

The Iron Man

Activities

Read the appropriate chapter aloud, working on using expression. Answer the questions as one task and complete the activities as another task.

Before Reading Task

Use the front cover and the blurb of the book to create a list of 5 predictions and evidence. Remember to quote the information you have found e.g.

Predictions	Evidence
I think the main character in the story will get lost.	I think this because the blurb states that "Ben wandered through the unknown lands".

Chapter 1: The Coming of the Iron Man

1. 'Nobody knew the Iron Man had fallen.' Why not?
2. Do you think the Iron Man is a good or a bad character? Explain why.
3. 'They watched the immense man striding to and fro over the rocks below.' What does the word 'immense' tell us about the Iron Man?
4. Why do you think Hughes uses so many similes to describe the Iron Man?
5. Ted Hughes was a poet as well as a storyteller. Can you find any evidence to suggest he has thought carefully about the sound of the words and phrases he has chosen?

(Example: 'CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!')

1. Draw and label a 'before and after' diagram of the Iron Man. Start by drawing an iron giant at the top of the cliff, using the description at the beginning of the chapter to help you, e.g. 'His great iron head, shaped like a dustbin but as big as a bedroom'. Then draw a picture to show the Iron Man after the fall, with his body parts scattered all over the beach. Use evidence from the text to carefully label your diagrams. Compare your work with a partner's. What similarities and differences do you notice?
2. Be a 'Word Detective' and search for examples of powerful verbs in Chapter 1. Ted Hughes uses some really interesting and ambitious action words to describe the movements and state of the Iron Man. Some good examples are 'toppling' and 'tumbling'. See how many you can find! Can you sort them into verbs that describe activity and verbs that describe stillness?



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Guided Reading Discussion Points and Activities

Chapter 2: The Return of the Iron Man

1. Why does Hogarth feel strange at the beginning of Chapter 2?
2. Hogarth's father believes him immediately. Why do you think this is?
3. In your own words, summarise what happens in Chapter 2: The
4. Return of the Iron Man.
5. When he describes the trap, Hughes uses a mixture of short and long sentences. What effect does this have?
6. Ted Hughes was a poet as well as a storyteller. Can you find any evidence of 'poetic' vocabulary choices, e.g. 'his eyes burned from red to purple'.

Follow-up Reading Activities

1. Ted Hughes keeps the moment where Hogarth tells his father about the Iron Man very brief. Read this section at the beginning of the chapter and think carefully about what this conversation might have been like. How might Hogarth have introduced the subject and how might his father have responded? Use your understanding of the story and characters so far to write your own version of this conversation, using dialogue. Remember to use speech marks accurately and start a new line for a new speaker.
2. 'Only Hogarth felt suddenly sorry. He felt guilty. It was he, after all, who had lured the Iron Man into the pit.' Imagine you are Hogarth. You go home after trapping the Iron Man and write a diary entry. Try to summarise the key events in your own words, as you remember back over what happened that day. Make sure you include your feelings and how they change – perhaps from fear, to excitement and triumph, and finally to guilt.



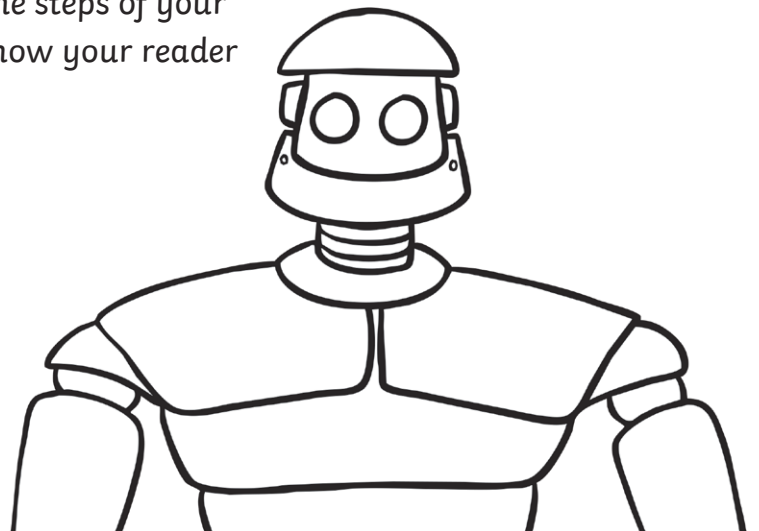
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Chapter 3: What's to be Done with the Iron Man?

1. What began to happen on top of the hill where the Iron Man was buried?
2. How do you think the little boy felt when he saw the 'enormous iron hand'? Why won't Hogarth's father listen to his idea this time?
3. **Find** and **copy** a word from the end of this chapter that shows that the Iron Man thought that the metal objects were delicious.
4. How does Ted Hughes use language to show that the Iron Man is happy?
5. Do you think Ted Hughes prefers Hogarth's first or second idea? How do you know? Which idea do you prefer and why?
6. Based on what you know about the Iron Man, what do you think will happen next in the story?

Follow-up Reading Activities

1. Look back at everything the Iron Man has eaten so far in the story, particularly at the end of Chapter 3. Design your own menu for an Iron Man Restaurant. Include plenty of delicious choices, e.g. 'a greasy black stove' and remember to include a description too, e.g. tangy, chewy metal drizzled with a generous coating of oily grease, served with a side order of staples and drawing pins. Think about your layout and presentation too!
2. What would you do with the Iron Man? Hogarth has come up with and tried out two different plans with very different outcomes. Your task is to create your own plan for what to do with the Iron Man. Would you try to capture and control him like Hogarth and the farmers do in Chapter 2, or would you find a way to keep him happy and busy like in Chapter 3? Use bullet points to show the steps of your plan, and include a labelled diagram to show your reader exactly what is going to happen.



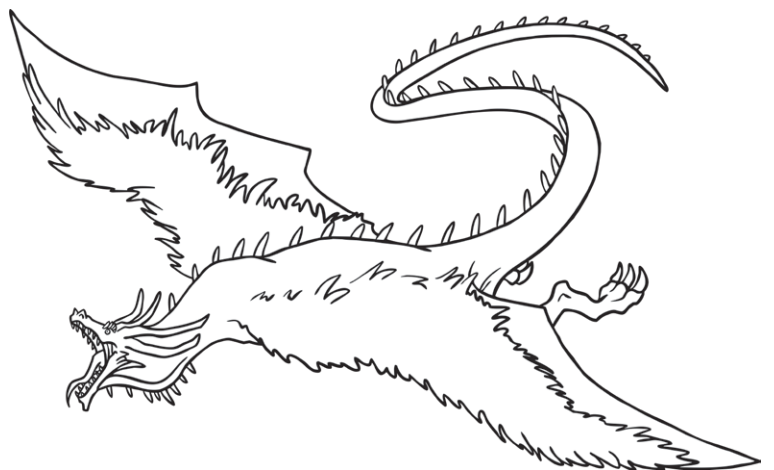
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Chapter 4: The Space Being and the Iron Man

1. What is the 'strange news' that everybody is talking about at the beginning of Chapter 4?
2. Why did the people of Earth tremble and weep and pray to God?
3. Why do you think Hughes chooses to repeat the word 'terribly' so often as he describes the space-bat-angel-dragon landing on Australia?
4. How do you feel when you read about the space-bat-angel-dragon?
5. Why has Ted Hughes used a mixture of lowercase and uppercase letters in the words BIGger, Grew and NEARer?
6. What do you think the Iron Man will do when he goes against the monster from space?

Follow-up Reading Activities

1. Draw a character sketch of the space-angel-bat-dragon. Use evidence from the story to help you decide how it should look. Label your drawing with quotations from the text, e.g. 'vast indescribably terrible eyes'. Compare your drawing with a partner's. What similarities and differences do you notice?
2. Plan and write a newspaper report about the space-angel-bat-dragon's landing in Australia. Imagine you are a reporter in a neighbouring country, and have seen events unfolding before your eyes. Use a short, snappy headline to get your reader's attention, and then use evidence from the story to describe the terrifying events you have seen. steps of your plan, and include a labelled diagram to show your reader exactly what is going to happen.



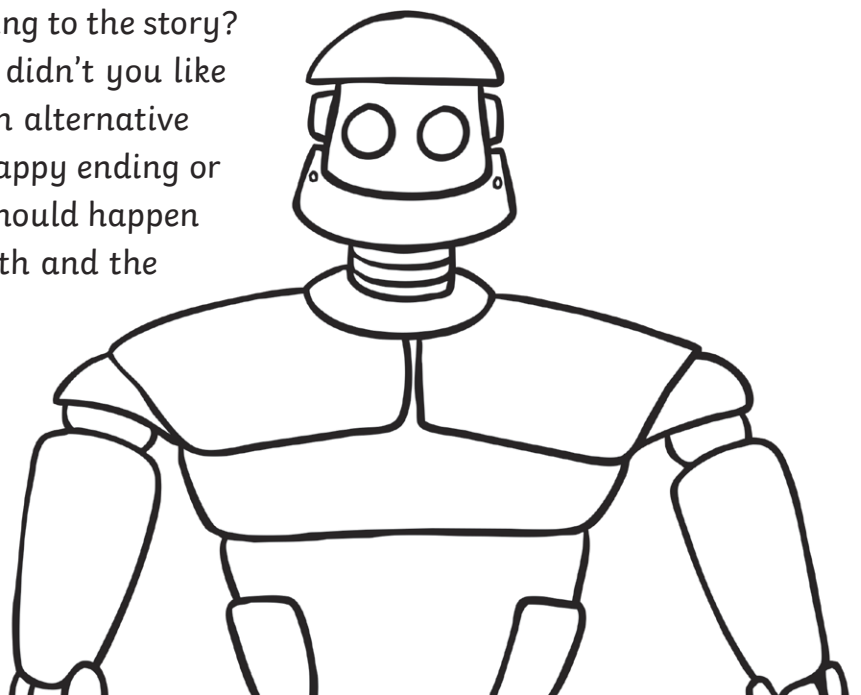
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Chapter 5: The Iron Man's Challenge

1. 'There was no time to be wasted.' Can you explain why?
2. Why does the space-bat-angel-dragon laugh when the Iron Man challenges him to a test of strength?
3. Why did Ted Hughes describe the furnace that the Iron Man stretched himself out on as 'raging'?
4. The Iron Man and the space-bat-angel-dragon talk to each other a great deal towards the end. Why do you think there is so much talking?
5. What message do you think Ted Hughes is trying to send to his readers about fighting and war? How does he use his characters to do this?
6. How have your feelings about the Iron Man changed from the very beginning of the story?

Follow-up Reading Activities

1. The Iron Man is very brave in the story. He is 'terribly afraid' of going into the flames again, but summons all his strength to win the terrible contest in order to save the people of Earth. Can you think of a time you have been brave, or challenged yourself to do something that frightened you? Write about what happened, how you summoned the strength to go through with it and how you felt afterwards.
2. Did you think this was a good ending to the story? What did you like about it? What didn't you like about it? Plan and write your own alternative ending for this story. It can be a happy ending or a sad ending. What do you think should happen to the Iron Man, the people of Earth and the space-bat-angel-dragon?



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