Kensuke’s Kingdom – Michael Morpurgo

Year 5 and 6

Reasons for selection and synopsis

I heard the wind above me in the sails. I remember thinking, this is silly, you haven't got your safety harness on, you haven't got your lifejacket on. You shouldn't be doing this ...I was in the cold of the sea before I could even open my mouth to scream. Washed up on an island in the Pacific, Michael struggles to survive on his own. With no food and no water, he curls up to die. When he wakes, there is a plate beside him of fish, of fruit, and a bowl of fresh water. He is not alone ...

Kensuke’s Kingdom is a stylish and deceptively simple best seller that has been capturing the hearts and imagination of children in the classroom for many years.

Before reading…

Ask the children to look at the front cover. What do you think the book will be about? What things can you see on the front cover?

What sort of story will it be? Who might enjoy it?

Now read the blurb – were any of your predictions correct?

What does the word kingdom mean to you? Have you heard the word Kensuke before? What might that be?

The blurb states that Michael is left food and water. Predict who might have put it there.

The following questions are designed as prompts only – allow the children to come up with their own questions and ideas. They will be much more engaged this way!
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<tr>
<th>Chapter 1</th>
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</table>
| **Vocabulary** | What phrase on Page 2 shows mum didn’t know what would happen?  
What word on Page 4 means ‘can’t be argued with’?  
What word on Page 5 means ‘insignificant’?  
Find a phrase on Page 10 that shows that they didn’t really know what to say.  
What does the phrase ‘more times than you’ve had hot dinners’ mean? |
| **Infer** | Why do you think they called themselves the Mudlarks?  
Why was the letter bad news?  
Why didn’t mum want to leave home?  
Why did mum agree to go down and see dad?  
What is Peggy Sue?  
Why was Gran crying as they left? |
| **Predict** | Predict what the chapter might be about from the words ‘Peggy Sue’.  
Read up to ‘then the letter arrived’ on Page 5. Predict what happens next.  
Read to the end of Chapter One. Predict what happens next. |
| **Explain** | Explain how Michael’s paper round motivated his dad to try and get a job.  
Explain why Michael grew to respect his parents more. |
| **Retrieve** | How old was the main character when he was sworn to secrecy?  
What does dad call Michael’s school? Why?  
What is the name of the dog?  
What will they do about Michael’s schooling?  
Why doesn’t Gran want them to go? |
| **Summarise** | Summarise the events of this chapter in 30 words or less.  
What impression do you get of Michael? |
<p>| <strong>Writing Opportunity</strong> | Write the letter from the brick factory, explaining that it’s going to shut down and everyone will be out of work. |</p>
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<th><strong>Chapter 2</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Summarise</strong></td>
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## Chapter 3

### Vocabulary

- What word on Page 26 means angry?
- What word on Page 29 means argument?
- What word on page 32 means ‘sent away to’?
- Find a phrase on Page 36 that shows it was urgent to rescue Stella quickly.
- What phrase on Page 38 means ‘crazy’?

### Infer

- Why do you think this chapter is called ‘Ship’s Log’?
- Why weren’t they making their 200 miles a day?
- Why’s Michael fed up with baked beans?
- How did Michael send a letter to Eddie?
- Why is Michael sulking in the picture of his maths lesson?
- Why didn’t Michael tell them he found researching Napoleon interesting?
- Why does mum cry when dad hugs her?
- Why is Michael upset about losing the football?

### Predict

- Read up to February 7. Predict what might happen next.
- Read up to ‘she hasn’t got her harness clipped on’ on Page 42. Predict what happens next.
- Read up to the end of the chapter. Predict what happens next.

### Explain

- Explain why there are many more short sentences in these extracts.
- Explain why Michael is so excited to stay in Africa for a couple of weeks.
- Explain the ‘very distant’ joke.

### Retrieve

- What date and time is the first entry set?
- How long ago did they leave Southampton?
- Why would being in the Doldrums be bad?
- What did Michael call his football team?
- Who won the football match?
- What words did the Brazilians know?
- What are they going to eat now there is no baked beans?
- How long did they stay in Australia for?
| **Summarise** | Summarise the Australia part in ten words.  
Summarise Michael’s feelings when he loses the football in three words. |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Opportunity</strong></td>
<td>We know from the blurb that Michael ends up on an island. Write a continuation of this chapter, explaining how he got there. Do it in the style of Michael Morpurgo, rather than in the style of Michael’s log book.</td>
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<th><strong>Chapter 4</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>What's a gibbon?</td>
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<td>What phrase on Page 46 shows that Michael could see nothing?</td>
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<td>What is buoyancy?</td>
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<td>What words and phrases on Page 50 show that Stella is oblivious to the gravity of the situation?</td>
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<td>What does ‘sparsely’ mean?</td>
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<td>What phrase on Page 55 suggests a lack of fruit on the island?</td>
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<td>What does surreptitious mean?</td>
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<td>What does mellifluous mean?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why does Michael think that the football is Stella?</td>
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<td>Why doesn’t Michael want to kick too much?</td>
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<td>Why does Michael start crying?</td>
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<td>Why can Michael see the whole island?</td>
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<td>Why do they need to find water? Why can’t they just drink from the sea?</td>
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<td>How does Michael know there must be fresh water?</td>
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<td>Why does Michael end up so thirsty?</td>
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<td>Why does Stella start growling?</td>
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<td>Why doesn’t Michael want to move when the orang-utan is there?</td>
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<td>How do you think Michael felt when he started the fire?</td>
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<td>Why is there less fire when Michael comes back out of the forest?</td>
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<tr>
<td>From the title ‘Gibbons and Ghosts’ predict what might happen to Michael.</td>
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<td>Read up to ‘strange upon a flat shelf of rock above her’. Predict what might</td>
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<td>Explain</td>
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| Vocabulary       | What does diminutive mean?  
                          | What phrase on Page 72 shows that Michael was scared of Kensuke?  
                          | ‘The appalling implications of my wretched predicament’ – explain this phrase.  
                          | What word on Page 78 means ‘put off’  
 |------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------
| Infer            | Why might the old man be so skinny?  
                          | Why do you think Stella greets the man like an old friend?  
                          | Why doesn’t Kensuke want him to start a fire?  
                          | How do you think Michael felt when Kensuke left him more food?  
                          | What does Michael decide Kensuke’s rules are?  
                          | Why do you think Kensuke isn’t cross when Stella crosses the boundary?  
                          | Who are the ‘bloodsucking tormentors’?  
                          | How does Michael feel when he gets the sheet?  
 |------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------
| Predict          | Read up to ‘Dameda! Dameda!’ and predict what this means.  
                          | Read up to ‘I very soon gave up’ on Page 77. Predict what would happen if Michael crossed Kensuke’s boundary.  
                          | Read to the end of Chapter 5 and predict what happens next.  
 |------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------
| Explain          | Explain why Michael is confused about Kensuke’s anger, and Kensuke’s insistence that Michael stick to one side of the island.  
                          | Explain why the sheet is very useful for Michael.  
 |------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------
| Retrieve         | Why is the man so annoyed?  
                          | What does ‘dameda’ mean?  
                          | What is the old man’s name?  
                          | What wakes Michael back up?  
                          | What fruit does Michael find?  
                          | Why did Michael never save the red bananas?  
                          | What does the old man give to Michael, to help him sleep?  
 |------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------
| Summarise        | Use three words to summarise your impressions of Kensuke.  
                          | Summarise Kensuke’s rules in three parts.  
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<th>Chapter 6</th>
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| **Vocabulary** | What phrase on Page 86 shows that Michael spent all morning worrying?  
What does ‘nonchalantly’ mean?  
What does ‘capitulated’ mean? |
| **Infer** | Why doesn't the ship see Michael?  
Why does Michael keep his beacon secret from Kensuke?  
Why does Kensuke wedge Michael’s food firmly under the shelf?  
Why does Michael hope his parents haven't seen the storm?  
Why did Michael think it was unfair that Kensuke told him not to swim?  
Why does Michael swim in the sea? |
| **Predict** | Predict what ‘abunai’ might mean.  
Read up to ‘waving his stick wildly in the air’ on Page 90. Predict what will happen next.  
Read to the end of the chapter. Predict what happens next. |
| **Explain** | Explain why Michael feels that Kensuke is keeping him prisoner.  
Explain why Michael grows to hate Kensuke. |
| **Retrieve** | Why does Michael shout at the ship?  
What does Michael build?  
How long does the storm last?  
What does Kensuke do when he finds the beacon?  
What does Kensuke say when Michael says he just wants to go home?  
What happens when Michael swims in the sea? |
| **Summarise** | Summarise why Kensuke didn’t want Michael to swim in less than ten words.  
Summarise Kensuke’s character thus far in three words. |
| Vocabulary | What does ‘erstwhile’ mean?  
What phrase on Page 101 shows that Kensuke has bigger living quarters than Michael?  
What does rudimentary mean?  
What phrase on Page 104 shows that the orang-utans respect Kensuke?  
Find phrases on Page 108 that show that Kensuke didn’t like being asked about how he came to be on the island.  
What does ‘conspiratorially’ mean? |
|---|---|
| Infer | Where did Michael wake up?  
What impression do you get of Kensuke when he is caring for Michael?  
Have your impressions of him changed?  
Why aren’t there mosquitoes in Kensuke’s cave?  
Why couldn’t Kensuke and Michael talk?  
How did Michael feel when he speared his first fish?  
Why do you think the orang-utans follow Kensuke around?  
Why did Michael like watching Kensuke work?  
Why is Michael’s football softer?  
How do you think Michael felt when he was reunited with the football? |
| Predict | From the title ‘All That Silence Said’ predict what might happen next.  
Read up to the end of the chapter. Predict what Kensuke’s story is. |
| Explain | Explain how you know Kensuke has been there a long time.  
Explain why Kensuke laughs when Michael tries to draw the jellyfish. |
| Retrieve | What did the vinegar remind Michael of?  
How did Michael know that Stella was there?  
What does Kensuke always do before he enters the cave? Why does he do it?  
What did Michael usually think about at night?  
What painting does Kensuke give to Michael?  
How did Kensuke and Michael communicate? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What's the first thing Michael tries to paint? How does Kensuke react? Who is Kensuke’s favourite orang-utan? Where is Kensuke from?</th>
<th>Summarise Kensuke and Michael’s routine in 50 words or less.</th>
<th>Write a letter to Eddie from Michael, detailing his time on the island. Start it with the loss of the football and end it with being reunited with the football.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter 8</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>What phrase on Page 118 shows that Michael is waiting patiently to hear the story? What does rebaited mean? What word on Page 123 means ‘killed’? What phrase on Page 129 shows that Michael feels bad?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infer</td>
<td>Why was Michael so happy? Why didn’t Kensuke abandon the burning ship? How did the orang-utans help Kensuke? Why did more men come to the island? Even though Kensuke hates mankind, he saved Michael. What does this tell you about his character? Why does Michael hide the coke bottle? Do you think Michael’s letter in a bottle could help? How do you think Michael feels when Stella brings the coke bottle in?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predict</td>
<td>Predict from the title ‘Everyone Dead In Nagasaki’ what Kensuke’s story might be. Read to the end of the chapter. Predict how Kensuke will react.</td>
<td>Expand why Kensuke hid from the American soldiers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retrieve</td>
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<td>Who made the boat? What was Kensuke’s previous job? Where did Kensuke get all of his supplies?</td>
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</table>
| What happened to Kensuke’s ship?  
How did Kensuke hide the orang-utans?  
What did the men who came to the island do to the gibbons?  
How did Michael survive?  
| Summarise | Summarise Kensuke’s life story in 100 words or less.  
| Writing Opportunity | Write a diary entry from Kensuke’s perspective on either a) when the second group of men came to the island or b) when Kensuke found Michael in the water.  
| Vocabulary | What does reproached mean?  
What phrase on Page 135 shows that Michael feels better?  
What does expounding mean?  
| Infer | How does Michael feel about Kensuke wanting to spend time alone?  
Why does Tomodachi come to Kensuke?  
Why does Kensuke decide that Michael should go home?  
What did the orang-utans think of the football game?  
On Page 139, what does Michael decide Kensuke should do if a ship comes? How does he try and persuade Kensuke of this?  
| Predict | Predict what ‘The Night Of The Turtles’ might be before reading.  
Read to the end of the chapter. Predict if and how Michael and Kensuke will get home.  
| Explain | Explain why Kensuke doesn’t want Michael to leave.  
Explain how Kensuke’s English has gotten better.  
| Retrieve | How does Michael know that Kensuke would prefer to spend time alone?  
What does Kensuke agree to build for Michael?  
Why did the football remind Michael of playing at home?  
What was the worst thing Kensuke had ever done?  
Why and how does Kensuke help the turtles?  
| Summarise |
| Vocabulary | What words on the first two pages show how bad the rain was?  
What does ‘obliterate’ mean?  
What words on Page 153 portray Kensuke’s sadness? |
|---|---|
| Infer | Why does Kensuke laugh after saying ‘for a rainy day’?  
Why does Kensuke want to run away from the men?  
How do you think Kensuke feels when Kikanbo doesn’t show up?  
Why are the men on the island?  
How did Michael and Kensuke feel when they found Kikanbo?  
‘I knew what he was going to tell me’. What is Kensuke going to tell Michael?  
Why does Michael cry? |
| Predict | Predict from the title ‘Killer Men Come’ what might happen in this chapter.  
Look at the illustrations on Page 145 before reading. What might these tell you about what could happen?  
Read up to ‘we cannot wait any longer’ on Page 151. Predict what will happen next.  
Read up to ‘they see this for sure, you see’ on Page 156. Predict what happens next. |
| Explain | Explain why you think Kensuke was less restless waiting for a boat than Michael.  
Explain why Kensuke doesn’t want Michael to mention the island for ten years. |
| Retrieve | What does Kensuke use the majority of the berries for?  
How did Kensuke get the binoculars back?  
Why was Stella growling?  
How does Kensuke calm the orang-utans? |
| Summarise | Summarise the book in 100 words or less. |
| Writing Opportunity | Write a review of the book, detailing your favourite parts, characters, what you’d change and who you’d recommend it for. |