

Welcome!



Thank you for downloading this Reflective Reading resource pack to accompany the novel *Rivet Boy* by award-winning children's author Barbara Henderson.

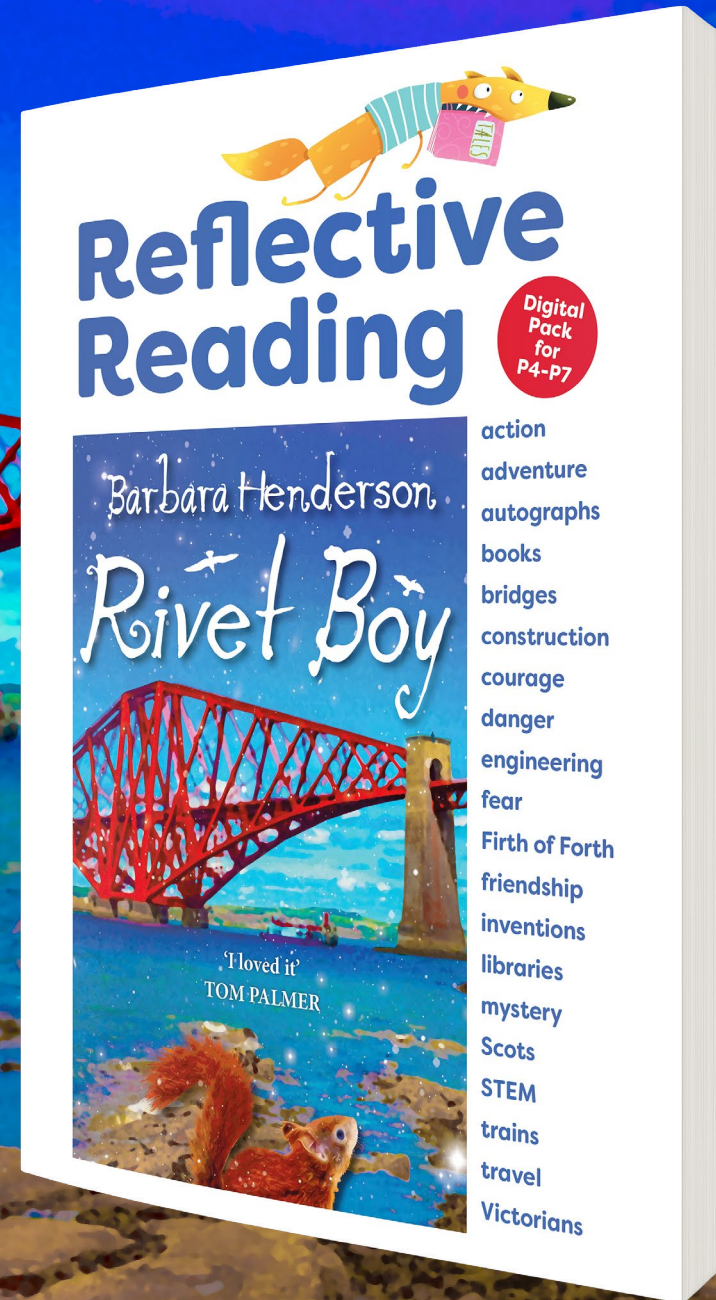
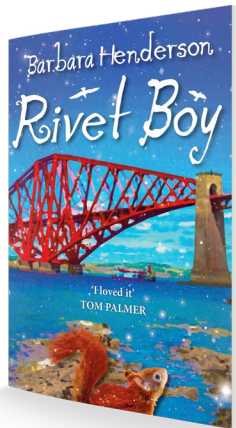
We really hope you enjoy reading and sharing the story of John Nicol and his role in the building of Scotland's greatest man-made wonder—the Forth Bridge!

Please share your work with us on social media using the hashtag #RivetBoy. Be sure to tag the author @scattyscribbler and @cranachanbooks :D

Happy reading!

Barbara is also available for author visits and school events.

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Read and Understand

Who are the main **characters** so far in *Rivet Boy*? In your jotter, begin a **Character Map** for John Nicol over a double-page spread.

Draw pictures, add notes, facts and quotes as you learn more about him during the novel. Fill in what you know or have learned about him so far. Choose a 2nd character & do the same for them.



Read and Understand

John's mother doesn't have it easy. What are some of the challenges she faces? Would her life be any easier today?

What do we know about John's father so far?

What do we learn about John's father in the **prologue**?

Infer What's Not There

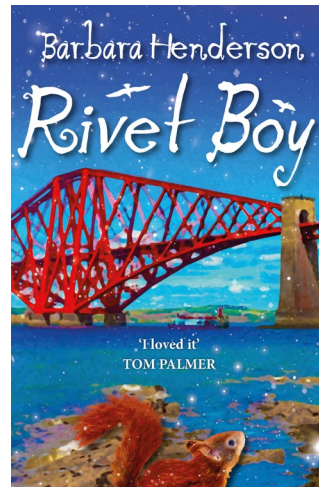
Ch1: "Dey" may not be a word you are familiar with. Can you work out from the context what it means?

Ch3: (p12) includes the phrase 'sifting my worries from my thoughts.' What type of **imagery** is this? What does it suggest about how John is feeling?

Explore Some More

Ch3: This chapter is titled: 'Don't Look a Gift Horse in the Mouth.' Do you know what this means? Make an educated guess in your group. Have you heard it before?

Look at the chapter headings. What do you call these types of sayings? Choose two other examples & explain their meanings.



Reflective Reading

Chapters 1-4



Connect 4

What are bridges used for? How many bridges can you name? Are there bridges (big or small) in your town or city?

John's aunt has emigrated to America. What reasons might she have had to leave her homeland behind? What reasons may people have for doing the same today?



Reflect and Respond

Name a character you find interesting in the book so far. Explain your reasons.

Who has power in these chapters? Who is the most powerful? Who is at the bottom of the heap and has least power?

Does this change how you as a reader feel about the characters? Are you drawn to powerful or less powerful characters?

Read & Understand

Take a new double-page spread in your jotter with the heading '**Chapter Summaries**'.

Summarise the events of each chapter briefly (no more than 2 sentences) using **Who, What, When, Where, Why,** and **How** to help you.

Add to this as you read the book.

Create Something Great

John's world is relatively small. His house in Dunfermline, the Carnegie Library, the train to North Queensferry, the Firth of Forth and South Queensferry.

Create a simple map, drawing the key locations, with added detail like steam trains and boats, a partly built bridge—be creative!

Read and Understand

Update your character list to include new characters (human & animal). Match them to the following **adjectives**: nervous, tired, caring, injured, authoritative, organised, relieved, cheerful.

What is a brigger?

John has a secret name for the man in charge. What is it, and what does it suggest about the man's personality? What makes John choose that name?



Reflect and Respond

Do you like John, the main character? Do you have sympathy for him? What are the reasons for your answer?

Ch7: John feels a whole range of emotions when he enters the library, and totally different emotions as he leaves it. How would you describe these in your own words?

Infer What's Not There

Ch6: 'Going down there is dangerous, and absolutely forbidden.' (p30) Why is it a bad idea to go onto the train tracks?

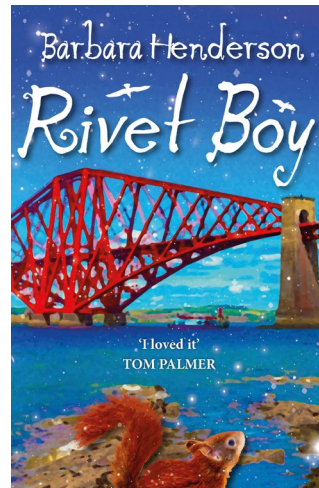
Ch7: Give two reasons why is it a treat for John to join the library.

Explain your answers.

Explore Some More

Ch6: John first encounters the squirrel. What can you find out about red squirrels? Create a fact file with pictures and display it in class. How can we best protect this iconic and much-loved species?

Ch7: Do you think the library assistant likes his job? (p37) Give reasons for your choice.



Reflective Reading Chapters 5-8



Connect 4

Many men died in real life during construction of the bridge. The youngest recorded victim to be killed building the bridge was a 13-year-old boy. What are your thoughts on this?

Should children have been allowed to work there? Do some children have to work today?

Children can get a part-time job (weekends, holidays) in the UK from age 13. Is this a good idea? Would you like a part-time job? Where would you like to work? Explain your thoughts.

Read and Understand

Summarise what happens in each of these chapters; one sentence per chapter.

Ch8: Explain why the Murdochs do not want John in their rivet gang.

Ch8: Summarise why MacOrderly does not accept the Murdochs' suggestion.

Explore Some More

Ch8:

'JOHN NICOOOOOOL!'

Rage has become words. And it is my name.'

(p51) The author uses capitals & has changed the spelling of John's name. What is the effect of this?

Ch8: 'Hope has clawed its way into my heart and made its home in it.' (p40) What figure of speech is this? Is it effective?

Create Something Great

Victorians loved shadow portraits using black paper and silhouettes. Create your own classroom gallery, recreating each main character you meet in Rivet boy. Small props like a cap, fake beard and a top hat will help set them apart.

Take inspiration from Queen Victoria's gallery in the step-by-step guide at <https://www.rct.uk/resources/activity-challenge-make-your-own-silhouette>

Infer What's Not There

Ch9: Can you guess what the Murdochs may be planning at the end of this chapter?

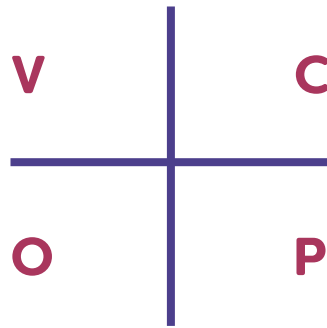
Ch9: *'I glance up at the bridge and bite my lip. There's an ill wind blowing.'* (p55)

Is this an effective ending? What does the word *'ill'* mean in this context?



Read and Understand

VCOP Hunt



Read and Understand

Ch10: The word *'resolutely'* appears on p58. What does it mean in this context? Can you think of synonyms (other words which mean the same thing)?

Ch10: What does the word *'dominie'* mean on p61?

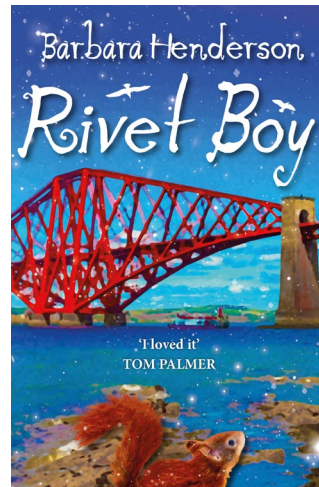
Ch12: On p70 we learn of Cora's ambition. What does she long for?

Infer What's Not There

Ch10: How do you think the Murdochs are feeling in chapter 10? What are the clues for this?

Ch11: We first meet Cora Ramage in this chapter. Based on the clues of this first encounter, what is your first impression of her? Describe her in three words.

Ch12: The last sentence sees John setting off towards the famous writer Robert Louis Stevenson. What is John going to do or say? There is enough context here to work it out.



Reflective Reading

Chapters 9-12



Reflect and Respond

Ch10: How effective do you find the ending of Chapter 10 (p62)? Are you interested in what happens next?

Ch11: Would you tell the truth if you were John (p67)? What are the reasons why he should or shouldn't in your opinion?

Connect 4

Ch9: John is terrified of heights. (p48-53) Do you relate to this? Do you have any fears or situations you intensely dislike? If you feel confident to do this, share with the class.

'I look back twice. Both times, Harold is still standing by the door of the sheds, his gaze following me. When the boat pulls way, he raises his hand in farewell.' Have you ever been sad to say goodbye to a place or a person?



Create Something Great

Chapters 10 and 11 are very dramatic and visual. Using the template provided, create a simple storyboard for a film treatment of John's fall, including a variety of different camera shots, ranging from wide and mid-shots to close ups. <https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/blank-storyboard-templates-various-portrait-and-landscape-styles>

Create Something Great

Andrew Carnegie does not appear in person in *Rivet Boy*, but his first library certainly does.

Read about it at <https://www.cilips.org.uk/the-evolution-of-dunfermline-carnegie-library/>

Design a poster suitable for the Victorian era, encouraging people to visit the first Carnegie library **OR** design one for your local library encouraging people to visit today.

Infer What's Not There

Ch13: '**commotion outside.**' (p73) Explain in your own words what this is.

Ch13-15: Write down three words from these three chapters to show that the Murdochs are bad news and can't be trusted.



Read and Understand

Ch13: What does Canny's gesture on p74 imply?

Ch13: '**We owe you that now**' (p76) What does this suggest about how MacOrderly feels about John's accident?

Ch15: This chapter ends with a subject change, and a question. What does this question suggest about John's changing relationship with his mother, and about his character? It's not just about height, is it?

Infer What's Not There

Ch16: What is the librarian's assistant's attitude to his job (p92)?

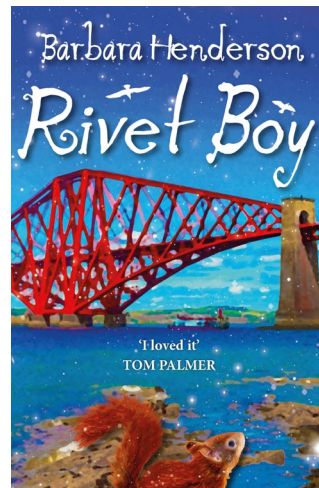
Ch16: John would like '**a slice of the life others take for granted.**' Explain what this means in your own words. What do you think he longs for? And is it too much to ask?

Ch16: Choose five words to describe Mr Peebles.

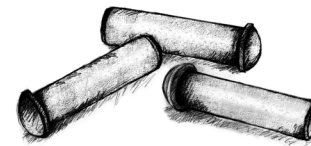
Connect 4

The riot in the Hawes Inn really happened, although the author has imagined the scenes in the book. Can you think of riots or strikes nowadays where workers are not happy with their pay or conditions? Who has been on strike recently and why? How are these situations handled?

The Murdochs are threatening John. If anyone threatens you, in or out of school, what are your options? What should you do? Research Childline, a helpline for kids in trouble or in need of advice.



Reflective Reading Chapters 13-16



Reflect and Respond

The character names in Rivet Boy all say something about the people they represent: **Cain Murdoch, MacOrderly, Bristles O'Malley.** Research Cain Murdoch, for example: What bible story does his first name evoke? What other words does his second name make you think of?

Chapter 14 ends on a cliff hanger is this effective? What impact does it have on the reader? Do you like this sort of ending why/why not?

Reflect and Respond

Ch14: John has had to overcome significant challenges in the story so far. Reflect on a challenging situation you have overcome. Discuss in your group.

Ch15: '**Nothing will happen to me.**' Can John possibly make such a promise to his mother on p87? Why does he say it, do you think? Have you ever said anything to make other people feel better?



Read and Understand

Choose one of this week's chapters.

Come up with a new chapter title for your chapter.

Using **Who, What, Where, When*, Why, How** write a short summary of it.

Create Something Great

Ch14: John and Cora brainstorm eminent Victorians John might like to include in his autograph book. (p78)

Choose a famous Victorian (they can be mentioned in the book or be your own choice) and prepare a presentation, fact file, or magazine article about them.

Infer What's Not There

Ch17: John feels differently about being on the bridge now. Make a list in your jotter of all the words and phrases that show John is more confident now. (p95)

Ch17: Draw and label a picture of the Shah using the words and phrases that describe him on p97 & p98.

Ch17: Can you spot an *oxymoron* on page 97?



Create Something Great

Ch18: In your own words, sum up what the MacOrderly tells the assembled workers on p105.

Ch18: What does 'curtsy' mean? Cora curtsies a lot on p.100!

Ch18: The librarian mentions an auction on p.102. What is an auction? Explain in your own words.

Infer What's Not There

Ch19: Why does John leave the library in a hurry? (p109-110)

Ch20: John counts his blessings (p115) as he lies down at night. What does this mean?

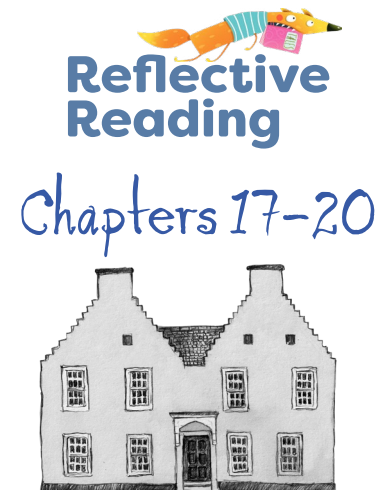
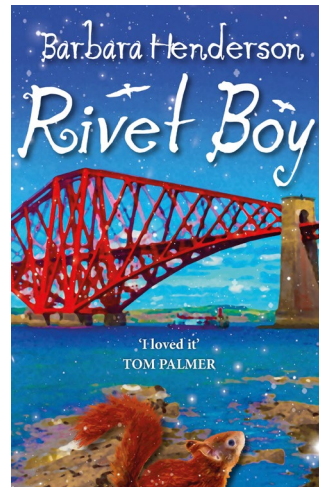
List three things that are blessings in your life.

Explore Some More

Ch19: Find an example of alliteration on p106.

Ch19: '*Oh, for the love of words!*' (p108). Is this an effective expression in the context?

Ch20: Is the question at the end of this chapter effective? Why/why not? (p115)



Connect 4

The people whose signatures John has collected are the Victorian equivalent to celebrities, and John's book of signatures may be more valuable as a result.

Do you think our modern obsession with celebrities is healthy? Do you think all celebrities genuinely deserve the recognition they get?

What about '*social media influencers*'?



Reflect and Respond

Write a 'postcard review' for *Rivet Boy*, like the ones you see in bookshops. Give three reasons to read it, or your opinions about the book. Use the brief plan below:

Intro sentence

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Conclusion

Read and Understand

Ch20: On p112-113 John is talking to himself in this interior monologue. Can you explain more fully what conflicts and worries are in his head? Why does he feel better?

Ch20: Why does John climb to the top of the bridge to think on p.112? Do you think 'seeing clearly' refers only to his physical vision?

Create Something Great

Create a true and false quiz based on the book so far and test your partner or your class.

Write a short, imaginative story, where you meet and make friends with a wild animal. Use descriptive language to bring it to life for your reader.



Read and Understand

Ch21: Give three reasons why John's family are about to have financial difficulties. (p118)

What might they have to do as they have less money? What does John secretly hope might solve their money problems? Is this realistic?

Ch21: Find a sentence with **triple alliteration** on p117.



Explore Some More

Ch21: Cora shakes her hand **'as if she'd touched something revolting'**. Why do you think she does this?

Ch21: The trains cross the bridge for the first time. Make a list of all the words and phrases the author uses on p119 that bring this sight and sound to life for the reader. Is it effective? Why/why not?

Infer What's Not There

Ch22: What is Bristles O'Malley's secret? How do you think this makes him feel? (p123)

Ch22: Why is the Prince of Wales coming to the bridge? (p124-125)

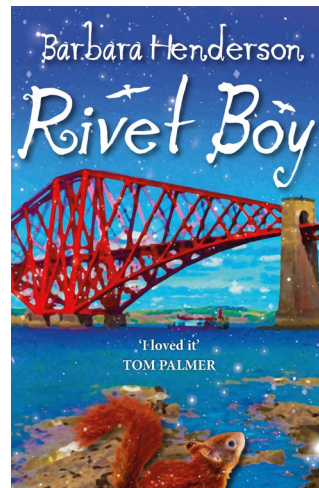
Ch22: Why is Doug skipping? (p126)

Explore Some More

Ch23: What does the word **'pour'** suggest about the movement of the crowd? (p127)

Ch24: Find three phrases that portray the **tension** that is building in this chapter for the following characters:

Dey p127:
John p128:
Cora p129:




Reflective Reading

Chapters 21-24



Reflect and Respond

Ch24: **'someone who has nothing, absolutely nothing to lose'** (p135) Do you have any sympathy for the Murdochs?

Most books build up to a final climax: some sort of exciting confrontation. Is *Rivet Boy* holding your interest? What do you think will happen at the end?

Do you think John is right to follow the Murdochs up onto the bridge? What would you do in that situation?

GROUP CHAT

Read and Understand

Choose your favourite character and using information from the text, draw a picture **or** a **sketchnote** of them.

Add labels, words and quotes to support your illustration.

(Google images of sketchnotes if you've never done one before.)

Read and Understand

Summarise Ch23 or Ch24 using **Who, What, Where, When*, Why, How.**

Ch23: **'Except me.'** (p128) Is this short sentence effective? Why?

Ch24: **'The Queensferry hillside is an anthill of writhing colour and noise.'** (p133) What type of **literary device** is this? What does it suggest?

Create Something Great

You have now seen all the black and white chapter heading illustrations by artist Sandra McGowan. What other images would you have liked to be featured in the book? Draw one: an item/place/animal—whatever you choose! If you create it in a larger format, it can be scanned and shrunk in size to make it look more impressive!

Create a posh invitation to the opening ceremony for the bridge! It should contain a programme of the day, mentions for the famous people who will be in attendance and a menu for the meal at the end of the day. Invent any of the details you don't know.

Read and Understand

Ch25: 'My father died due to a faulty rivet.'
(p.137) Where in the book is this mentioned
before?

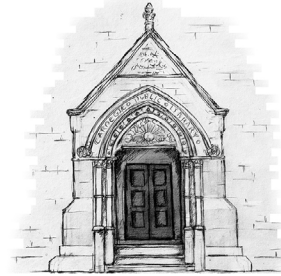
Ch25: What does the word 'patron' mean on
page 141? Can you work it out from the context?



Infer What's Not There

Ch25: How does the atmosphere change from
the beginning to the end of this chapter?

Ch25: '*What's for you
won't go by you*' (p141)
What does this mean for
John Nicol. Explain fully
in your own words.



Explore Some More

Ch25: John's mind is '*reeling*' on page 138. What
does this image mean?

Ch25: Find and note two examples of a rhetorical
questions in this chapter (p137 and p140).

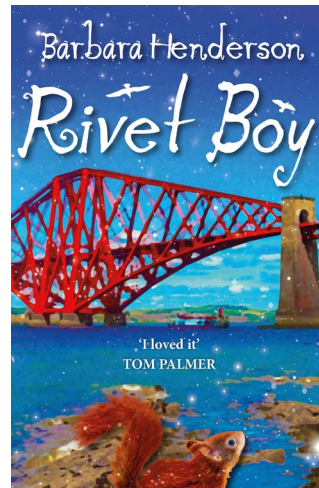


Explore Some More

Ch25: John's mind is '*reeling*' on page 138. What
does this image mean?

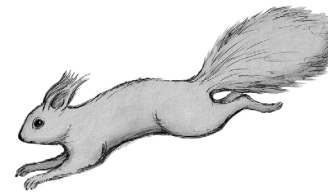
Ch25: Find and note two examples of a
rhetorical questions in this chapter (p137 and
p140).

Ch26: Describe in your own words what John
could see at the auction and what he was feeling
about it? (p144-146)




**Reflective
Reading**

Chapters 25-26



Reflect and Respond

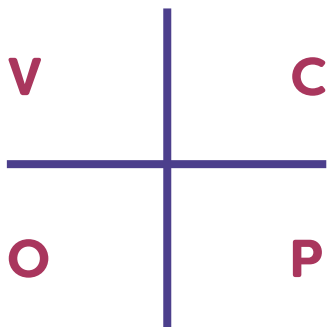
Ch25: 'The list of people in attendance on p140 is
real; all those people were really there. Does the
range of guests impress you? Why/why not?

The Crown Prince was really there to drive in the
golden rivet (it's still there), but the assassination
attempt was invented by the author. Do you like
stories which mix fact and fiction?

What do you think of the ending of the book? Is it a
good outcome for John?

Read and Understand

VCOP Hunt



Create Something Great

Imagine you are planning to interview the author
of *Rivet Boy* for a magazine article. In your group,
choose 5 questions you would really like to ask
her about the novel and its real-life events and
characters.

Email or tweet the questions to Barbara
Henderson!
Email: scattyscribbler@gmail.com
Twitter: [@scattyscribbler](https://twitter.com/scattyscribbler)

Create Something Great

Take a look at the picture section at the back of
the book. Now create some photo portraits of
people in the class in that style, with a black and
white filter, serious facial expressions, costumes
and old-fashioned hair/beards.

Use the pictures as inspiration. That way you can
create a Victorian gallery or even a slideshow.