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Thank you for taking the time to look at the *Language Comprehension Success* book.

The activities and exercises are all based on a unique children's story called *Guff's Journey*. The activities will assist your students to sharpen and improve their oral comprehension and written language abilities.

Included in this preview is a *table of contents* and examples of some of the exercises and activities to give you a sense of the look and feel of the book.

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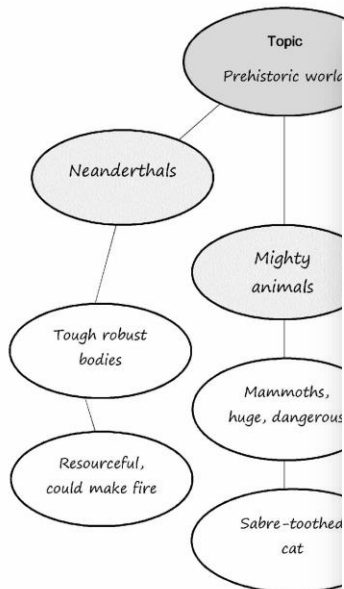
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## Exploring Themes – Pre-Story Background Map

The pre-story background map is an excellent means of exploring many of the background themes of a story. This section details how to use the map to target and discuss some of the themes and setting of *Guff's Journey* to assist students' understanding of the prehistoric world. As we can see from our example, the clinician has chosen three main themes to be discussed with the student prior to the reading of the text. The three main themes are *Neanderthal man*, *mighty animals* and *harsh climate*.



**Story:** *Guff's Journey* - Words and illustrations by David Newman

**Description:** Guff is a Neanderthal boy who, due to a hunting misadventure, becomes separated from his tribe. Guff relies on his wits, courage and ability to adapt in order to survive in a harsh environment. Guff is resourceful and is a good problem solver.

**Reading Age:** 9 – 12 years

**Fleisch Kincaid Level:** Grade 3.3

**Total Words:** 2077

### Instructions for Reading and Reading Comprehension Assessment based on *Guff's Journey*

The student is required to read a passage of the text or the entire text, depending on the student's level of reading competency. For readers who struggle with the text's complexity, it is recommended that only one scene be completed at a time. Each scene is long enough and contains enough information to obtain both a reading error analysis and reading comprehension analysis. Multiple examples of reading and reading comprehension analysis are provided in chapter 3.

### Instructions for Shared Reading of the Entire *Guff's Journey* Story

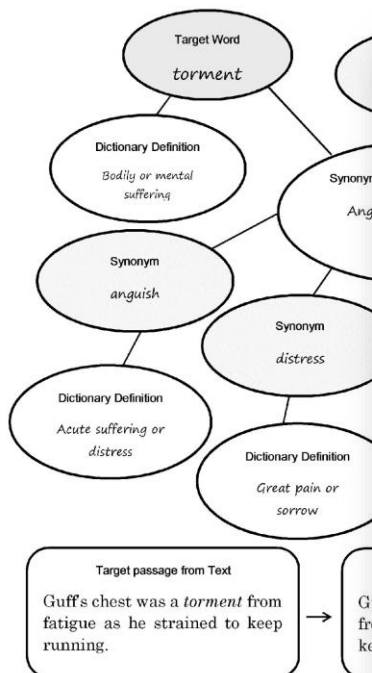
Read the story aloud with the student, with either you or the student reading, or a combination of the two. Pause at different points in the story to comment on important plot developments, character motivations, or interesting language. Review chapters 8 and 9 for tips and strategies on how to engage students with the *Guff's Journey* text.

## Thumbnails from the book...

### Vocabulary Map Completion – Additional Activity Option

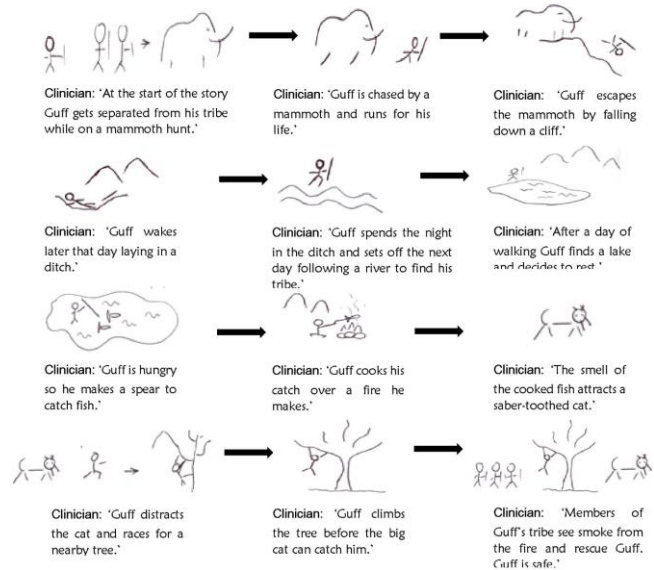
The clinician completed a vocabulary map with the student to focus more attention on a single word. In this case the word *torment* was selected for further discussion and exploration and the circular boxes completed.

## Vocabulary Map



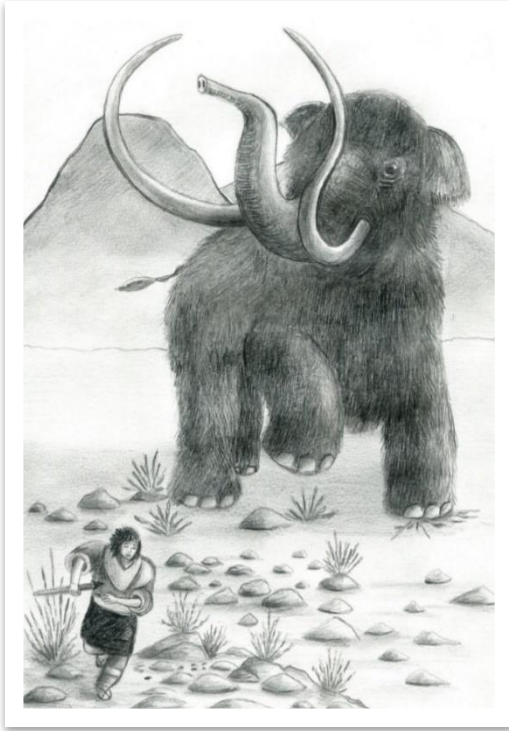
## Pictograms and Story Grammar Example

The clinician writes the pictograms in sequence starting with the mammoth hunt and includes all the major sequences and events in the story, finishing with Guff being found by his father. Note that the clinician adds arrows after each sequence.



As can be seen from the above pictogram example, the drawings do not require any artistic skill and can be drawn very quickly. After the clinician has drafted the pictographic representation of the story events, the clinician discusses the story with the student.

# Excerpt from the *Guff's Journey* story



Guff scrambled to his feet as blood surged to his head. His thoughts were jumbled, so he ran. His father and tribe were gone, scattered. Guff sensed something enormous shadow him. He felt the rhythmic crunch of its hooves impact the ground just behind him, its breath a series of loud bursts. Soon it would crush him. Guff's chest was a torment from fatigue as he strained to keep running. In his panic, Guff failed to see that the ground had suddenly vanished from under him. He shrieked and fell into blackness down a steep hill.

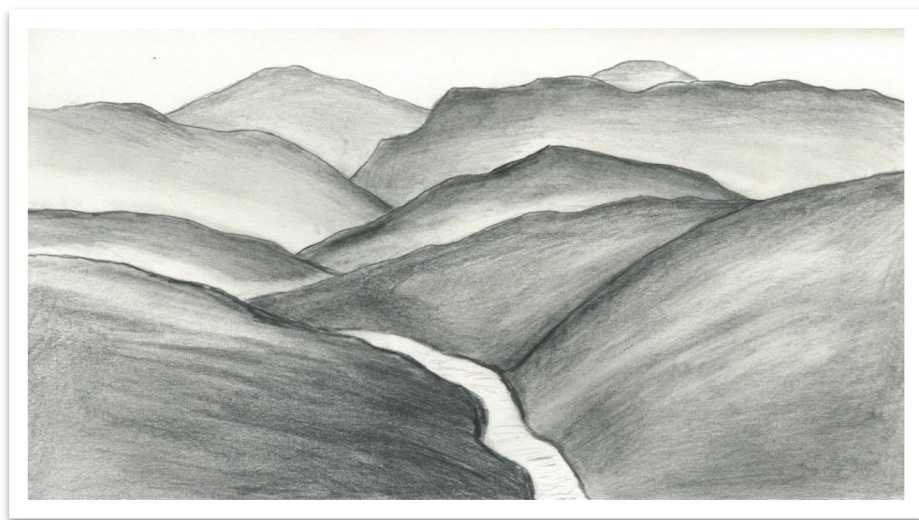
Much later, Guff slowly opened his eyes and winced. Sunlight trickled in. His thoughts were murky. He could make out shadows and shapes and saw that the sun was about to leave the big sky. The muloth was gone. The half-light before dark crept with long fingers across the land. Guff's foggiess cleared. He saw for the first time that he lay in a ditch. His back ached but he could move his limbs. His spear lay beside him, undamaged. Guff's stone blade, wrapped in its leather pouch, was still attached to his leggings. His father would be pleased. He slowly poked his head above the ditch. He was in a deep ravine. Mountains rose sharp and pitiless on all sides. In the half-light, the peaks were cold, vast and glowing. The last wisps of gold and warmth clung to the tops of the harsh crests. Too soon, the threads of light faded to nothing and the evening gloom deepened. Guff was alone in the dark for the first time in his life.



### Scene 3

Guff huddled and shivered beneath the great night orb. His father's words bounced in his head. "If lost at night. Make no sound. Be not seen nor heard." Guff was indeed lost. The search for his tribe would begin with first light, but first he had to survive the night. Guff wrapped himself in his furs but the cold defeated him. He stayed awake through the long dark, fearful of making the smallest sound as night animals hunted. He prayed silently to his ancestors while his ears strained for sounds of great beasts; the throaty snort of the great bear, the piercing roar of the monster with teeth like long blades.

The dawn found Guff with his head buried within his cloak, ice in his hair. Short puffs of mist escaped from his mouth. When the sun rose above the sharp peaks, Guff felt joy. Despite his aching back, he had faith that he would find his father today. Guff lifted himself from the ditch and walked to the river at the bottom of the ravine. He scooped water in his hands and drank for a long time. He was terribly thirsty and the water was cold and delicious. Guff could feel strength return, the panic of the previous day wash away. He gripped his spear and began to trot across large flat stones that warmed in the morning sun. Guff's father had said that when lost, a river could lead you home. Guff's people could be camped on the banks of this river.



# Example of Exercises from Chapter 5

## Story Details

1. What did Guff first have to do before he could search for his tribe at dawn?

---

2. What was Guff fearful of making as he lay cold and alone in the ditch?

---

3. Who did Guff pray to for help?

---

4. What did Guff strain his ears *for* during the long dark?

---

5. Where did Guff have his head when dawn arrived?

---

6. What did the water taste like from the river?

---

7. What had Guff's father told him about rivers if he were ever lost?

---

# Moments in Time

## Scene 3

1. Did Guff drink water from the river before or after his recollection of his father's words about make no sound?

---

2. Which did Guff do first, wrap himself in his furs or listen for sounds of dangerous beasts?

---

3. Which happened first, short gusts of mist escaped from Guff's mouth or he scooped water into his hands to drink?

---

4. Did Guff drink the water before or after he left the ditch, where he had been sheltering?

---

5. Which happened first, Guff gripped his spear or walked to the river at the bottom of the ravine?

---

# Making Inferences from the Story

## Scene 3

1. How might Guff have felt to be alone in a strange place?  

---
2. Why do you think Guff felt joy when the sun rose above the peaks?  

---
3. Why did Guff pray to his ancestors that night?  

---
4. What tells us that the night had been very cold?  

---
5. What do you think the monster with teeth like long blades as Guff describes it could be?  

---
6. Why was it so important that Guff listened for sounds of wild and dangerous animals that night?  

---

# Example of Exercises from Chapter 5

## Task B: *Critical Thinking Exercises*

Task B: *The missing piece. Complete the sequence of events.*

This exercise requires students to identify the missing piece of information.

1. Asa wants to plant a wheat seed.

Example Sequence: Asa digs a small hole.

She places a wheat seed in the hole.

*Asa covers the seed with soil.*

Asa sprinkles water over the spot.

2. Guff wants to climb a tree.

Sequence: Guff places his left foot onto a low-lying branch.

He holds a branch above his head with his left hand.

---

Guff climbs to the top of the tree.

3. Utha hunts a deer.

Sequence: Utha spots a deer a long way in the distance.

---

Utha is within a spear's throw of the deer

Utha throws his spear.

4. Guff confronts a saber-toothed cat.

**Sequence:** While Guff cooks fish over a fire, he hears a noise.  
He turns and sees a saber-toothed cat.

---

Guff climbs to the top of a tree.

5. Utha makes a shelter.

**Sequence:** Utha digs out a floor.  
Utha puts up some walls.

---

That night, Utha's family was safe and dry in the shelter when it rained.

6. Guff takes eggs from a bird nest.

**Sequence:** Guff started to climb the tree.  
He climbed to the top of the tree and found a nest.

---

Guff started the climb down while holding the bird eggs.

7. Asa makes a fire.

**Sequence:** Asa collects dry leaves and sticks.

She uses a flint to create a small flame.

---

Asa places the fish and meat over the roaring flames.

8. Utha's hunting party hunt a mammoth herd.

**Sequence:** The hunting party approaches the mammoth herd.

The bull mammoth senses the hunters' presence.

---

Utha runs away from the mammoth herd!

9. Guff and Asa build a raft.

**Sequence:** Guff cuts down a small tree.

---

Asa binds the branches with twine.

The raft is placed in the water.

## Task C: *Critical Thinking Exercises*

### Task C: *Which is easier for the character to do?*

This exercise requires students to identify the relative difficulty of one situation versus the other. There is never a clear right or wrong answer. Encourage students to verbalize or write *why* they believe a particular scenario would be easier.

1. Which is *easier* for Guff to do?

Fight a saber-toothed cat with  
his bare hands...

Ride on top of a mammoth...

---

2. Which is *easier* for Guff to do?

Cut down a tree with a small  
axe...

Make a fire with a flint and dry  
sticks...

---

3. Which is *easier* for Utha to do?

Climb to the top of a  
large mountain...

Swim across a swiftly flowing river...



4. Which is *easier* for Asa to do?

Swim across a rapidly

flowing river...

Spear a fast moving fish in the water...

---

5. Which is *easier* for Guff to do?

Steal eagle eggs from the

top of a mountain...

Hunt a mammoth herd alone...

---

6. Which is *easier* for Asa to do?

Catch fish with a fishing line

and bait...

Catch fish using a spear...

---

7. Which is *easier* for Utha to do?

Create a woolen tunic with

an axe...

Carve a woolen tunic using

a knife...

---

# Example from Shared Reading

## Intervention - Chapter 8

### Shared Reading Session - Introduction

For this session the clinician has targeted a passage close to the beginning of the *Guff's Journey* story. Daniel had some initial difficulty on his first reading of this particular passage with several words and concepts proving to be challenging. Several of the words that Daniel had specific difficulty with have been highlighted, while the sentences and phrases italicized are targets for inferential comprehension.

### Passage from *Guff's Journey* Story

'Guff sensed something enormous shadow him. He felt the **rhythmic** crunch of its legs **impact** the ground just behind him, its breath a series of loud bursts. Soon it would crush him. Guff's chest was a **torment** from fatigue as he strained to keep running. In his panic, Guff failed to see that the ground had suddenly vanished from under him. He shrieked and fell into blackness down a steep hill.' (Excerpt from Scene 2, *Guff's Journey*)

### Shared Reading – Vocabulary Intervention

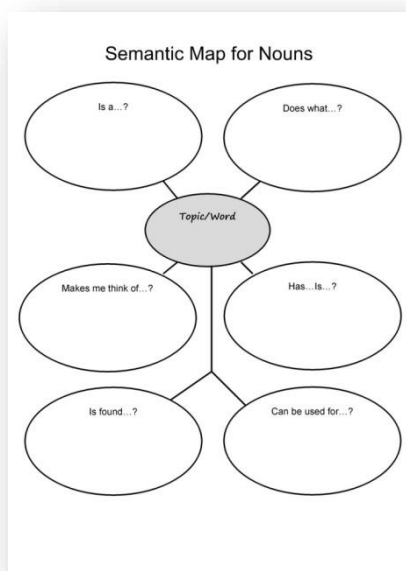
The clinician has previously worked with Daniel on the **Prestory Background** section in chapter 4. Thus before the session begins, Daniel has a basic knowledge of Guff as a character and a rudimentary understanding of the world that Guff inhabits. The clinician sits across from Daniel and begins the session by reading through the target passage once more with Daniel. The target words are highlighted. The target words for the session are *torment*, *rhythmic*, and *impact*. The target words are typically words that a student may have had exposure to from other text, but not necessarily understand their meaning. The words *torment*, *rhythmic* and *torment* will need to be taught explicitly using the context of the story to scaffold their meaning. The clinician has several copies of Semantic Maps for Nouns and Vocabulary Maps printed for the word learning session.

**Clinician:** ‘Some of the words from this passage are a little tricky. I would like to explore them in more detail.’

The clinician places the **Semantic Map for Nouns** before the student. The clinician writes the word *torment* into the dark shaded word/topic box.

**Clinician:** ‘It says here that Guff ran and that he ran even though his chest was a *torment*. What do you think the word *torment* means in this context? Are you familiar with the word *torment*?’

**Daniel:** ‘I’m not sure. I don’t know what it means.’



**Clinician:** ‘When I find a word in books I don’t know I usually look up the word in a dictionary. Let’s look up the word *torment* in the dictionary.’

Daniel looks up the word in the dictionary using the **dictionary guide** which provides a helpful structure for Daniel to quicken the search for the word *torment*. Daniel is encouraged by the clinician to read the definition.

**Daniel:** ‘**Torment** is something which causes mental or physical pain.’

**Clinician:** ‘That’s right. It says in the text that Guff’s chest is a **torment**. Do you think he might be in pain as he runs?’

**Daniel:** ‘Yes.’

**Clinician:** ‘Yes I believe he is in some pain. His legs are also cramping. You may have run a lot while playing sport and found it hard to breathe or your legs become really sore from running.’

The clinician uses a number of shared reading strategies to extend Daniel's understanding of the word *torment* within the context of the *Guff's Journey* story using **extension, generalization and association**.

**Clinician:** 'Guff's chest was a **torment** as he ran which tells us that his heart and lungs must have been straining. So he certainly felt the physical **torment** of running, but we can also infer that he must have felt the emotional **torment** as well. Imagine having a massive animal chasing you. Also, Guff is separated from his father and tribe. It must be terrifying for Guff, both here in this scene and later in the rest of the story. Remember, **torment** relates to both physical and mental pain.'

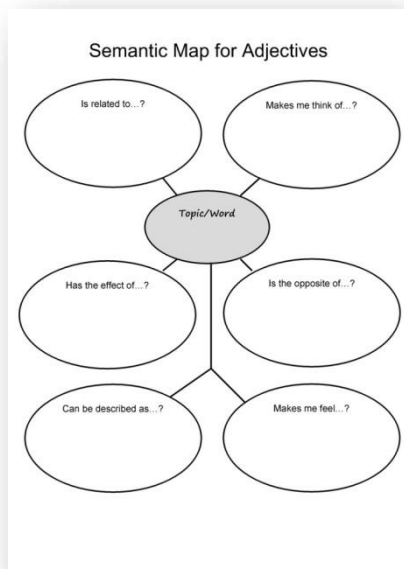
Daniel is then encouraged by the clinician to fill in the **Semantic Map for Nouns** worksheet for the word *torment*. With some scaffolding provided, Daniel completes the semantic map. Note that not every box is applicable to the word *torment*.

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| • Does what...         | <i>Not applicable</i>   |
| • Has...Is...          | Is a form of physical or emotional pain   |
| • Can be used to...    | <i>Not applicable</i>   |
| • Is found...          | In this context <i>torment</i> relates to Guff's chest and breathing pain and fatigue |
| • Makes me think of... | Times when I've been exhausted while running  |
| • Is related to...     | Discomfort, fatigue, exhaustion   |

The clinician provides a quick summary of the meaning of the word *torment* in the context of the target passage before moving to the next target word, *impact*.

**Clinician:** 'We've learnt so far that *torment* relates to physical pain and emotional pain. Guff must feel a lot of pain in his chest because he is running so fast, which must be exhausting for Guff. We both know how it feels to have trouble being out of breath after we've run in a race. I want to now explore two other words from this passage, *rhythmic* and *impact*. We'll start with the word *impact*.'

The clinician introduces the next target word, *impact*. Note that impact in the context of the story is a verb. The **Semantic Map for Adjectives** can be used to explore adjectives as well as some verbs.



The clinician places the **Semantic Map for Adjectives** before the student. The clinician writes the word *impact* into the dark shaded word/topic box.

**Clinician:** ‘This is a semantic map for adjectives, but *impact* is not an adjective; it is in fact a verb. The word *impact* can also be a noun. In our story it states that *the crunch of its legs impact the ground*. The legs *impact* the ground. *Impact* is a verb in the context of this passage. Do you know what *impact* means?’

**Daniel:** ‘No.’

**Clinician:** ‘The same as we did before with the word *torment*, let’s search for *impact* in the dictionary.’

Daniel once again uses the dictionary and **dictionary guide** to search for the word *impact*. Daniel is encouraged by the clinician to read the definition.

**Daniel:** ‘If you *impact* something you drive it into the ground with considerable force.’

**Clinician:** ‘What do you think is driving into the ground with great force just behind Guff as he runs. Use the picture to help you if needed.’

**Daniel:** ‘The mammoth’s legs?’

**Clinician:** ‘I agree. The mammoth is just behind Guff as he runs for his life. The mammoth’s legs strike the ground with such force that they *impact* the ground. **Impact** refers to considerable force or lots of force. Why do you think the mammoth’s legs *impact*?’

**Daniel:** 'Because the mammoth has big legs and it's heavy.'

The clinician uses communicative reading strategies once again to extend Daniel's understanding of the target word, *impact*. The clinician uses **extension**, **paraphrasing** and **semantic cues**.

**Clinician:** 'Yes, that's right. Well done. A mammoth, especially the bull mammoth, is a huge and very heavy animal and his legs *impact* on the ground just behind Guff due to the animal's massive size. The thing that followed Guff as being as big as a mountain. It surely must have felt like that to Guff to be pursued by such a massive animal.'

Daniel is then encouraged by the clinician to fill in the **Semantic Map for Adjectives** worksheet for the word *impact*. With some scaffolding provided, Daniel completes the semantic map. Note that not every box is applicable for the word *impact*.

- |                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • <b>Makes me think of...</b>   | heavy, pounding, crunch    |
| • <b>Is the opposite of...</b>  | stillness, quiet           |
| • <b>Makes me feel...</b>       | scared for Guff            |
| • <b>Can be described as...</b> | heavy sound                |
| • <b>Has the effect of...</b>   | crushing, pounding         |
| • <b>Is related to...</b>       | crunching, pounding, heavy |

As before with the word *torment*, the clinician provides a quick summary of the meaning of the word *impact* in the context of the target passage.

**Clinician:** 'We've learnt that *torment* relates to physical and emotional pain. Guff must feel a lot of physical pain in his chest because he is running so fast which must be exhausting. We know how it feels to have trouble breathing when we've run in a race. We have also learnt that *impact* can be a verb and is something which drives into the ground with considerable force. The mammoth's legs are so massive and heavy that the impact of its legs striking the ground would be quite powerful.'