

How to Train Your Dragon: Chapter One

Activity 1

Read Chapter 1 of 'How to Train Your Dragon,' by Cressida Cowell. A link to an audiobook recording is also available. Once you have completed the chapter, answer the questions below in order to check your understanding of what you have read.

1) Where is the story set?

- a. Norway
- b. Berk**
- c. Iceland

2) Hiccup must take part in a 'Dragon Initiation Programme.' What does the word 'initiation' mean?

- a. a ceremony at which a crown is formally placed on the head of a new king or queen
- b. the act of becoming a member of a group, often by completing certain tasks**
- c. the process of getting older

3) How many boys take part in 'The Dragon Initiation Programme'?

- a. Twelve
- b. Ten**
- c. Six

4) The adjective 'bleak' means:

- a. expecting good things to happen or something to be successful
- b. not giving any reason to have hope / cold and unpleasant**
- c. (of land or soil) not good enough for plants to grow on it

5) What is the name of the soldier in charge of teaching 'Dragon Initiation'?

- a. Stoick the Vast
- b. Gobber the Belch**
- c. Horrendous Haddock the Third

6) Hiccup is the son of Chief Stoick the Vast. According to Viking custom, as heir and progenitor, Hiccup will:

- a. Become the tribe's leader when his father dies**
- b. Become an advisor to the new leader
- c. Be forced to leave his home in order to make way for the new leader

7) What is the first part of the boy's test?

- a. They must train their dragon to fight
- b. They must learn to ride a dragon
- c. They must catch their own dragon**

8) The boys have to climb a cliff to reach the dragon caves. What are they told to take with them?

- a. A sword
- b. **A basket**
- c. Fire resistant clothing

9) Why is winter a good time to complete the first part of the test?

- a. Dangerous adult dragons are away hunting
- b. **Dragons hibernate (sleep) during winter**
- c. Dragons have less energy during winter and are thus less ferocious

10) If the boys pass the first test they will be on their way to becoming "Viking warriors." If they fail, they will probably end up "breakfasting with Oden in Valhalla." Who was Oden to the Vikings?

- a. the god of thunder
- b. the goddess of spring
- c. **the king of the gods**

Activity 2

Draw a picture of Hiccup at the end of this chapter and add a thought bubble. What must Hiccup be thinking at this point in the novel?



←
Hiccup
Horrendous
Haddock
the
Third

Possible answers...

- What if I return empty handed?
Everyone will laugh at me
- What if I'm mortally wounded
trying to catch a dragon?
- I can't believe I'm going to see
so many dragons up close.
- I'm both nervous and excited.
- I feel sick with worry.
- As the son of the Chief, there is
so much pressure for me to
succeed.
- I'm more brain power than
muscle power.

Stretch & Challenge:

Re-read this passage from the opening of Chapter 1. How does Cowell use language to create a sense of hopelessness and futility?

Long ago, on the wild and windy isle of Berk, a smallish Viking with a longish name stood up to his ankles in snow.

Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third, the Hope and Heir to the Tribe of the Hairy Hooligans, had been feeling slightly sick ever since he woke up that morning.

Ten boys, including Hiccup, were hoping to become full members of the Tribe by passing the Dragon Initiation Program. They were standing on a bleak little beach at the bleakest spot on the whole bleak island. A heavy snow was falling.

Possible answers:

- The description of Hiccup standing 'up to his ankles in snow' suggests he is out of his depth in the situation he is facing. This is reinforced by the reference to his 'longish name.' It suggests he may be of noble birth and thus be expected to lead when he comes of age.
- The adjectives 'wild' and 'windy' to describe the isle of Berk suggest it is a volatile and challenging place to live.
- We can infer from the description of Hiccup 'feeling slightly sick ever since he woke up,' that he is very nervous about the challenge that awaits him.
- The adjective 'bleak' is repeated to emphasise how empty and miserable the beach is. It would be exposed and empty of vegetation. This 'bleak' setting is symbolic of the emptiness and misery felt by Hiccup.