

# The Yellow Train



## Question Book:

Year 6, pages 10-11

## Author / Source:

www.telegraph.co.uk

## Genre:

Non-fiction — travel article

## Cross-curricular links:

- Geography (the Pyrenees)
- Art (Charles Rennie Mackintosh)
- Science (circuit diagrams)

## Introduction

Officially opened to the public in 1909, the Yellow Train remains a popular tourist attraction in the south of France. This travel article uses poetic and imaginative descriptions to recreate the character and charm of the Yellow Train, whilst delivering useful factual information to readers. Before reading the article, show pupils some images of the Pyrenees and ask them if they would like to go there.

## Answers

1. E.g. Because the train isn't like modern trains, so it's like going back in time.
2. E.g. A symphony is where all the different instruments in an orchestra feature in a piece of music. I think the author is saying that the Yellow Train's surroundings are made up of lots of different natural features.
3. b. a metaphor
4. a. c. to inform      b. E.g. Because it contains facts which tell the reader about the train journey.
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Different, because the newspapers that I've read usually talk about current affairs, not travel. They also don't use as much descriptive language. OR E.g. Similar, because it is a non-fiction text that gives information about something.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because the article makes a journey on the Yellow Train sound like an amazing experience, for example the author calls it a "magical trip". OR E.g. No, because I don't like heights and the article describes part of the train journey as being like "the roof of the world".

## Extra Activities

- Split the class into groups. Ask each group to underline examples of descriptive language in the extract (e.g. "magical trip", "tumultuous scenery"). As a class, discuss the effect of this language on the reader. Compile this descriptive language into a class display to help pupils with their own creative writing.
- Get pupils to imagine they are going on a train journey to an amazing place (either real or fictional). They should write their own travel article about the trip, making the scenery sound as attractive as possible.
- Show pupils a map of Europe and ask them to use the introduction in the Question Book to locate the Pyrenees. Ask pupils to research how the range was formed, the climate and popular tourist locations and activities. Pupils should use their research to create a tourist leaflet for the Pyrenees.
- Charles Rennie Mackintosh was a famous Scottish artist and architect, born in 1868. He moved to the south of France in the 1920s and lived in a town called Port-Vendres. Get pupils to research Mackintosh's watercolours of Port-Vendres. Pupils should consider his use of colour and shape, then create a watercolour painting of their own in a similar style.
- Explain to pupils that the Yellow Train is powered by electricity. Show pupils an image of a simple electric circuit, then ask them to write a set of instructions describing how to set one up. Pupils should then swap their work with a partner and advise each other on how it could be improved.