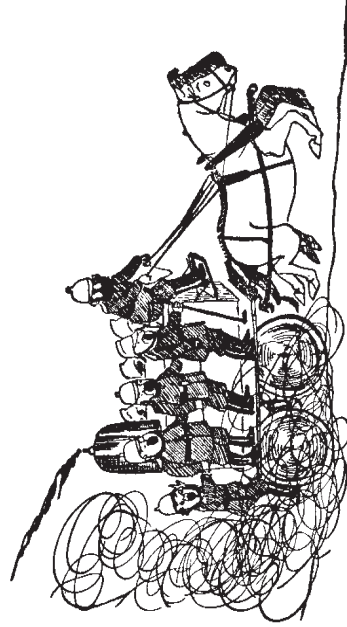


# RESPONSES TO READING

The *Responses To Reading* series consists of prose extracts and poems covering a wide range of topics. Each extract is followed by ample opportunities for written response. Several of the extracts provide a good introduction to pre-twentieth century texts. The work provided may be integrated into departmental programmes and also provides a varied and instantly available source for one-off lessons and homework assignments.

***Responses To Reading, Series One***, is aimed at Years Seven and Eight.

It contains extracts from Mark Twain, Charles Dickens, E. Nesbit, F. H. Burnett, Lewis Carroll, R. L. Stevenson, Hans Christian Andersen and many others. The poetry sections include poems by Christina Rossetti, William Wordsworth, John Keats, Gareth Owen, Thomas Hardy, Thomas Hood and others.



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# PHOTOCOPIABLE RESOURCES



***Responses To Reading, Series Two***, is aimed at Years Eight and Nine.

It contains extracts from: Anna Sewell, Edward Thomas, Jack London, Geoffrey Chaucer, Aesop's Fables, William Allingham, Robert Frost, Thomas Hardy, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Washington Irving, Mark Twain, Mary Coleridge, Edgar Allan Poe, Matthew Arnold, Robert Herrick, Charles Dickens, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, Raymond Wilson, George & Weedon Grossmith, Shakespeare, Beowulf, Emily Bronte, E. Nesbit, Hilaire Belloc, Henry Lawson and Jerome K. Jerome.

## Responses To Reading

SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS

Series One

Series Two

***Each set costs £22 (Post and Package £3 is payable on total order)***

# My Earliest Memory

**Suffolk 1899**  
**Ronald Blythe**



There were ten of us in the family and as my father was a farm labourer earning 13 shillings a week, you can imagine how we lived. It was when I was three, we were sitting round the fire waiting for my soldier brother to come home. He was the eldest boy in the family.

He arrived about six in the evening, and he had managed to ride all the way from Ipswich in a milk-cart. He wore a red coat and he looked very lively. My mother got up and kissed him, but father just sat and said, "How are you?". It was dark. It was the winter time. A few days later he walked away and my mother stood right out in the middle of the road, watching. He walked smartly down the lane until his red coat was no bigger than a poppy. Then the trees hid him. We never saw him again.

## Understanding

1. Where was Ronald Blythe born?
2. How many children were there in his family when he was a boy?
3. What was his father's job?
4. How much did his father earn?
5. What was his eldest brother's job?
6. What was his eldest brother wearing when he visited them?
7. What did his mother do when her eldest son left?
8. How old was Ronald Blythe when the visit took place?

## Ideas for Writing

1. Imagine that you are Ronald Blythe's mother or father. **Write about the visit home of your eldest son.** What did you feel as you watched him march away in his red coat?
2. **Write a story about what happened to the soldier after he marched away.** You will have to use your own imagination.
3. Ronald Blythe was three when his soldier brother visited them. This must have been one of his earliest memories. **Write as much as you can about your own earliest memory.**

# Spring

In Britain our weather is such that the seasons of the year are quite different. After the cold, damp winter when all the trees are bare and there are few flowers we look forward to the first signs of Spring. The snow-drops are the first flowers to appear but it is still very much winter in February.

The first signs of Spring for many people are the daffodils which come out about Easter time. The poem that follows is very well known.



## I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud

I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the milky way,  
They stretched in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay;  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they  
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:  
A poet could not but be gay,  
In such a jocund company;  
I gazed - and gazed - but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth  
(1770 - 1850)

### A Daffodils

Describe in your own words the scene that inspired Wordsworth to write this poem about the daffodils.

### B Springtime

Write as much as you can about the things that you think of when you think of Spring.

### C Fast days, feast days and holy days

1. Find out why we have pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.
2. What is Lent?
3. *Hot cross buns, hot cross buns*  
*One a penny, two a penny - hot cross buns.*  
*If you have no daughters, give them to your sons*  
*One a penny, two a penny - hot cross buns.*  
Why do we have hot cross buns on Good Friday?
4. Write about how and why we celebrate Easter.



# Aesop's Fables

A fable is a story which contains a moral or lesson. Many old fables have animals as their main characters rather than people. Aesop's fables date from about the 6th century BC. Whether Aesop ever actually existed as a historical person is open to question, but these stories have been told for thousands of years in many parts of the world and in many languages.

## The Fox and the Grapes

A hungry Fox saw some fine bunches of grapes hanging from a vine that was trained along a high trellis, and did his best to reach them by jumping as high as he could into the air. But it was all in vain, for they were just out of reach; so he gave up trying, and he walked away with an air of dignity and unconcern, remarking, "I thought those grapes were ripe, but I see now they are quite sour."

## The Goose That Laid the Golden Eggs

A man and his wife had the good fortune to possess a Goose which laid Golden Eggs every day. Lucky though they were, they soon began to think they were not getting rich fast enough, and, imagining the bird must be made of gold inside, they decided to kill it in order to secure the whole store of precious metal at once. But when they cut it open they found it was just like any other goose. Thus, they neither got rich all at once, as they had hoped, nor enjoyed any longer the daily addition to their wealth.

## The Fox and The Crow.

A Crow was sitting on the branch of a tree with a piece of cheese in her beak when a Fox observed her and set his wits to work to discover some way of getting the cheese. Coming and standing under the tree he looked up and said, "What a noble bird I see above me! Her beauty is without equal, the hue of her plumage exquisite. If only her voice is as sweet as her looks are fair, she ought without doubt to be Queen of the Birds." The Crow was hugely flattered by this, and just to show the Fox that she could sing she gave a loud caw. Down came the cheese, of course, and the Fox, snatching it up, said, "You have a voice, madam, I see: what you want is wits."



### A Understanding

1. What is meant by the expression "It's just sour grapes"?
2. What is the moral of the story about the Goose that laid the Golden Eggs?
3. What is the moral of the story about the Fox and the Crow?
4. What did the fox mean when he said to the crow "...what you want is wits."?

### B Make up a story of your own to illustrate ONE of these morals or lessons:

- They complain most who suffer least
- Do not try to do too much at once
- There is strength in unity
- Look before you leap
- Slow and steady wins the race



# Windy Nights

Whenever the moon and stars are set,  
Whenever the wind is high,  
All night long in the dark and wet,  
A man goes riding by,  
Late in the night when the fires are out,  
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,  
And ships are tossed at sea,  
By, on the highway, low and loud,  
By at the gallop goes he.  
By at the gallop he goes, and then  
By he comes back at the gallop again.

Robert Louis Stevenson  
(1850 - 1894)

## Ideas for Writing

1. The poem *Windy Nights* is full of movement and noise. Write down all the words and phrases that suggest movement and all the words and phrases that suggest noise.
2. The poem *The Way Through the Woods* is quiet and peaceful. There is little noise or movement. How is this effect achieved?
3. In both of these poems the poet imagines a ghostly rider. In *Windy Nights* it is probably a noise like the thud of a gate banging in the wind that produces the impression of horses hooves galloping by. What could possibly make you hear "the beat of a horse's feet / And the swish of a skirt in the dew" in the second poem?
4. In the poem *The Way Through the Woods* what has happened to the old roadway?
5. Imagine that you are walking in the evening in the woods described in the second poem. Describe in your own words what you might see and hear.
6. Windy nights can be scary. High winds can be dangerous. Write about a windy night from your own experience.
7. The picture at the top of the page shows a highwayman. Write a story of your own about a highwayman.



# The Way Through The Woods

They shut the road through the woods  
Seventy years ago.  
Weather and rain have undone it again,  
And now you would never know  
There was once a road through the woods  
Before they planted the trees.

It is underneath the coppice and heath,  
And the thin anemones.  
Only the keeper sees  
That, where the ring-dove broods,  
And the badgers roll at ease,  
There was once a way through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods  
Of a summer evening late,  
When the night air cools on the trout-ringed pools  
Where the otter whistles his mate,  
(They fear not men in the woods,  
Because they see so few)  
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,  
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,  
Steadily cantering through  
The misty solitudes,  
As though they perfectly knew  
The old lost road through the woods....  
But there is no road through the woods!

Rudyard Kipling  
(1865 - 1936)