

Student workbook

Name \_\_\_\_\_

While reading the book we will be developing these reading skills:

# Reading Vipers

**V**ocabulary

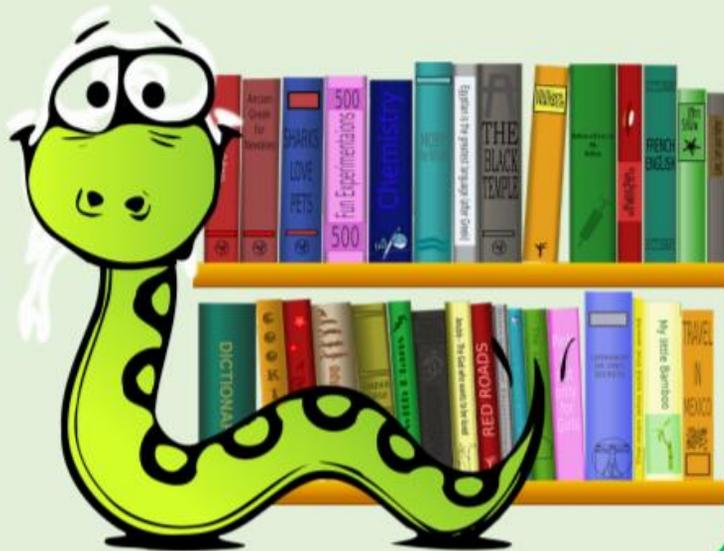
**I**nfer

**P**redict

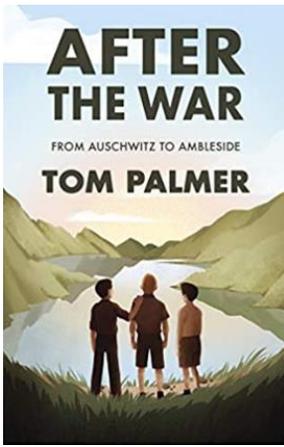
**E**xplain

**R**etrieve

**S**ummarise



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## Predict

Before we start to read the book, make some predictions about the book, based on what you can see on the front cover.

1. Who do you think would enjoy reading this book?

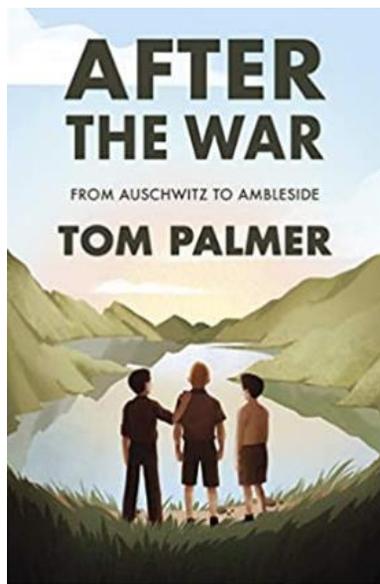
2. What are they looking at?

3. What war do you think has finished and when do you think this book is set?

4. What do you think happened to these characters during the war?

5. Why do you think they are here, now?

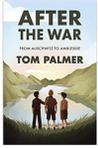
6. How would you feel if you were any of the characters on the cover?



**My predictions about the story ...**

**What makes me think this?**

**Now write a short paragraph about what you think the story might be about**



# Foreword and Chapter 1

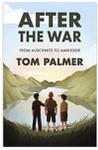


Retrieve

1. Match up the names of the boys with some information about them.

Could speak German, Russian, Czech and Polish	Fifteen years old	Always looking for opportunities
<b>Yossi</b>	<b>Mordecai</b>	<b>Leo</b>
Tall with blond hair	Short, with dark hair	Loves aeroplanes

2. Why would we expect Yossi to be afraid of aeroplanes?
3. Where were the children travelling from?



# Chapters 2 and 3

Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

distant

reassurance

spool

concentration camp

Summarise

What happened in the previous chapter?

Knowledge  
Retrieval

Where are the children travelling from?

How are they travelling?



*Yossi was not really sure that he and Mordecai would be safe when the plane finally landed in England. They had been lied to by the Nazis so many times about where they were going and what would happen next that it was impossible for him to truly feel safe. He reached into his pocket and touched the bar of chocolate that they had been given by the pilot before take-off and remembered the day it had all begun.*

Infer

1. Why do you think the children had been given chocolate?

*Outside his bedroom window he saw a line of people leaving the village on foot, carrying suitcases, pushing carts, pulling animals on ropes behind them. One woman was clutching her Sabbath candlesticks to her chest as she passed by.*

2. Why was the woman carrying the candlesticks?

*Yossi turned away, not wanting to think about his mother. Not now. Not yet.*

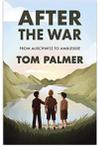
3. Why does Yossi not want to think about his mother?

*Yossi heard voices above the sound of the truck's engine, then saw a group of people standing outside a building that had an oil painting hanging above its door. The crowd were singing. They waved and lifted their glasses in the air as the children passed, seeming to toast them.*

4. What building have they passed?

*"Sheets?" Mordecai's voice was pitched high.*

5. Why does Mordecai's voice change pitch?



# Chapters 4 and 5

## Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

liberated

Sabbath

hostel

lush

clusters

gazing

lingering

alert

## Summarise

What happened in the previous chapters?

## Knowledge Retrieval

What is the name of the estate where the boys will be staying?

What was made nearby during the war?



*Yossi sat stiffly on the end of the bed.  
His bed.  
In his room.*

Explain

1. Why is each sentence in its own paragraph?

*On arrival, they had been stripped of their clothes and dusted with powder before being sent to have a shower. This had been terrifying.*

2. Why is the word *terrifying* printed in italics?

*For a while they were speechless. With wonder.*

3. Why are the words, *with wonder*, in a sentence all on their own?

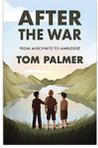
Infer

4. Why is Mordecai unhappy when he finds out that Leo has been giving biscuits to the dog?

*Yossi didn't miss the fact that Mordecai closed his eyes and lowered his head over his food before he ate.*

5. What is Mordecai doing?

6. Why has Yossi grabbed carrot peelings and stuffed them into his clothes?



# Chapter 6

Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

Windermere

concentration camp

seaplane

ghetto

aware

Summarise

What happened in the previous chapters?

Knowledge  
Retrieval

Where did Yossi, Mordecai and Leo spend the night?

What did they eat for breakfast?



Vocabulary

1. Underline the phrase that tells us that the men did not pose any danger.

*He sometimes saw men in heavy boots and overalls covered in oil. They scared him, so he avoided them, even though he had been told that they were workers from the seaplane factory and were no threat.*

Infer

2. Before handing over their bikes to the Germans, why did Yossi and his father clean their bicycles?

*Yossi would never forget what happened next. The memory would influence all his decisions about what to do or how to act over the following six years.*

3. How did this memory affect the decisions Yossi would make?

4. Why could Yossi not speak as he approached the soldiers? Tick the correct answer.

He was nervous

He was excited

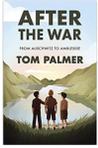
He was scared

Retrieve

5. Why did Yossi feel proud when he handed over his bike?

Infer

Why was this important to him?



# Chapters 7 and 8

Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

flitting

spool

shore

ghetto

possessions

jolted

concentration camp

hostel

Summarise

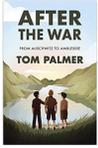
What happened in the previous chapter?

Knowledge  
Retrieval

What happened to Yossi's bike?

What promise did Yossi's father make to him?





# Chapters 9 and 10

## Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

possessions

Red Cross

liberated

reunite

shuddered

murmur

hubbub

ghetto

## Summarise

What happened in the previous chapters?

## Knowledge Retrieval

How did the boys expect Arthur to react when he found out they had taken his bicycle?

How did he react?



Infer

*He felt the same impulse: that fear of important men, the kind of men who decided what would happen to you next.*

1. Who is he thinking about when he says this?

Vocabulary

2. Look at p.79. Find and copy **one word** which means *something they have been prevented from having*.

Look at p.81. Find and copy **one word** which means *exciting*.

*His mother led him away quickly, through his old school friends, holding his hand so hard it hurt, even though Yossi was telling her that his class wasn't overcrowded, that there were only seven of them, that is must be a mistake.*

Retrieve

3. What was the mistake Yossi is talking about?

Infer

4. Why was she holding his hand so tightly?

Explain

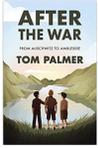
5. Why does the author refer to the other children as Yossi's **old school friends**?

Summarise

6. Yossi crossed out all but one name on his list. What does this tell us about his family?

Predict

7. Do you think he will be able to find his father? Explain your answer.



# Chapter 11

## Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

Rabbi

shuddered

ghetto

synagogue

Sabbath

echoes

thrilled

swallows

## Summarise

What happened in the previous chapters?

## Knowledge Retrieval

What language are the children being taught?

Which organisation is trying to trace their relatives?



Summarise

1. Write Yossi and Mordecai's names on the line to show how religious they both were.

Not  
religious

Very  
religious

\_\_\_\_\_

*Yossi remembered these words. Rosh Hashanah. Sabbath. They were like distant echoes of something before.*

Explain

2. Why does the author use the phrase **distant echoes**?

Infer

3. Why was Friday night at sunset the worst time for the attack on the synagogue to happen?

Vocabulary

4. Which definition of limp is used here:  
*Soon flames were consuming the books and scrolls as their seven helpless victims sat or stood **limp**, heads down.*

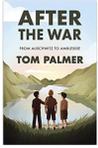
Explain your choice.

If you describe something as **limp**, you mean that it is soft or weak when it should be firm or strong.

If someone is **limp**, their body has no strength and is not moving, for example because they are asleep or unconscious.

Summarise

5. Why does Yossi say he cannot worship with the others?



# Chapter 12

## Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

Red Cross

ghetto

concentration camp

reunited

partisans

butt

emerged

Auschwitz

## Summarise

What happened in the previous chapter?

## Knowledge Retrieval

Where did the Jewish men come from?

What festival did they come to celebrate?



Summarise

1. Write numbers beside each point to show the order they happened. The first one has been done for you.

They boarded trains for the journey to Auschwitz.	
They went outside with what they could carry.	
They were sorted into lines.	
Yossi heard shouting and shooting.	1
They were marched out of the ghetto.	

2. What was the worst thing about the train journey to Auschwitz?

3. What was the **best** thing about the train journey to Auschwitz?

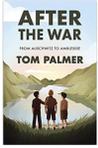
*Yossi's father put his hands on his shoulders, as if he was comforting him.  
But Yossi knew better.*

Retrieve

4. Why did Yossi's father put his hands on his shoulders?

Predict

5. What would happen to the those in the left hand queue, those who were not deemed 'fit for work'?
6. What do you think Yossi's mother might have whispered to him **that chilled him to the bone but made him move away, looking at each of them solemnly in the eyes: Mina, Anna, his mother?**



# Chapters 13 and 14

## Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

pleaded

brutal

impulse

Rabbi

hesitating

Red Cross

## Summarise

What happened in the previous chapter?

## Knowledge Retrieval

How old did Yossi say he was when he arrived at Auschwitz?

What job did he say he could do?



*He was gasping for air. Just a short run and he was shattered.*

Infer

1. Why was Yossi so unfit?

Explain

2. What does the author mean when he writes, ***The lake's angry today?***

Summarise

3. When Yossi saw the children having a pillow fight, which memory came to him?

Explain

4. When the man who was laughing and talking to himself said, ***"That's your mother and your sisters,"*** what did he mean?

Infer

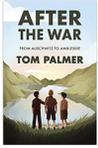
5. Why does Yossi bang his head against the wall?

Summarise

6. The following day, Yossi refuses to get out of bed or eat anything. Why?

Retrieve

7. What made him finally change his mind?



# Chapters 15 and 16

## Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

ghetto

reveal

ruffling

emerged

skimming

barely

brutal

ripples

## Summarise

What happened in the previous chapters?

## Knowledge Retrieval

Yossi was reminded of ash falling on the concentration camp. What did the younger children do to spark this memory for him?

His father had told him there was only one thing he could do to fight back against the Nazis. What was it?



Retrieve

1. Why did Yossi go to see the doctor?
2. What does he want to do when he grows up?
3. The boys had to decide where they would go when it was time to leave the Calgarth Estate. What choices did they have?

Explain

4. During the football match, a Polish player called Heinrich, a German player, "**Nazi scum**". How would Heinrich feel about being called Nazi? Explain why.

Infer

5. In the brush factory, why did Aaron say he was the one who had knocked over all of the boxes?

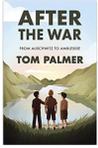
6. Why did the boys make an effigy of Hitler?

7. Why was Heinrich the one to strike the first match?

*And now, in the darkness, he could see the faces of the dozens of boys, their eyes reflecting the flames, blackness all around them as the moon hid behind a cloud.*

Explain

8. Why does the author include this reference to the moon?



# Chapter 17

## Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

anxiety

collapsed

funnelled

liberate

alert

one-storey

paralysed

synagogue

## Summarise

What happened in the previous chapters?

## Knowledge Retrieval

Some of the boys got into a fight over which game?

They burnt an effigy of which figure?



Retrieve

1. The boys began to make plans for where they would go when they left the Calgarth Estate. Draw lines to match each boy to his idea.

Work for the  
Red Cross

Stay at  
Calgarth

Go to live in  
Gateshead

**Leo**  
**Mordecai**

Go to live in  
Palestine

Go back to  
Poland

Go to live in  
Leeds

2. Why did the boys decide to take Spot home?

Infer

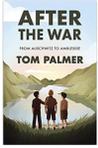
3. When the boys ask Dorothy if she's heard from Peter, her reply is, "**not yet**". Why does she say this rather than just, "no"?

Summarise

4. What did Leo find when he went back to his village?

Infer

5. At the end of the chapter, Yossi decides that he will go wherever Leo and Mordecai go. Why?



# Chapters 18 and 19

## Vocabulary

What do these words mean?

intense

shore

beck

reunite

trellis

droning

seaplane

hostels

## Summarise

What happened in the previous chapter?

## Knowledge Retrieval

Why did Leo want to go and live in Palestine?

What had happened to Spot?



Explain

*There was hope. There was excitement. That is what Yossi felt. That today he could have news of his father and the future could begin.*

1. What does the author mean when he says **the future could begin**?

*A stiff wind was coming from the north, up and over the mountains, bringing the cold with it. The same wind he had felt less than half an hour ago as he went excitedly to hear news about his father.*

2. Why has the author mentioned the weather?

Vocabulary

3. Which definition of the word **'trace'** is meant here?

There was no news of his father. No record of his father trying to **trace** him.

A **trace** is a sign which shows you that someone or something has been in a place.

If you **trace** someone or something, you find them after looking for them.

**Traces** of frost from the morning still clung to the rocks around the shore.

A **trace** is a sign which shows you that someone or something has been in a place.

If you **trace** someone or something, you find them after looking for them.

Summarise

4. How does Yossi know who the soldier is?

Explain

5. Why has the author ended the story with the boys watching the plane taking off?

**Compiled by Denise Forrest**