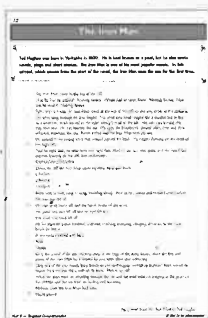


# The Iron Man



**Question Book:**  
Year 5, pages 12-13

**Author / Source:**  
Ted Hughes

**Genre:**  
Fiction — novel extract

**Cross-curricular links:**

- Science (properties of materials)
- Maths (nets)

## Introduction

Ted Hughes (1930-1998) is widely regarded as one of the greatest English poets of the twentieth century. He was also a popular children's author, and *The Iron Man* is one of his most successful works for children. Like so much of Hughes's writing, *The Iron Man* is written in a vivid and engaging style, and this extract gives pupils the chance to explore techniques that engage the reader, including figurative and descriptive language, variations in sentence length and the use of questions. As pupils read the extract, focus their attention on the way Hughes uses language to make them want to keep reading.

## Answers

1. E.g. edge; tip; verge
2. E.g. They help the reader to imagine what the Iron Man looked like because they compare different parts of him to familiar things like "a dustbin" and "headlamps".
3. Any appropriate answer. E.g. He had never seen the sea before, so maybe he didn't understand what it was and he didn't realise that it would be dangerous to step off the cliff towards the sea.
4. E.g. To show the reader that the Iron Man is bouncing down the cliff, hitting lots of things on the way, and to help the reader imagine the noise he makes as he falls.
5. "the sea, chewing away at the edge of the rocky beach"
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because in this extract, it seems like the Iron Man has been destroyed, so I want to read more of the novel to find out whether he manages to survive falling off the cliff.

## Extra Activities

- Ask pupils to annotate their copy of the extract, underlining words and phrases that engage the reader, and labelling examples of similes, personification, onomatopoeia, repetition, etc. As a class, discuss the words, phrases and literary techniques that pupils have identified, and explore their effect on the reader.
- This extract is taken from the beginning of *The Iron Man*. Ask pupils to write a few paragraphs describing what they think happens next. Encourage them to write in the same style as the extract, using as many of the same techniques as they can.
- In this extract, Hughes captures the reader's attention and sets the scene in just ten lines. Challenge pupils to write their own ten-line opening to a short story about a mysterious creature, which engages the reader and creates an atmospheric setting.
- Ask pupils to find out about the properties of iron and to suggest some advantages and disadvantages of being made of iron. Ask pupils to research the properties of some other materials (e.g. salt, wood, paper, plastic) and explain which they think would be most suitable to make an animate giant from.
- Get pupils to design and build an 'Iron Man' consisting entirely of regular cuboids. They should draw a net of each cuboid on thin cardboard, then cut it out and fold it into shape. Encourage pupils to make careful measurements when drawing their nets.