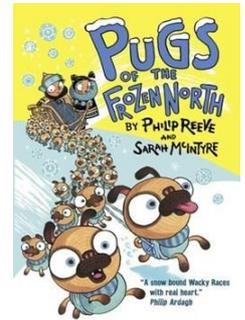


Take 5: Ideas for Independent/Home Learning

Pugs of the Frozen North by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre (Oxford University Press)

1. Explore it

Read the extract from the book below, thinking about what is happening and the characters you meet:



The town of Snowdovia was built in the same style as the Po of Ice, on stilted platforms along a fjord-edge. But unlike the Po of Ice, it was full of life and bustle. People lined the balconies outside their homes to watch as the adventurers who meant to race to the top of the world came sledding into their fjord.

From all over the north they came.

True Winter had not arrived completely without warning. Not for people who knew what to look for. Not for people who had been eagerly waiting for the first flake of magical snow to fall. They had been preparing for weeks, and now that the ice had come, they were ready.

At Limpetville Institute of Technology, Professor Shackleton Jones had known about the coming winter by the excited way the Northern Lights made his particle detectors ping. He was determined to reach the top of the world using the power of Science. He and his robot companion SNOBOT swept into Snowdovia on a carbon-fibre sled so strong and lightweight that it was barely there at all.

On a lonely island not far from Snowdovia, Helga Hammerfest had learned of the big freeze by watching the flight of geese and the way the spiders spun their cobwebs. She had readied her sled, and harnessed up her team — no dogs for Helga, just her two pet polar bears, Snowdrop and Slushpuppy. She was the local

favourite, so she got an extra big cheer when her snow-bears tame lumbering up to the starting line.

Sir Basil Sprout-Dumpling heard of the freeze from his butler, Sideplate, who had been keeping watch on the weather forecasts. Ten minutes later they were at the airport, loading Sir Basil's sled and pedigree dog team aboard an aeroplane. Sir Basil's father had been the first to reach the top of the world last time True Winter came. He had met the Snowfather, and had his wish granted, which was to be ridiculously rich. He had gone back to England with a fortune in rubies, sapphires and diamonds, but Sir Basil had spent it all. 'If we don't beat these riff-raff to the Pole, Sideplate,' he said as they drew up to the starting line, 'I shall have to sell off the old stately home. I mean to win this race, even if I have to cheat like an absolute bounder.

'Yes, Sir Basil,' said Sideplate sadly, holding his bowler hat on tight and wishing he'd worn warmer underwear. 'But if I may say so, Sir Basil, I do hope cheating won't be necessary.'

Sir Basil wasn't listening. 'I say!' he cried. For the pink sled that had just pulled up next to him held none other than Mitzi von Primm, most glamorous of all the racers. How embarrassed her team of huskies looked, clipped like poodles and dyed pink to match Mitzi's stylish racing outfit!

What is happening in this extract? Who are the central characters? Can you summarise what you've read in a couple of sentences? If there are words you don't know or understand, like 'fjord', 'sapphire' or 'bounder' you could look them up in a dictionary or online, e.g., <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>.

Now, think about how this extract makes you feel and what you like or dislike about it. Does it remind you of anything you know in stories or real life? How? Think about how it is written. Do any parts of the extract really stick in your mind? Which words and phrases do you like best? What do you like about them? Do they look or sound interesting? Do they help you make a picture in your mind?

Think about what is being described, including the four contestants who have been introduced. What do you think you know about this competition, the people who take part, how often it happens and the prize that is offered? How would you describe the atmosphere at the start? What clues do you get to the time and place the story might be set? What do you think might happen next? What makes you think that?

2. Illustrate it

Re-read the passage, or ask someone to read it to you, or maybe record it for you so you can play it over again. After you have read the extract a few times, take something to draw with and whatever paper or card you have to hand. Draw what you see in your imagination. It might be interesting to share the passage with a friend or family member, draw together and compare their drawing with your own. Did you draw a particular contestant and their team, a scene with all four contestants and the crowd, Snowdovia from above, or maybe the treasure Sir Basil's father won that his son has squandered? Remember, everyone has their own ideas and imagines things their own way. This is a good thing!

3. Talk about it

Read the extract again, or have someone read it aloud to you. Think more about what you heard and read:

- Why do you think the race is taking place? What tells you this?
- What words best describe what the town is like at race time?
- Do you think the contest is open to everyone? What sort of people are invited to take part? Why might they want to win?
- Do you think Sir Basil's father deserved the wish that the Snowfather granted him? What do you think would be a good thing to wish for? What does the possibility of being granted a magic wish tell you about the kind of story this might be?

4. Imagine it

Think about the different contestants the race has attracted, each with their different approach, be it science and technology, natural aptitudes, cheating or fashion sense. Imagine you decide to take part as well. How would you use the Snowfather's wish if you won? How much do you want to win this wish? Think of the design of your sled, what creatures you would have to pull it, what clothing and equipment you would select. You could sketch the sled and team and write notes next to each item of equipment. What will be your strategy when the race starts, especially one that involves lots of people. Would anything funny or exciting happen along the way? What challenges would you have to overcome? Write or draw what would happen if you were involved in the race with your special sled and equipment.

5. Create it

Which sport or game do you like to watch? Think about a time when you have watched a sporting event. This could be a match, game or race that you have watched in a stadium or sports centre, on television or a school sports day or tournament. Maybe you have taken part in a memorable or exciting competition and told people about it afterwards?

Take on the role of a sports commentator and describe the start of the event in writing. You might want to begin by explaining why the contest is so important, how often it happens, what are the rules and conditions and what the winner stands to take home. You could go on to describe the contestants. Then build the tension as the participants wait to begin and the opening stages of the competition. Share this with friends or family, to see if they can imagine the scene you are describing and who might go on to win.