Week beginning 29th June 2020

Year 6, spend at least 30 minutes per day reading your own book. Make a note of any words that you are unsure of/unfamiliar with and look them up them up in a dictionary. Remember that it is still important for you to read out loud to an adult so you can learn to pronounce new words.

Reading Task 1: Reading for Pleasure

To help children and families during lockdown, J.K. Rowling is publishing her original story, *The Ickabog*, online for free! Set in an imaginary land, *The Ickabog* is a stand-alone fairy tale.

A new instalment of the story will be revealed daily at 3pm, Monday to Friday, throughout the course of seven weeks.

You can read the story online at www.theickabog.com/read-the-story/

Here is the letter from J.K. Rowling:

Welcome!
You've arrived at the website of my new story, *The Ickabog*.
I had the idea for *The Ickabog* a long time ago and read it to my two younger children chapter by chapter each night while I was working on it. However, when the time came to publish it, I decided to put out a book for adults instead, which is how *The Ickabog* ended up in the attic. I became busy with other things, and even though I loved the story, over the years I came to think of it as something that was just for my own children.
Then this lockdown happened. It's been very hard on children, in particular, so I brought *The Ickabog* down from the attic, read it for the first time in years, rewrote bits of it and then read it to my children again. They told me to put back in some bits they'd liked when they were little, and here we are!
The Ickabog will be published for free on this website, in instalments, over the next seven weeks, a chapter (or two, or three), at a time. It isn't Harry Potter and it doesn't include magic. This is an entirely different story.
The most exciting part, for me, at least, is that I'd like you to illustrate *The Ickabog* for me. Every day, I'll be making suggestions for what you might like to draw. You can enter the official competition being run by my publishers, for the chance to have your artwork included in a printed version of the book due out later this year. I'll be giving suggestions as to what to draw as we go along, but you should let your imagination run wild.
I won't be judging the competition. Each publisher will decide what works best for their editions. However, if you, your parent or your guardian would like to share your artwork on Twitter using the hashtag #TheIckabog, I'll be able to see it and maybe share and comment on it!
When the book is published in November, I'm going to donate all my royalties to help people who have been affected by the coronavirus. We'll give full details later in the year.
I think that's everything you need to know. I hope you enjoy reading it and I can't wait to see your pictures!
Love,
J.K. Rowling

When you have completed a chapter, make an illustration to go with it.

Reading Task 2: Reading comprehension

Reading Comprehension **A Week on Galapagos**

First, read the text:

Monday 25th March

Jenny Shaw, naturalist, reporting for duty! I'm writing this on a small boat heading to the archipelago of the Galapagos Islands, due west of South America. My interest in the work of Charles Darwin led me to study these islands. Darwin, who was a renowned scientist, also sailed to these islands in 1835 and was puzzled by the unique wildlife he found there. Years earlier, after a failed attempt at a career in medicine, he was unexpectedly offered the job of a 'naturalist' on board the 'Beagle', a small sailing vessel set for a voyage around the world. During the long and arduous journey, he spent five weeks on the Galapagos Islands, where Darwin studied and collected specimens which kept him thinking, studying and writing for the next fifty years. Darwin's new ideas –known as Evolution and Natural Selection –revolutionised the way people think about the natural world and it is still influencing scientists today –including me!

As soon as I learned about Darwin at school, I wanted to see some of the unique creatures which he studied. Not many people get to witness the natural splendour of these islands and their rare wildlife with their own eyes… and I longed to be one of the lucky few. So that is why I'm on my way to the Galapagos right now… and I'm feeling a bit sick because of the rough seas we've encountered… blergh!! I've been thinking, studying and writing about the species which live on these mesmerising islands just like Darwin and now I'm actually going, I'm full of anticipation and excitement!! Writing a diary, making notes and sketches during –what I hope will be –an awe-inspiring expedition, will provide me with a lasting memory of a trip which I've always dreamed of.

Tuesday 26thMarch

Sailing into the Galapagos Islands, I felt rather like Darwin; an intrepid explorer. I was dazzled by the sunlight on the water's surface and my eyes widened to take in the
hypnotising vivid azure blue and emerald green colours. It was overwhelming and more beautiful than I ever expected.

At first, we seemed to be the only living things around. However, as I surveyed the rocky crags, I noticed the rocks… weren't rocks… but Galapagos Tortoises! These islands are actually named after these creatures and they have been known to live for more than 100 years! Strangely, they differ from tortoises on the mainland and I was amazed to see these variations for myself. Darwin discovered that the tortoises were different on each separate island; they were much larger and had different shaped shells. Incredibly, the tortoises have adapted their shells over time to help them survive on their own individual islands. The stunning tortoise I watched had a saddle-back shell. On other islands they have dome shaped shells.

Most species inherit features from both its mother and father. However, we all have natural variations or differences, which make us different from our parents. Some variations are an advantage and make survival easier but some are a disadvantage and make an individual weaker. Long ago, some of these tortoises were lucky enough to be born with the natural variation of a saddle-back shell, making survival easier as they could reach food higher off the dry ground, which other tortoises could not reach.

Darwin called this process 'natural selection'. This means, individuals with traits suited to their environment survive and weaker specimens die out. Because the adults with the adapted shell were more likely to survive, they were also more likely to reproduce and pass on the positive variation. Now all adults on this island have the saddle-back shell and therefore pass this on to all of their young, allowing the species to be fit for survival on this island and so these wonderful tortoises live on. The species has evolved, gradually changed and adapted over time. The power of nature astounds me! Darwin was a genius! I thought about this natural miracle and watched them feeding and foraging, the remarkable shell allowing them to do so with ease and charm. As the daylight now wanes, I'm glad I've shared some of their secrets.

Wednesday 27th March
This morning I awoke to a beautiful, melodious bird song. Looking out of the window, I saw a small finch chirping tunefully. Surely a Galapagos finch. Darwin had made sketches of these unusual finches and I had studied them at university, fascinated by their evolution. Darwin had counted about 13 different types of finch living on the Galapagos Islands. All found only on these islands, and nowhere else in the world! Originally, they all had the same shaped beaks and probably came from the mainland. But now their heads –and particularly their beaks –were not all the same. Darwin realised that each finch's beak had gradually adapted to eat the different food available on their particular island. So finches on islands where large, hard-shelled nuts were prevalent developed robust beaks, and finches on islands where insects or flowers were available developed delicate, pointy beaks. I watched an insect-eater with its long, thin beak digging out the insects. Observing intently, I tried to sketch the finch just as Darwin had. I watched the result of evolution right in front of my eyes! A-maz-ing! Right now, I am in complete awe of the intricate beauty of our natural world.

Friday 29th March
Today was different. I wanted to broaden my experiences, so I joined with a team of palaeontologists to explore the species which may have lived here during prehistoric times. Was evolution apparent even so long ago? I was taken on an exhausting (and sweaty!) hike through the mountains to the site where, only recently, the fossilised remains of a dwarf elephant were discovered. A dwarf elephant… it sounded like something from a fantasy story!
However, the team informed me that on small islands, large species can adapt and evolve smaller bodies so as the limited availability of food would be enough to nourish them. Wow, I'm astonished! Even millions of years ago, species were adapting and evolving so as they could try to survive! At some point though and for some reason this species became extinct. Maybe it just couldn't adapt enough. Now the delicate fossil in my hand was all that remained. Holding it carefully, I tried to imagine the animal which this fossil once was and its struggle for survival. Nature had dictated the fate of this species. Like detectives, the team here continue to investigate dwarf elephants and their fossils. I wonder what clues they will discover next!?

Saturday 30th March

I'm writing as I sit watching a marine iguana. Its short, blunt nose is well-adapted to feeding on sea algae. On one or two islands, marine iguanas have been seen feeding on land plants or grasshoppers, perhaps an adaptation because sea algae, at certain times of year and during certain types of weather, can be very scarce. Lately, scientists here have found that when food is scarce, the adult marine iguanas will shrink in length and then regrow as food becomes plentiful again. They can switch between growing and shrinking repeatedly throughout their life. A perfect adaptation to the food cycles in Galapagos –nature at its best!

Sunday 31st March
Well my time here is sadly coming to an end. I have marvelled at the incredible beauty of the natural world; observed rare species which only live on the Galapagos Islands; witnessed creatures which have adapted in magnificent ways, allowing animals to survive then reproduce meaning the adaptations can be passed on to future generations and how all this leads to evolution. Even more now, I admire and respect the variations and transformations of life in our world. Let's treasure it forever. Following in the footsteps of Charles Darwin has been a true honour.

Next, answer these questions (answers on the next page):

1. **Write down the features that tell you this text is a diary.**

2. **Look at the first paragraph. Find and copy the word which is a synonym of 'boat'.**

3. **In what three ways was Jenny similar to Darwin?**

4. **Look at the diary entry for Tuesday 26th March. Find and copy the word which is similar in meaning to 'fearless'.**

5. ***'I'm glad I've shared some of their secrets.'* What were the secrets that Jenny was referring to?**

6. **Why does Jenny use the word *'intricate'* to describe the natural world?**

7. **Why did Jenny sketch the finches?**

8. **'Nature had dictated the fate of this species.' What does this phrase mean?**

9. **Look at the diary entry for Friday 28th March. The text says the palaeontologists are like detectives. Find and copy the words which show this.**

10. **Read the last diary entry. How did Jenny feel about the journey? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.**

10. **Write two facts for each animal mentioned in the text.**

Answers to these questions:

1. It is written in the first person, includes some chatty language, has dates as sub-headings and personal thoughts and feelings are included.

2. Vessel

3. She writes about and studies the animals of the Galapagos Islands. She sailed to the Galapagos Islands. She is a naturalist.

4. Intrepid

5. That the tortoise has adapted its shell to be either domed or saddleback shaped. That the tortoise feeds and forages differently on different islands depending on the sources of food available. That the tortoise has evolved to help the species survive.

6. To show that the natural world can be complex.

7. To replicate Darwin's experience. To compare the beaks of the finches on different islands. She wanted a lasting memory of her trip and wanted to capture the beauty of the birds to remember forever.

8. It means nature can be powerful and can control whether a species survives or becomes extinct.

9. Investigate, clues, discover

10. She felt honoured to be able to witness the unique and distinctive wildlife with her own eyes. She felt excited to be following in Darwin's footsteps. She felt amazed at the evolution of the wildlife there. She felt in awe of the beauty she witnessed.

11.

Tortoise

Can live for over 100 years.

Can have a dome or saddleback shell.

Finch

Can have delicate, pointy beaks to eat insects or flowers.

Can have robust beaks to eat hard-shelled nuts.

Iguana

Has a short, blunt nose.

They can shrink in length when food is scarce.