Modelled reading – *The time machine*

Model the QAR process for students and include pre-reading and post-reading questions.

**Before reading**

**On your own**

From the title, what can you predict this story will be about?

**Author and you**

What do you already know about this topic that can help connect you to the topic or the story?

**During reading**

(Square brackets are used around text highlighted in blue)

**Extract**

'I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both hands, and went off with a thud. The laboratory got hazy and went dark. Mrs Watchett came in and walked, apparently without seeing me, towards the garden door. I suppose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came like the turning out of a lamp, and in another moment came to-morrow. The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter. To-morrow night came black, then day again, night again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur filled my ears, and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my mind.'

Wells, HG 1895, *The time machine*, Planet eBook

**Author and you**

**Extract:** 'I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both hands, and went off with a thud.'

**Question:** What does the phrase 'I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both hands' suggest about the narrator's frame of mind?

**Extension:** Think about times you have gripped something or gritted your teeth – anticipating something with some degree of anxiety or not knowing what to expect (eg extreme ride at a theme park).
Right there

Extract: 'The laboratory got hazy and went dark. [Mrs Watchett] came in and [walked], apparently without seeing me, towards the [garden door].'

Question: [Who] [walked] through the room to the [garden door]?

Extension: Often the words in the question will be directly taken from the text. The answer is Mrs Watchett.

On your own

Extract: 'I suppose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket.'

Question: What figure of speech is the phrase 'like a rocket'? How effective is it used in this context?

Extension: Which figure of speech compares two items using the words 'like' or 'as'? The answer is simile. You should know this from prior learning. To comment on how effective it is, visualise Mrs Watchett moving around the room. Comment on the effect of the words shooting and rocket and whether you think this is a good description.

Author and you

Extract: 'The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter.'

Question: What feeling did the author want to create by using these descriptions? 'The laboratory grew faint and hazy, then fainter and ever fainter.'

Extension: Focus on the words in the quote: faint, hazy, fainter, ever fainter. This is a gradual increase in how unclear the room is becoming. Can you relate this to a time when you felt faint, were moving really fast or felt dizzy?

Right there

Extract: 'An eddying murmur filled my ears, and a strange, dumb confusedness [descended on my mind].'

Question: Describe what [descended on] the [mind] of the narrator as a result of the fast movement.

Extension: Look for any key words in the question which might be in the text, [descended on] the [mind]. The answer is 'dumb confusedness'.
After reading

Author and you

What do you think will happen next?

Direct students to read the following section of text independently and to answer the questions that follow.

Suggest to students that for every question they are asked, they should consider what type of question it is. This should help them to think about where they might find the answer.

Extract

'I am afraid I cannot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like that one has upon a switchback* – of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a black wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory had been destroyed and I had come into the open air. I had a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darknesses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous colour like that of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.'

*switchback - a rollercoaster; a zigzag railway with high ascents and descents

Wells, HG 1895, The time machine, Planet eBook
QAR: question–answer relationships

Right there

The narrator of this story:
☐ is recounting a story they heard from someone else
☐ is recounting a story from their own experience

The main sense of movement experienced by the narrator is one of:
☐ speed
☐ slowness
☐ spinning
☐ flickering.

The celestial body that the author witnessed moving through its quarters was:
☐ a star
☐ the moon
☐ the sun.

Think and search

The best adjective to describe the feeling of the narrator in re-telling this account is:
☐ peculiar
☐ painful
☐ wonderful
☐ horrible.

Any of these answers could be correct, but will need to be justified.

Author and you

The topic of the passage was time travel. If time travel was ever possible, what do you think would be some benefits for society? Variety of possible student responses.

Author and you

Which descriptive phrase did you like the best? Explain why. Variety of possible student responses.

On my own

Which of the following quotes from the text is a metaphor?
☐ 'night followed day like the flapping of a black wing'
☐ 'the sun hopping swiftly across the sky'
☐ 'the slowest snail that ever crawled'
☐ 'the sun became a streak of fire'.