

# The Iron Man

## Guided Reading Discussion Points and Activities

### Chapter 1: The Coming of the Iron Man

**(2b – Rex Retriever)** ‘Nobody knew the Iron Man had fallen.’ Why not?

**(2d – Iggy Inference)** Do you think the Iron Man is a good or a bad character? Explain why.

**(2e – Victor Vocabulary)** ‘They watched the immense man striding to and fro over the rocks below.’ What does the word ‘immense’ tell us about the Iron Man?

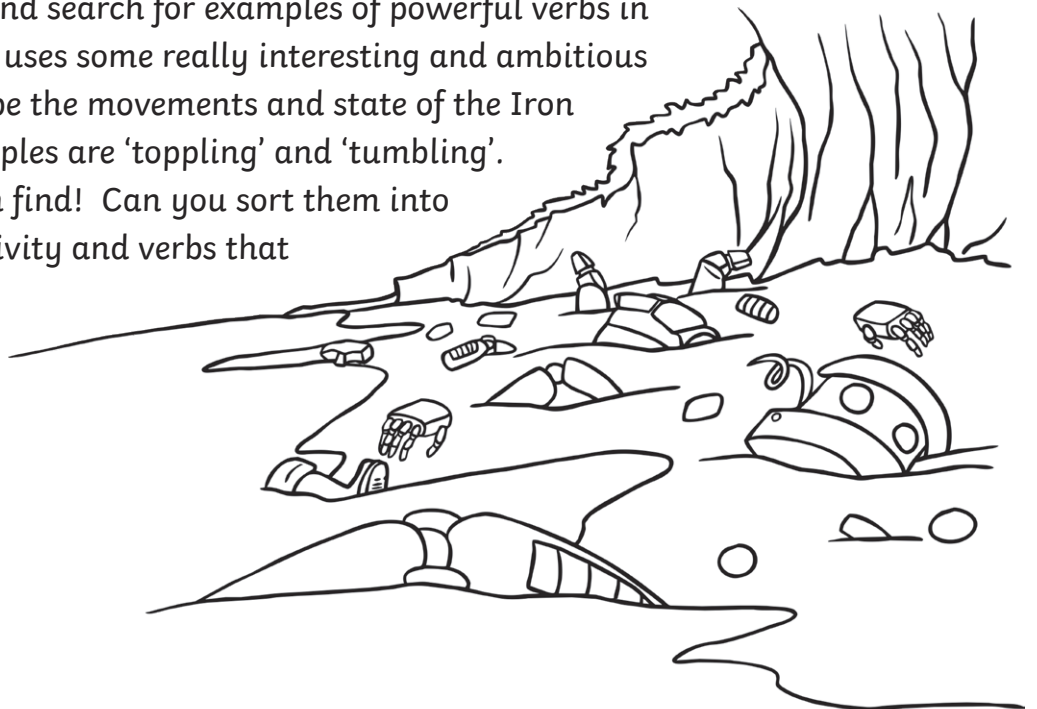
**(2g – Arlo the Author)** Why do you think Hughes uses so many similes to describe the Iron Man?

**(2e – Cassie Commentator)** Ted Hughes was a poet as well as a storyteller. Can you find any evidence to suggest he has thought carefully about the sound of the words and phrases he has chosen?

(Example: ‘CRASH! CRASH! CRASH!’)

#### Follow-up Reading Activities

1. Draw and label a ‘before and after’ diagram of the Iron Man. Start by drawing an iron giant at the top of the cliff, using the description at the beginning of the chapter to help you, e.g. ‘His great iron head, shaped like a dustbin but as big as a bedroom’. Then draw a picture to show the Iron Man after the fall, with his body parts scattered all over the beach. Use evidence from the text to carefully label your diagrams. Compare your work with a partner’s. What similarities and differences do you notice?
2. Be a ‘Word Detective’ and search for examples of powerful verbs in Chapter 1. Ted Hughes uses some really interesting and ambitious action words to describe the movements and state of the Iron Man. Some good examples are ‘toppling’ and ‘tumbling’. See how many you can find! Can you sort them into verbs that describe activity and verbs that describe stillness?



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## Guided Reading Discussion Points and Activities

### Chapter 2: The Return of the Iron Man

**(2b – Rex Retriever)** Why does Hogarth feel strange at the beginning of Chapter 2?

**(2d – Iggy Inference)** Hogarth's father believes him immediately. Why do you think this is?

**(2c – Summarising Sheba)** In your own words, summarise what happens in Chapter 2: The Return of the Iron Man.

**(2g – Arlo the Author)** When he describes the trap, Hughes uses a mixture of short and long sentences. What effect does this have?

**(2e – Cassie Commentator)** Ted Hughes was a poet as well as a storyteller. Can you find any evidence of 'poetic' vocabulary choices, e.g. 'his eyes burned from red to purple'.

#### Follow-up Reading Activities

1. Ted Hughes keeps the moment where Hogarth tells his father about the Iron Man very brief. Read this section at the beginning of the chapter and think carefully about what this conversation might have been like. How might Hogarth have introduced the subject and how might his father have responded? Use your understanding of the story and characters so far to write your own version of this conversation, using dialogue. Remember to use speech marks accurately and start a new line for a new speaker.
2. 'Only Hogarth felt suddenly sorry. He felt guilty. It was he, after all, who had lured the Iron Man into the pit.' Imagine you are Hogarth. You go home after trapping the Iron Man and write a diary entry. Try to summarise the key events in your own words, as you remember back over what happened that day. Make sure you include our feelings and how they change – perhaps from fear, to excitement and triumph, and finally to guilt.



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## Guided Reading Discussion Points and Activities

### Chapter 3: What's to be Done with the Iron Man?

**(2b – Rex Retriever)** What began to happen on top of the hill where the Iron Man was buried?

**(2d – Iggy Inference)** How do you think the little boy felt when he saw the 'enormous iron hand'? Why won't Hogarth's father listen to his idea this time?

**(2a – Victor Vocabulary)** Find and copy a word from the end of this chapter that shows that the Iron Man thought that the metal objects were delicious.

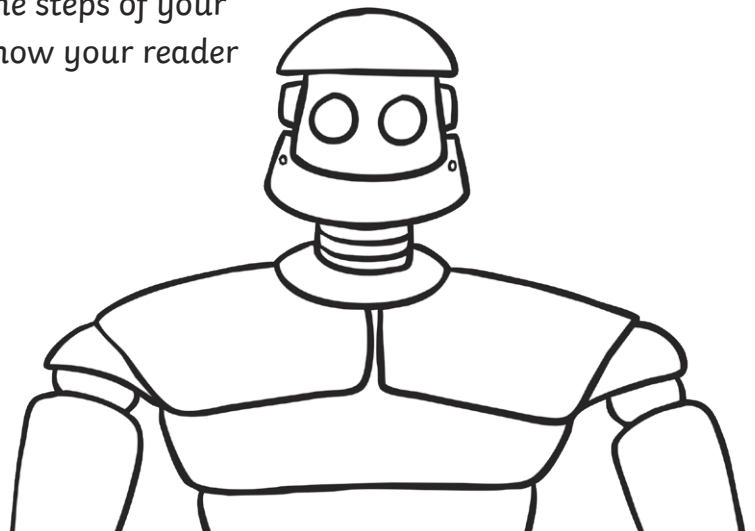
**(2g – Arlo the Author)** How does Ted Hughes use language to show that the Iron Man is happy?

**(2e – Cassie Commentator)** Do you think Ted Hughes prefers Hogarth's first or second idea? How do you know? Which idea do you prefer and why?

**(2e – Predicting Pip)** Based on what you know about the Iron Man, what do you think will happen next in the story?

#### Follow-up Reading Activities

1. Look back at everything the Iron Man has eaten so far in the story, particularly at the end of Chapter 3. Design your own menu for an Iron Man Restaurant. Include plenty of delicious choices, e.g. 'a greasy black stove' and remember to include a description too, e.g. tangy, chewy metal drizzled with a generous coating of oily grease, served with a side order of staples and drawing pins. Think about your layout and presentation too!
2. What would you do with the Iron Man? Hogarth has come up with and tried out two different plans with very different outcomes. Your task is to create your own plan for what to do with the Iron Man. Would you try to capture and control him like Hogarth and the farmers do in Chapter 2, or would you find a way to keep him happy and busy like in Chapter 3? Use bullet points to show the steps of your plan, and include a labelled diagram to show your reader exactly what is going to happen.



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## Guided Reading Discussion Points and Activities

### Chapter 4: The Space Being and the Iron Man

**(2b – Rex Retriever)** What is the ‘strange news’ that everybody is talking about at the beginning of Chapter 4?

**(2d – Iggy Inference)** Why did the people of Earth tremble and weep and pray to God?

**(2g – Arlo the Author)** Why do you think Hughes chooses to repeat the word ‘terribly’ so often as he describes the space-bat-angel-dragon landing on Australia?

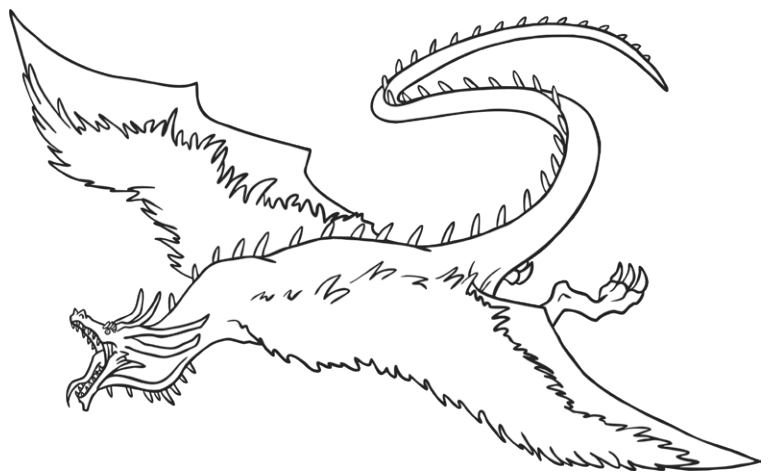
**(2e – Cassie Commentator)** How do you feel when you read about the space-bat-angel-dragon?

**(2h – Cassie Commentator)** Why has Ted Hughes used a mixture of lowercase and uppercase letters in the words BIGger, Grew and NEARer?

**(2e – Predicting Pip)** What do you think the Iron Man will do when he goes against the monster from space?

#### Follow-up Reading Activities

1. Draw a character sketch of the space-angel-bat-dragon. Use evidence from the story to help you decide how it should look. Label your drawing with quotations from the text, e.g. ‘vast indescribably terrible eyes’. Compare your drawing with a partner’s. What similarities and differences do you notice?
2. Plan and write a newspaper report about the space-angel-bat-dragon’s landing in Australia. Imagine you are a reporter in a neighbouring country, and have seen events unfolding before your eyes. Use a short, snappy headline to get your reader’s attention, and then use evidence from the story to describe the terrifying events you have seen. steps of your plan, and include a labelled diagram to show your reader exactly what is going to happen.



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## Guided Reading Discussion Points and Activities

### Chapter 5: The Iron Man's Challenge

**(2b – Rex Retriever)** 'There was no time to be wasted.' Can you explain why?

**(2d – Iggy Inference)** Why does the space-bat-angel-dragon laugh when the Iron Man challenges him to a test of strength?

**(2a – Victor Vocabulary)** Why did Ted Hughes describe the furnace that the Iron Man stretched himself out on as 'raging'?

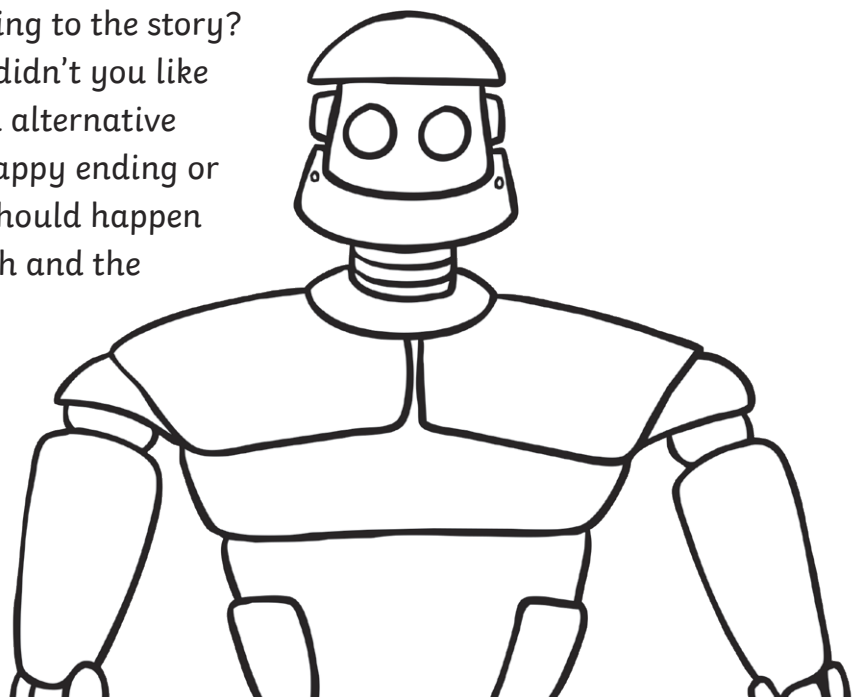
**(2g – Arlo the Author)** The Iron Man and the space-bat-angel-dragon talk to each other a great deal towards the end. Why do you think there is so much talking?

**(2e – Cassie Commentator)** What message do you think Ted Hughes is trying to send to his readers about fighting and war? How does he use his characters to do this?

**(2h – Cassie Commentator)** How have your feelings about the Iron Man changed from the very beginning of the story?

#### Follow-up Reading Activities

1. The Iron Man is very brave in the story. He is 'terribly afraid' of going into the flames again, but summons all his strength to win the terrible contest in order to save the people of Earth. Can you think of a time you have been brave, or challenged yourself to do something that frightened you? Write about what happened, how you summoned the strength to go through with it and how you felt afterwards.
2. Did you think this was a good ending to the story? What did you like about it? What didn't you like about it? Plan and write your own alternative ending for this story. It can be a happy ending or a sad ending. What do you think should happen to the Iron Man, the people of Earth and the space-bat-angel-dragon?





# Iron Man

## Guided Reading Discussion Points and Activities Answers

### Chapter 1: The Coming of the Iron Man

(2b – Rex Retriever) **Nobody knew that the Iron Man had fallen because it was night time.**

(2d – Iggy Inference) **Accept a response of 'good' or 'bad' that uses evidence from the text, e.g. I think that the Iron Man is a bad character because he uses his finger and jabs one of the gulls.**

(2e – Victor Vocabulary) **The word 'immense' tells us that the Iron Man is exceptionally large.**

(2g – Arlo the Author) **Ted Hughes uses lots of similes to help the reader understand what each body part looks like and how it moves.**

(2e – Cassie Commentator) **Ted Hughes uses onomatopoeia to describe how the body parts move, e.g. CRASH. He also uses repetition of words, e.g. 'hop, hop, hop'.**

### Chapter 2: The Return of the Iron Man

(2b – Rex Retriever) **Hogarth feels strange because he feels like he is being watched and that he is not alone.**

(2d – Iggy Inference) **Perhaps Hogarth's father believes him because the Iron Giant has been there before and his father may have seen him. (Some children may refer to the title of this chapter.)**

(2c – Summarising Sheba) **Listen to pupil's summaries.**

(2g – Arlo the Author) **The long sentences help the reader to visualise the hole and the short sentences create a sense of tension and excitement within the reader.**

(2e – Cassie Commentator) **Ted Hughes uses onomatopoeia, e.g. 'Clink, clink, clink' and similes e.g. 'like a big lorry grinding its gears on a steep hill'.**

### Chapter 3: What's to be Done with the Iron Man?

(2b – Rex Retriever) **The land began to shake on top of the hill where the Iron Man was buried.**

(2d – Iggy Inference) **The little boy felt both amazed and terrified when he saw the 'enormous iron hand'.**

**Hogarth's father won't listen to his idea this time because it is dangerous and he is worried that Hogarth will be killed by the Iron Man.**

(2a – Victor Vocabulary) **'delicacies'**

(2g – Arlo the Author) **Ted Hughes uses colours to show that the Iron Man is feeling happy. For example, 'His eyes glowing a soft blue' and 'His body gleamed blue...'**

(2e – Cassie Commentator) **Listen to pupil's responses and encourage them to find examples from the text to support their answers, such as:**

**I think that Ted Hughes prefers Hogarth's second idea as he describes it with more energy. I prefer the second idea too because the Iron Man is happy as a result - it says, 'It was an Iron Man's heaven'.**

(2e – Predicting Pip) **Listen to pupil's predictions.**

### Chapter 4: The Space-Being and the Iron Man

(2b – Rex Retriever) **The 'strange news' is that one of the stars in the sky is changing; it is getting bigger.**

(2d – Iggy Inference) **The people are afraid and they want God to save them from the space-bat-angel-dragon that has landed on Australia.**

(2h – Cassie Commentator) **Ted Hughes has used a mixture of lowercase and uppercase letters to show that the space-bat-angel is growing, just like the words get larger and larger.**

(2g – Arlo the Author) **Ted Hughes repeats the word 'terribly' in order to emphasise and exaggerate how scary and awful the space-bat-angel-dragon is.**

(2e – Cassie Commentator) **Listen to pupils' responses and encourage them to refer to the text in their answers.**

(2e – Predicting Pip) **Listen to pupil's predictions.**

## **Chapter 5: The Iron Man's Challenge**

(2b – Rex Retriever) **'There was not time to be wasted' means that they had to act quickly as they were running out to time. The space-bat-angel-dragon had only given them a week to prepare a feast.**

(2d – Iggy Inference) **The space-bat-angel-dragon laughs because the Iron Man is so much smaller than him and does not seem like a threat to him.**

(2a – Victor Vocabulary) **Ted Hughes describes the furnace as raging to show that it is fierce and angry and really hurting the Iron Man.**

(2g – Arlo the Author) **There is so much talking because they are challenging each other.**

(2e – Cassie Commentator) **Listen to pupil's responses. They may refer to the fact that:**

- **bravery and courage will help win a war even against a larger enemy;**
- **if people feel happy and relaxed, they are less likely to fight.**

(2h – Cassie Commentator) **Listen to pupil's responses.**