

What to do today

Day 1. Reading

1. Story time

Go to <https://youtu.be/ZDT8WUNMjOk> .

Listen to the reading of *Sam's Duck*, written by Michael Morpurgo and illustrated by Keith Bowen.

Stop when you get to, 'No quacking,' Sam whispered, '*Please!*'

- Explain one thing you have really liked in the story so far.
- What do you think Sam will do with the duck?

2. Answering comprehension questions

Nethercott Farm is a real farm in Devon. It is run by a charity called Farms for City Children.

Read all about [Farms for City Children](#).

- Answer the [Questions](#) about the text.

Day 1 . Writing

1. Writing about your average day (you could link this with your maths work on time)

Read the text of [An Average Day at Nethercott Farm](#).

- Say one way in which your average day is different to that on the farm, and one way in which it is quite similar.
- On [My Average Day](#), set out a normal day for you in the same way.
- Mention at least **four** different things for each part of your day.

Farms for City Children



Farms for City Children started in 1974, when Michael Morpurgo – who wrote *Sam's Duck* – and his wife Clare started a charity (an organisation set up to help other people) to make it possible for children who live in towns and cities to spend time on farms out in the countryside.

Farms for City Children own three farms – Nethercott Farm in Devon (which is where Sam goes in the story), Lower Treginnis in Pembrokeshire and Wick Court in Gloucestershire.

Children come from schools in cities all over Britain to live and work on the farms. They learn how to look after farm animals and grow vegetables, use tools and go looking for wild animals and birds. Although the children come with their teachers, Mums and Dads stay at home, so coming to the farms also gives children a chance to feel what is like being away from their families for a few days in a safe and exciting place.

There is loads of lovely food to eat (some of which the children grow and pick and prepare themselves) and at night time, everyone sleeps in dormitories with their friends. But you have to go to sleep nice and early as you get woken up at the crack of dawn to do all the farm jobs that need tackling, from feeding lambs and grooming horses to mucking out pig sties and picking potatoes in the fields.



Questions



Which two people started Farms for City Children?

Which of these definitions of what 'charity' means is the most accurate

a farm for children to visit _____

a club for children's authors _____

a group that try to assist people in some way _____

a place in Pembrokeshire _____

Why do you think the farm trips are for city children and not for children who live in the country?

Find and copy the line in the text that says you do not get your own bedroom when you stay on one of the farms.

What does the expression '*the crack of dawn*' mean?

Look at the photograph at the bottom of the Farms for City Children page.
Explain what you think is going on in the photograph.

Why do you think the girl is wearing the clothes she is in?

How does she seem to be feeling about her time at one of the farms?

‘I would not want to stay at one of the farms as you have to work too hard
and everything is muddy and smelly’. How much do you agree with this?
Explain why you agree or disagree with the statement.

An Average Day at Nethercott Farm

Morning	<p>6am Take the cows to the milking parlour and milk the whole herd.</p> <p>7am Give the horse, calves and pigs their first feed of the day.</p> <p>7.30am Have breakfast in the kitchen – porridge, scrambled eggs and lots of toast.</p> <p>8.00am Let out the ducks, hens and geese so that they can forage for food around the farmyard. Collect eggs from the nest boxes.</p> <p>8.30am Muck out the animals' sheds and put down clean straw.</p> <p>12.00pm Go in for lunch: hot soup, crusty rolls and slices of cheese.</p>
Afternoon	<p>1.30pm Pick up stones from the fields so that they can be sown for crops.</p> <p>3.00pm Visit the livestock market to buy new animals for the farm and to collect feed, straw and other useful things.</p> <p>5.00pm Milk the cows again.</p> <p>6.00pm Have a tea of steaming hot stew with potatoes and vegetables grown on the farm.</p>
Evening	<p>7.00pm Bring the lambing sheep into the barn for the night. Groom the horses. Close up the hen coops and get the ducks and geese back into their pens.</p> <p>9.00pm Have a hot chocolate and get an early night, ready for tomorrow!</p>

My Average Day

Morning	
Afternoon	
Evening	

Answers - Questions

Which two people started Farms for City Children?

Michael Morpurgo and his wife Clare.

Which of these definitions of what 'charity' means is the most accurate

A group that try to assist people in some way.

Why do you think the farm trips are for city children and not for children who live in the country?

Children who live in the country are more likely to see farms and farm animals as they go about their daily lives, they might be able to grow vegetables in their gardens. For some children living in the inner city (where there are no fields for animals to live in or crops to grow) it won't be something they've experienced before.

Find and copy the line in the text that says you do not get your own bedroom when you stay on one of the farms.

'at night time, everyone sleeps in dormitories with their friends'

What does the expression 'the crack of dawn' mean?

It means really early in the morning just as the sun is coming up.

Look at the photograph at the bottom of the Farms for City Children page. Explain what you think is going on in the photograph.

The girl is feeding a lamb from a bottle.

Why do you think the girl is wearing the clothes she is in?

She's wearing overalls so that it doesn't matter if she gets dirty. She's wearing wellies so she can walk through muddy fields.

How does she seem to be feeling about her time at one of the farms?

The girl is smiling and she looks happy to be there feeding the lamb.

'I would not want to stay at one of the farms as you have to work too hard and everything is muddy and smelly'. How much do you agree with this? Explain why you agree or disagree with the statement.

Answers will differ but children should give reasons for why they agree or disagree.

Day 2 – Reading

1. Story time

Go back to <https://youtu.be/ZDT8WUNMjOk>.

Listen to the rest of *Sam's Duck*, from, 'No quacking,' Sam whispered, 'Please!' to the end of the book.

- Who nearly revealed that Sam had the duck on board the coach?

- How do you think the duck would have felt at being smuggled home by Sam? Consider two different emotions it might have had.

2. Reading about characters

Think about the characters in the story. How many can you list?

- Name one character that is sympathetic (that you like and feel warmly about) and one that is unsympathetic.
- Is there a character you particularly like or dislike? Explain why.

Read the profiles of *The Gardener* and *The Red-Faced Man*.

The Gardener



The gardener at Nethercott Farm is cheerful, kind and friendly. He is quite tall, with a long brown work coat and a jersey and a tie. He is a bit bald but has silver hair just like Sam's Grandad. The gardener is in charge of the vegetable patch at the farm, sowing seeds and picking all the fruit, salads and vegetables that Sam and the other children help plant, and which they get to eat in the farmhouse kitchen at teatime. He likes teaching Sam things

about the countryside and knows all about animals too. He helps Sam take care of Francis. Although he probably doesn't think it's a terribly good idea for Sam to actually take Francis home, he does understand how important the duck is to Sam and so he doesn't try to stop him.

The red-faced man at the market



The red-faced man that Sam meets at the market is not a very nice character at all. He wears an old cloth cap over long, straggly grey hair and has a battered and dirty country jacket. His face is red from being angry and a bit mean to the animals. Unlike the gardener who Sam meets on the farm, the red-faced man is really unfriendly and cruel. He sneers at Sam and tells him to get out of his way. He is very rough with the animals at the market, pulling their tails to make them move and even kicking out at them. Sam

realises that the man is thoughtless and uncaring so he buys the duck to stop the him taking it home and killing it for his dinner.

Day 2 – Writing

Writing a character profile

Using the profiles of the gardener and the red-faced man as models, write a profile of Sam.

- Don't forget: in your profile you need to focus on Sam's personality and how he behaves.

Day 3 – Reading

1. Story time

Go back to <https://youtu.be/ZDT8WUNMjOk>.

Listen again to the whole of *Sam's Duck*.

- Does Sam know how to look after a duck properly?
- Do you think that Sam's Grandad is right to say Sam should let the duck go?

2. Reading an information text

Read the information sheet on *Farm Ducks and their care*. Read it through twice and talk to a grown up about all the things you have to do.

- Do ducks sound easy or hard to look after?

Farm Ducks and their Care

There are lots of different sorts of farm ducks in Britain, but all of them need the same sort of care if they are to be happy and healthy.



Aylesbury



Khaki Campbell



Indian Runner



Rouen Clair



Muscovy

What a duck needs

- ❖ Lots of water to play and splash about in. This can be a proper stream or pond, or just an old bath or paddling pool filled up with fresh water each day. Be warned – ducks make their water very dirty and usually splash most of it out of a bath or tub!
- ❖ A sturdy house or enclosure for night time to protect them from predators.
- ❖ Clean straw to sleep on and keep them warm.
- ❖ A hopper (a special feeding bucket) of pellets or corn to eat.
- ❖ Drinking water.
- ❖ Access to grass and soil so that the duck can eat insects and bugs such as slugs and snails. This might be a big field or just a normal garden but ducks can't live inside all the time.
- ❖ Company! Ducks don't like to live on their own so you should always have at least two ducks living together so they stay cheerful.

Day 3 – Writing

Writing instructions

Imagine you have brought a duck back to live at your house. Your Grandad (who lives far away) is not sure that you *really* know what to do to look after it. Write your Grandad a letter.

- Say what sort of duck you've got and what its name is.
- Explain all that you will do to take good care of it.
- Tell your Grandad not to worry.
- Sign off affectionately from you and your duck!

Day 4 – Reading

Go back to <https://youtu.be/ZDT8WUNMjOk>.

Listen again to the section of Sam's Duck that details *how* Sam smuggles Francis back to his home city after he rescues him from the red-faced man.

- Do you think Sam was lucky to get away with it? What sort of things might have given him away?

2. Baby animals

Read the text about *Baby Farm Animals*.

If you rescued an animal like Sam did, imagine which one it would be.

Choose the baby farm animal you would rescue. Use *Getting my Animal Home* to make brief notes about how you would:

- disguise or hide your animal on the journey
- cover up any stinky smells it created
- make up an excuse for any noises it made

Baby Farm Animals



In the picture above you can see a baby donkey, a calf, a young chicken, a lamb, a foal and a piglet.

Which one would **you** choose to try to smuggle home?

You have to think about these problems though or you might get caught!

Even baby farm animals are quite big – and they move around a lot. How will you disguise or hide your animal? How will you keep them from moving about all the time? (*Sing them a lullaby, feed them so they are full and happy, etc.*)

Let's face it, baby farm animals look adorable but they do smell... quite a bit! What will you do to cover up the icky odour while you are smuggling them? You'll need a very nice smell to block out their pong. (*Spray perfume, have a bunch of flowers, use a room spray, etc.*)

Baby farm animals also make plenty of noise. They neigh, moo, cluck, bleat, whinny and oink all the time to get their mums' attentions and let everyone know they are HUNGRY! What excuses could you make for their noises? (*It's coming from a toy, it's on my phone or my i-pad, etc.*)

Getting my baby farm animal home

How I would disguise or hide my animal	How I would cover up its pong	What I would say was making all the noise

Day 4 – Writing

Story writing

Write a short story about how you smuggled your baby animal home. Use the title *On The Day I Smuggled Home a Baby...*

- Use all your ideas from *Getting My Animal Home* to help you.

Day 5 Reading

1. Reading time

Read the short poem *Four Ducks on a Pond* by William Allingham.

- In what ways is the poem like *Sam's Duck*?
- The poet says, 'to remember with tears'. Do you think he means tears of joy or sadness?
- What could make him so happy about what he saw? What could make him so sad?

2. Comparing poems

Read *Night Cat* by Helen Dunmore, a poem about an animal – like Sam's duck – that goes away and leaves a person behind.

- Answer the *Questions* about the poem.

Four Ducks on a Pond



Four ducks on a pond,

A grass bank beyond,
A blue sky of Spring,
White clouds on the wing*;
What a little thing
To remember for years –
To remember with tears.

by William Allingham

From *Read Me First, Poems for Younger Readers for Every Day of the Year*,
Louise Bolongaro,
Macmillan Children's Books, 2003

* **on the wing** – flying past in the breeze, as if they were birds

The Night Cat



She's there by the fence
but you mustn't call out,
like a scoop of night
or a water shadow
tense for flight
she'll twist and go,
don't open your mouth –
the moon's so close
that the stars blow out –
you turn she's gone
leaving that patch
where the moon shone
leaving the empty dress of night
with the stars picked out
and you alone.

by Helen Dunmore

From Read Me First, Poems for Younger Readers for Every Day of the Year,
Louise Bolongaro,
Macmillan Children's Books, 2003

Questions about The Night Cat

1. Which of the words below describe the cat in the poem?
Circle any of the words that you think describe the cat well.

<i>bold</i>	<i>cautious</i>	<i>wary</i>	<i>boisterous</i>	<i>excited</i>	<i>timid</i>
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2. What colour do *a scoop of night* and *a water shadow* make you think of?

3. Why is that a very appropriate colour for this poem?

4. **Rhyming verse** features sets of words at the end of lines that rhyme with one another and has a strong, singsong rhythm when you say it out loud.

Free verse is poetry where there are no or very few rhymes and where the rhythm is not so regular.

Which term best describes *The Night Cat*, **rhyming verse** or **free verse**?

5. The gap between *you turn* and *she's gone* on line 10 is not a mistake. The poet deliberately put it there. Why do you think she wanted a gap between those words?

6. How does the person in the poem feel at the start of the poem? How do they feel at the end? What has caused the change?

Day 5 – Writing

Finish writing your story then spend time editing it. Remember to include all our usual must haves and particularly check your spellings.

Answers - Questions about The Night Cat

1. Which of the words below describe the cat in the poem?
Circle any of the words that you think describe the cat well.

bold *cautious* *wary* *boisterous* *excited* *timid*

2. What colour do *a scoop of night* and *a water shadow* make you think of?

Answers may vary – maybe dark blue or another dark colour

3. Why is that a very appropriate colour for this poem?

Answer should reflect what the children said above, e.g. dark blue because the sky is very dark blue at night-time.

4. **Rhyming verse** features sets of words at the end of lines that rhyme with one another and has a strong, singsong rhythm when you say it out loud.

Free verse is poetry where there are no or very few rhymes and where the rhythm is not so regular.

Which term best describes *The Night Cat*, **rhyming verse** or **free verse**?

Free verse, there are some rhymes but there isn't a regular rhythm.

5. The gap between *you turn* and *she's gone* on line 10 is not a mistake. The poet deliberately put it there. Why do you think she wanted a gap between those words?

Answers will vary but might indicate something like: to show that there's a pause as the watcher of the cat turns round very slowly.

6. How does the person in the poem feel at the start of the poem? How do they feel at the end?
What has caused the change?

At the beginning the person is fascinated by the cat and excited to see it. At the end they seem to be sad and lonely. They might be feeling like this because the cat has gone.