundings. After a while, the brown bears food source ran low. This caused them to travel further north in search of nutrition. Here, the weather was colder and, as a result, the landscape was covered in snow. Some bears were born with fur, due to a genetic mutation. Only the bears with white fur survived as they were able to blend in with their surroundings. This meant that it was</p>
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<p>a result, the landscape was covered in snow.</p> <p>This meant that it was these bears who could reproduce.</p> <p>Over thousands of years, all bears born in that region had white fur.</p> <p>Only the bears with white fur survived as they were able to blend in with their surroundings.</p>	<p>these bears who could reproduce. Over thousands of years, all bears born in that region had white fur.</p>
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**b. You can break up texts into paragraphs, paragraphs into sentences and sentences into words to reorganise:**

<p>alone, and animals be can fascinating generally hunt live quite sociable These they too. though</p>	<p>These fascinating animals generally live and hunt alone, though they can be quite sociable too.</p>
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## 4. Diagram

Convert the text into a diagram only using simple labels.

### How to Travel to Castle Crow

Have you been asked to travel to Castle Crow? Are you about to embark on this perilous journey? Are your knees knocking at the thought of what you might encounter? If so, read these instructions and soon you will reach your destination in safety.

**What you need:** a mighty steed, a golden horn, a magical bow and arrows.

**What you do:**

1. First, choose the fastest horse from the King's stable.
2. Next, ride through the Forest of Doom.
3. After that, follow the River Ruin towards the distant mountain.
4. Finally, cross over the bridge that whispers.
5. When you reach the castle gates, blow the golden horn.

**A word of warning:**

If you are in danger, you may use your magical bow and arrows. Do not stop to talk with any strangers on the way as they may enchant you.



## 5. Label

<b>Sharks – the deadly fish?</b>	<b>Label with subheadings:</b>
<p>Have you ever stepped into the sea and wondered whether a shark will attack you? Most people live in fear of sharks and believe that they are cold-blooded killers. However, only a few different types are actually dangerous. Sharks are a sort of fish. There are about 450 different types.</p>	
<p>The large majority of sharks are easily recognisable because nearly all types have a long tail. Typically, they move this from side to side to help them swim. Additionally, they have staring eyes that help them see in dark water. Furthermore, they are famous for their sharp teeth. During their lifetime, sharks grow and lose many thousands of teeth. Another common feature is that their skin is made of scales that feel rough to touch and they have pointed snouts that are very sensitive. There are a few amazing exceptions. For instance, the Hammerhead Shark is known by most people because their heads are shaped like a huge hammer!</p>	
<p>Sharks live in the sea and are found around the world. A few live in fresh water. For instance, Bull Sharks swim up and down the Zambezi River. Some sharks live on the seabed and tend to have flattened bodies. These have what are known as ‘barbels’, which they use to disturb sand in order to find food. However, the majority live nearer the surface and their fins can be seen as they glide through the water. Basking sharks drift along the surface with their mouths wide open as they ingest plankton.</p>	
<p>Everyone knows that sharks are meat-eating fish. Many hunt fish and squid whilst those who feed on the seabed eat lobsters, crabs, shrimps, mussels and sea urchins. They use their teeth to crush, slice and chew their food. Tiger sharks will also eat jellyfish as well as turtles. Sharks have been found with cows, horses, dogs and chickens in their stomachs. The Great White will even feed on the carcass of a whale!</p>	
<p>Whilst sharks are fascinating creatures, they are much feared by swimmers. However, shark attacks are rare. It is rather unfair that whilst tigers and elephants kill humans, they are viewed in a more positive light. Perhaps, if more people visited aquariums and found about these graceful creatures then they would be treated with more respect. Many varieties are in danger of over-fishing and therefore we do need to speak up on behalf of the shark!</p>	

## 6. Transform

### 1. Some words have been altered – restore the text on the left.

<p>Adult polar mints are weak swimmers – they can fly for several years to get from one piece of chocolate to another.</p>	<p>Adult polar bears are strong swimmers – they can swim for several hours to get from one piece of ice to another.</p>
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### 2. Rewrite to change the mood, tone, atmosphere or level of formality:

<p>Tragically, these mischievous creatures are at risk of extinction. Due to climate change, the ice is melting, and these beautiful creatures are being forced inland unable to hunt for their main source of food (seals).</p>	<p>Thankfully, these vile creatures are heading for extinction. Due to climate change, the ice is melting, and these barbarous creatures are being forced inland unable to hunt for their main source of food (seals).</p>
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## 7. Sorting – sort facts, ideas, statements:

### a. Sort the facts into possible sections with subheadings:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All have lean bodies with long, thick fur.</li> <li>• Enjoy eggs and fruit.</li> <li>• Hunt alone at night.</li> <li>• 27 species around the world.</li> <li>• Have adapted to town habitats.</li> <li>• Most are reddish brown colour.</li> <li>• Some species are yellow, white or black.</li> <li>• Usually live in wooded areas.</li> <li>• Can hear a mouse by its squeak.</li> <li>• Mark their territory with scent.</li> <li>• Have a bushy tail, or brush, and sharply pointed muzzle.</li> <li>• Live in a den underground.</li> <li>• Can see in the dark.</li> <li>• Will defend territory against intruders.</li> <li>• Mainly eat mice, rabbits, lizards, insects, frogs.</li> <li>• Sneak up on prey, freeze and pounce.</li> </ul>
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- Can climb trees, walls and even rooftops.
- Very hard to tame.
- Do not make good pets.
- Member of the dog family.
- Most have large, pointed ears.
- Keen sense of smell and hearing.

**b. Sort the facts about blue whales from opinions:**

Blue whales are one of the most extraordinary creatures on the planet. Amazingly, they are the largest animals ever known to have lived on Earth. These magnificent marine mammals rule the oceans at up to 30 metres long and upwards of 200 tons. Their tongues alone can weigh as much as an elephant; their hearts, as much as an automobile. Blue whales reach these mind-boggling dimensions on a diet composed nearly exclusively of tiny shrimp-like animals called krill.

Facts	Opinions

## 9. Matching

Which of these words matches 'predator' the best and why?

**Predator** – killer – slayer – hunter – raider

## 10. Fact on the wall/role on the wall

Draw the key image in the centre and then surround with facts, e.g.

<p>Adults are strong swimmers – they can swim for several hours to get from one piece of ice to another. Aside from being well-insulated from layers of fat and dense fur, these predators have developed extremely large feet for scooping through the water as the bear swims in a doggy-paddle fashion. Despite being the world’s biggest <b>land</b> carnivore, they are suited to the <b>water</b> as their fat layer provides buoyancy. Many experts believe that polar bears can reach speeds of up to 10mph when swimming and can travel over 1,800 km before reaching land.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adults are strong swimmers</li> <li>• can swim for several hours</li> <li>• well-insulated from layers of fat and dense fur</li> <li>• extremely large feet for scooping through the water as the bear swims in a doggy-paddle fashion</li> <li>• world’s biggest <b>land</b> carnivore</li> <li>• fat layer provides buoyancy</li> <li>• can swim up to 10mph</li> <li>• can travel over 1,800 km</li> </ul>
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## 11. Graphic representation – turn information into charts, maps, diagrams, timelines, graphs, etc.

Draw and label using the information provided:

Would you be able to identify a mountain giant if you saw one? In fact, they are very similar to the large majority of giants. Like most giants, they have an enormous head, powerful limbs and possess the strength of a small army. Typically, they are the size of a large elephant and when crouching may easily be mistaken for a hillock. In order to stay hidden, these unsociable giants wear massive coats of woven turf, covered in slabs of rock and may even have small trees and bushes growing out of their hair. In this way, they are very hard to spot, especially when crouching. Furthermore, the mountain giant is known for its extremely long legs which allow it to move rapidly from valley to valley. Indeed, its ability to travel swiftly and stay camouflaged has helped it to survive over the years.

## 12. Note key points

### Underline and bullet point the key points:

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## 13. Relevance sort, e.g., sorting statements from a text

The African elephant is the largest animal walking the Earth. They are easily recognised by their trunk which is used for communication, foraging and handling objects. Large ears allow them to radiate excess heat (a fantastic adaptation for living in the Africa bush!) Their distinctive tusks are actually upper incisor teeth which grow throughout their lifetime. These incredible tusks have a range of purposes: in males they are used for fighting for the ideal mate, defence against predators and lifting heavy objects out of their path.

### Which 3 statements are most accurate and why:

- a. African elephants are enormous.
- b. They use their trunks to communicate and search for food.
- c. They use their trunks to pick up donuts.
- d. African elephants are the largest animals that walk.
- e. Their ears help top keep them cool.
- f. Males use their tusks for fighting and lifting trees.
- g. Tusks are actually teeth.



#### **14. What's the title or sub-heading?**

In recent years, growing demand for ivory, particularly from Asia, has led to a surge in poaching. Populations of elephants – especially in southern and eastern Africa – that once showed promising signs of recovery could be at risk due to the recent surge in poaching for illegal ivory trade.

#### **15. Compare – which sentence or paragraph or text is most effective and why?**

- a. African elephants are very bright, live in herds and can be found across 37 countries in Africa.
- b. African elephants live in enormous groups in 37 countries in Africa.
- c. The African elephant is found in Africa and lives in groups.
- d. These intelligent creatures wander in herds across 37 countries in Africa.