



TalkforWriting™

Talk for Writing Home-school booklet

The Ultimate Guide to Unicorns & Flying Horses

by Pie Corbett



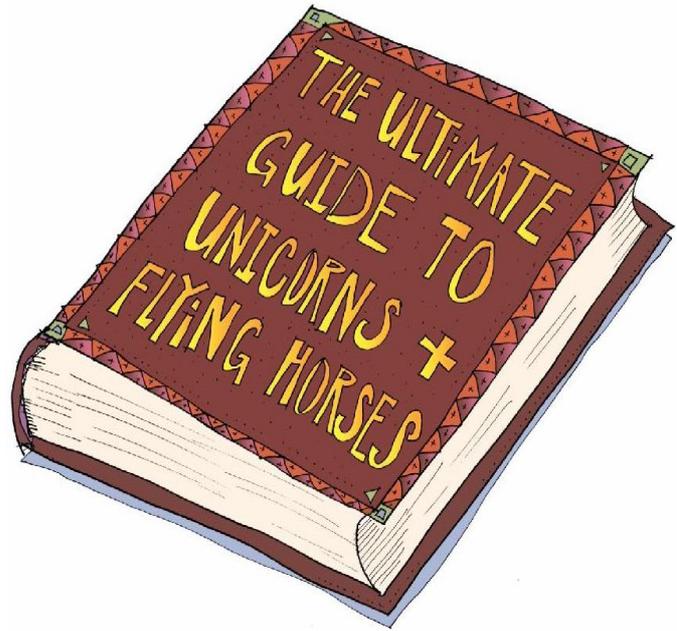
© Copyright of Pie Corbett and Talk for Writing 2021.

Permissions: Sharing the web link / URL to where this booklet sits on the Talk for Writing website with colleagues and parents is encouraged, but no part of this publication should be re-uploaded elsewhere online, reproduced or altered without permission.

www.talk4writing.com



World famous, flying-horse specialist Pie Corbett is putting together The Ultimate Guide to Unicorns and Flying Horses. Pie is well-known as a unicorn whisperer and has researched the unicorns of Asia as well as varieties of frost unicorns living in Iceland and other wintry places.



Your job, should you accept this mission, is to provide Pie with another entry for his book by writing about a type of unicorn or flying horse.

Information with a touch of 'faction'

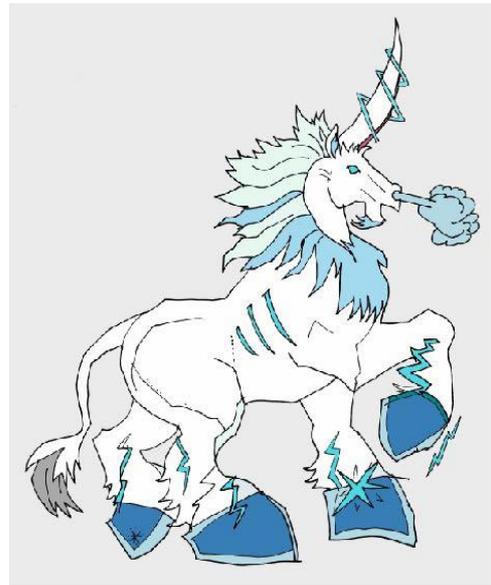
*In this workbook, we are going to be writing an information text about a type of unicorn or flying horse. Of course, these are mythological figures. Even though this is a non-fiction genre of writing, we can still be inventive and creative. We like calling it **FACTION** because the form fits information about facts but the content is fiction.*

To get us started, here is a model of a fictional information text about a variety of unicorn. As you are listening, you might want to think about which type of unicorn or flying horse that you will write about. Have a read below and listen to me read it aloud here:

<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/frost-unicorn/s-8LzGBGXpmTI>

The Frost Unicorn

There are many different breeds of unicorn and one of the most intriguing is the frost unicorn. These unicorns live in cold countries where there is snow on the ground for most of the year. Very little is known about this variety because it camouflages itself so well that it is rarely seen. However, people are interested in discovering more because unicorns are said to be magical creatures that may be able to grant wishes.



Would you be able to recognise a frost unicorn if you saw one? In fact, they are very similar to the large majority of unicorns. Like most unicorns, they have a long horn, the body of a horse and excellent eyesight. Typically, they are an amazing snow-white colour which glitters as their hair catches the sunlight. However, a few have been spotted which are a frost-blue colour with tinges of green in their mane. This helps them to blend in amongst forest vegetation. Furthermore, they have extraordinary teeth made of diamonds. Curiously, their tails consist of molten-silver hair which is stronger than steel. The main feature of the frost unicorn is that it can freeze anything that it touches and this is often used as a form of defence. Amazingly, they scatter flakes of snow-glitter as they move along. From a distance, they appear to be rather like a small, glowing snowstorm. They are almost indistinguishable from a Pegasus.

Baby frost unicorns have rainbow-coloured horns, fairy-small wings and webbed, silver hooves. Their tails are sun-golden, their eyes are buttercup-yellow and emit rays of translucent, gleaming light which enables them to see in the dark. The babies stay with their parents until they can fly, care for themselves and are able to foretell the future. The ability to see into the future has

meant that many species have managed to adapt to man-made environments and avoid destruction.

No one actually knows where frost unicorns live during the summer months when snow is scarce. It is thought that they hibernate in the North Pole, possibly buried beneath ice caps. However, in the winter they can be seen more easily as they often hide in northern forests. If you wish to see a frost unicorn, then you should wait by a moonlit pool when the snow is falling. However, you will need to keep quite still and be patient. Remember to take some icicles with you as frost unicorns love to lick ice as it keeps their body temperature stable.

Not much is known about how the frost unicorn spends its time. It is believed that they make faithful companions to wood sprites. They have been seen flying above clouds, scattering sun-golden glitter onto magical pools. These graceful creatures are even-tempered but expect to be treated with respect. They seem to be solitary but have been known to rescue elves from battle. The Doctor, the well-known Time Lord, has said that 'unicorns are the light of the universe'.

Are frost unicorns dangerous? Many people believe that they are because they have the ability to enchant anyone who sees them. Children and adults have disappeared after seeing a frost unicorn and it is believed that they have been tempted into riding a unicorn. This is considered to be most dangerous as unicorns may be able to take children into the fairy world from where there be no return. Unfortunately, if you touch a frost unicorn, you run the risk of being turned to ice! This is especially dangerous if the unicorn feels threatened. So, anyone curious enough to track a frost unicorn should be very careful. You have been warned!

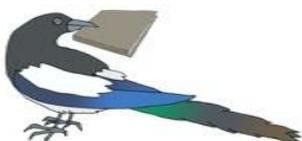
Pie Corbett, Unicorn Whisperer



Activity 1: Match the vocabulary to its definition

You might not know all of the vocabulary that is in our model text. Don't worry as this activity will help! Match the word to the correct definition and then check at the end of the booklet on page 25 to see if you have worked them out.

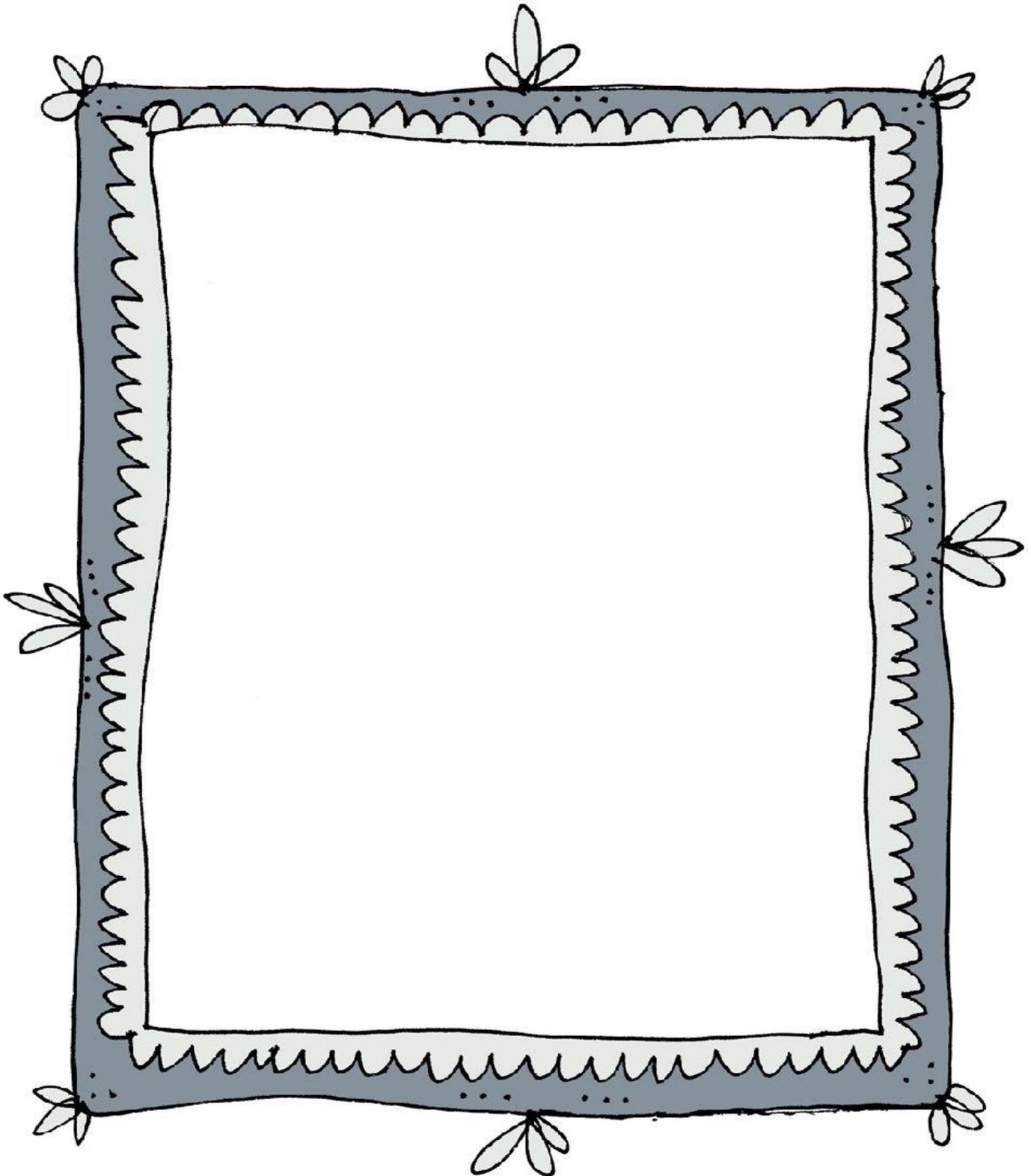
Word	Definition
breed	a touch of a colour
camouflages	interested
grant	not a lot
tinge	sleep during winter
blend	see-through
vegetation	protection
defence	to put a spell on someone
environments	give
scarce	not likely to change
hibernate	mix together
stable	plants, trees and flowers
enchant	type of
tempt	make difficult to see
translucent	surroundings
curious	make someone want to do something



You could magpie some of these words and use them in your own writing later on.

Activity 2: Draw a frost unicorn

In the box below, draw an adult frost unicorn with its baby and label them with all the descriptive information taken from the writing.



Activity 3: Where do frost unicorns live?

Mark the spot where you think frost unicorns are most likely to live. Give three reasons for your answer. One has been done for you.



Reason 1 - Frost unicorns are likely to live in the Snow Hills because they are close to the Blue Pool, near the town and the sea is nearby.

Reason 2 -

Reason 3 -

Reason 4 -

Activity 4: Unicorn's New Year Wishes

All unicorns have the ability to grant wishes once a year. They are able to do this on New Year's Eve as long as there is a full moon. Here are some impossible and magical wishes that different people have made. Add a dozen (12) more wishes of your own. Think of impossible things you could do and extend the ideas.

I wish I could tap dance my way across the Grand Canyon on a high wire made of silk.

I wish I could control the weather and create thunderstorms with lightning like golden anacondas.

I wish I could jump over the Eifel Tower and leapfrog Everest.

Wish 1 -

Wish 2 -

Wish 3 -

Wish 4 -

Wish 5 -

Wish 6 -

Wish 7 -

Wish 8 -

Wish 9 -

Wish 10 -

Wish 11 -

Wish 12 -

Activity 5: Six things a unicorn can do

Unicorns have special abilities. What 6 amazing things can a storm unicorn do? Think about how a storm unicorn might behave. Try to make the storm unicorn very different to the more friendly frost unicorn. Here is a list of 6 things that frost unicorns do. You can hear me read this list aloud here: <https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/6-things-frost-unicorns/s-J2KukOINhNb>

Six things frost unicorns can do

1. Create snowstorms to hide themselves from predators.
2. Grant a single wish to worthy humans.
3. Freeze anyone who is a threat and touches them.
4. See many miles into the distance with clarity.
5. Fly above the clouds at great speed.
6. Send thought-waves into the minds of trusted humans.



Six things a storm unicorn can do

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Activity 6: Magpie useful words & openers

Are there any words in the frost unicorn report that you would like to add to the word bank below and use in your report? Are there any words that start the sentences or phrases that might be useful for your writing? I have found some and added several extra ones. Can you find any more by reading the text again. There is another text on pages 19-20. Are there any useful words or phrases in that text that you can use when writing?

Words to add on more information	Adverbs to interest the reader	Generalisers	Change of direction	Other helpful words
additionally	amazingly	generally	however	
also	surprisingly	most/many	contrary to popular belief	
furthermore	interestingly	some/a few	on the other hand	
moreover	weirdly	several	perhaps	
it is thought that	curiously	the majority	unfortunately	
the ability to	similarly	the minority	despite ...	
many people believe that	typically	almost all	alternatively	

When you are writing, use this bank of words and phrases. Look back at the model texts to see how they are used in sentences. Of course, you will be inventing your own facts.

Activity 7: Spot the underlying pattern

I have picked out the underlying pattern for you by boxing up the structure. This is just a guide: you could add in extra paragraphs, different sections, diagrams etc.

Type of creature	Frost unicorns
<p>Opening hook – Hook reader to find out more. Fascinating fact for interest.</p>	<p>There are many different breeds of unicorn and one of the most intriguing is the frost unicorn. These unicorns live in cold countries where there is snow on the ground for most of the year. Very little is known about this variety because it camouflages itself so well that it is rarely seen. However, people are interested in discovering more because unicorns are said to be magical creatures that may be able to grant wishes.</p>
<p>Appearance Information about what the creature looks like (plus description of juveniles)</p>	<p>Would you be able to recognise a frost unicorn if you saw one? In fact, they are very similar to the large majority of unicorns. Like most unicorns, they have a long horn, the body of a horse and excellent eyesight. Typically, they are an amazing snow-white colour which glitters as their hair catches the sunlight. However, a few have been spotted which are a frost-blue colour with tinges of green in their mane. This helps them to blend in amongst forest vegetation. Furthermore, they have extraordinary teeth made of diamonds. Curiously, their tails consist of molten-silver hair which is stronger than steel. The main feature of the frost unicorn is that it can freeze anything that it touches and this is often used as a form of defence. Amazingly, they scatter flakes of snow-glitter as they move along. From a distance, they appear to be rather like a small, glowing snowstorm. They are almost indistinguishable from a Pegasus.</p> <p>Baby frost unicorns have rainbow-coloured horns, fairy-small wings and webbed, silver hooves. Their tails are sun-golden, their eyes are buttercup-yellow and emit rays of translucent, gleaming light which enables them to see in the dark. The babies stay with their parents until they can fly, care for themselves and are able to foretell the future. The ability to see into the future has meant that many species have managed to adapt to man-made environments and avoid destruction.</p>
<p>Habitat Information about the area the creature lives in</p>	<p>No one actually knows where frost unicorns live during the summer months when snow is scarce. It is thought that they hibernate in the North Pole, possibly buried beneath ice caps. However, in the winter they can be seen more easily as they often hide in northern forests. If you wish to see a frost unicorn, then you should wait by a moonlit pool when the snow is falling. However, you will need to keep quite still and be patient. Remember to take some icicles with you as frost unicorns love to lick ice as it keeps their body temperature stable.</p>
<p>Behaviour Information about what the creature does</p>	<p>Not much is known about how the frost unicorn spends its time. It is believed that they make faithful companions to wood sprites. They have been seen flying above clouds, scattering sun-golden glitter onto magical pools. These graceful creatures are even-tempered but expect to be treated with respect. They seem to be solitary but have been known to rescue elves from battle. The Doctor, the well-known Time Lord, has said that 'unicorns are the light of the universe'.</p>
<p>Ending Involve the reader</p>	<p>Are frost unicorns dangerous? Many people believe that they are because they have the ability to enchant anyone who sees them. Children and adults have disappeared after seeing a frost unicorn and it is believed that they have been tempted into riding a unicorn. This is considered to be most dangerous as unicorns may be able to take children into the fairy world from where there be no return. Unfortunately, if you touch a frost unicorn, you run the risk of being turned to ice! This is especially dangerous if the unicorn feels threatened. So, anyone curious enough to track a frost unicorn should be very careful. You have been warned!</p>

Activity 8: What additional paragraphs to include

When you write your own entry for the Ultimate Guide, are there any other paragraphs that you might include? Think about what your reader might want to know about.

- What sort of person might read this guide?
- What other things would they be interested in?
- What would someone who wanted a unicorn as a pet be interested in?
- What would an evil unicorn hunter want to know about?
- What would someone who wanted to protect your chosen species be interested in?
- What are their strengths, weaknesses, how would you care for one, should they be hunted, can they perform tricks, do they make safe pets, can they be trained, how do you track one? Etc.

Add your ideas for what other paragraphs you could include here:

Section heading	Key points

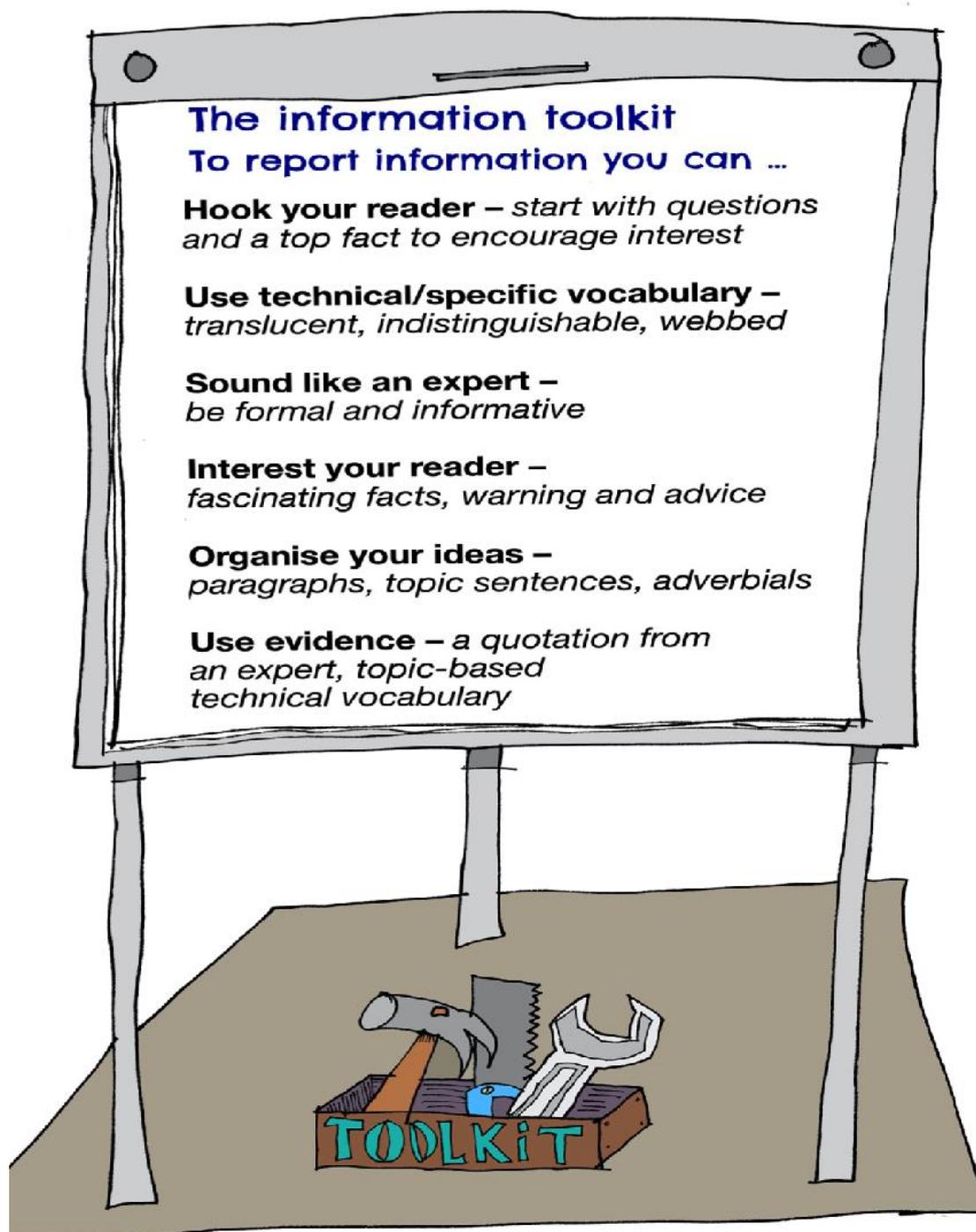
Activity 9: Sort the structure activity

In the first column there is a list of sub-headings for an information report. These are muddled into the wrong order. How would you organise these? Write your suggestion in the second column.

Incorrect structure	Logical structure
Wrapping it up	
Do they make good pets?	
Should they be hunted?	
Strengths	
Behaviour	
Hooking the reader's interest	
Habitat	
How do you trap one?	
Weaknesses	
Description	
Special powers	

Activity 10: Let's Look at the toolkit

Before you start thinking about your own ideas for your species of unicorn, we need to look closely at the text and see what writing tools/tips/tricks the author has used so we can do the same in ours. Here is a toolkit I have made for writing information texts.



Activity 11: New ideas

Now comes the fun part! In role as a unicornologist or flying horse specialist, your challenge is to write an information text about a type of unicorn or flying horse that you have discovered. The choices are endless and I am sure that you already have an idea about the type of flying horse or unicorn that you might write about. To help you, here is a list of suggestions that might inspire you:

The Water Pegasus lives in forests, woods and hedgerows. It is a leafy green colour.

The storm unicorn lives in mountainous regions, distant valleys and cliffs. It is a black and grey.

The river flying horse lives under riverbanks or close to lakes and ponds. It is covered in a salmon's scale, has webbed hooves and uses its wings to swim and fly.

The common town flying horse lives in most town and city areas often hiding in dumpsters and garbage sites. They spit, eat rotten leftovers and can be smelled from a distance.

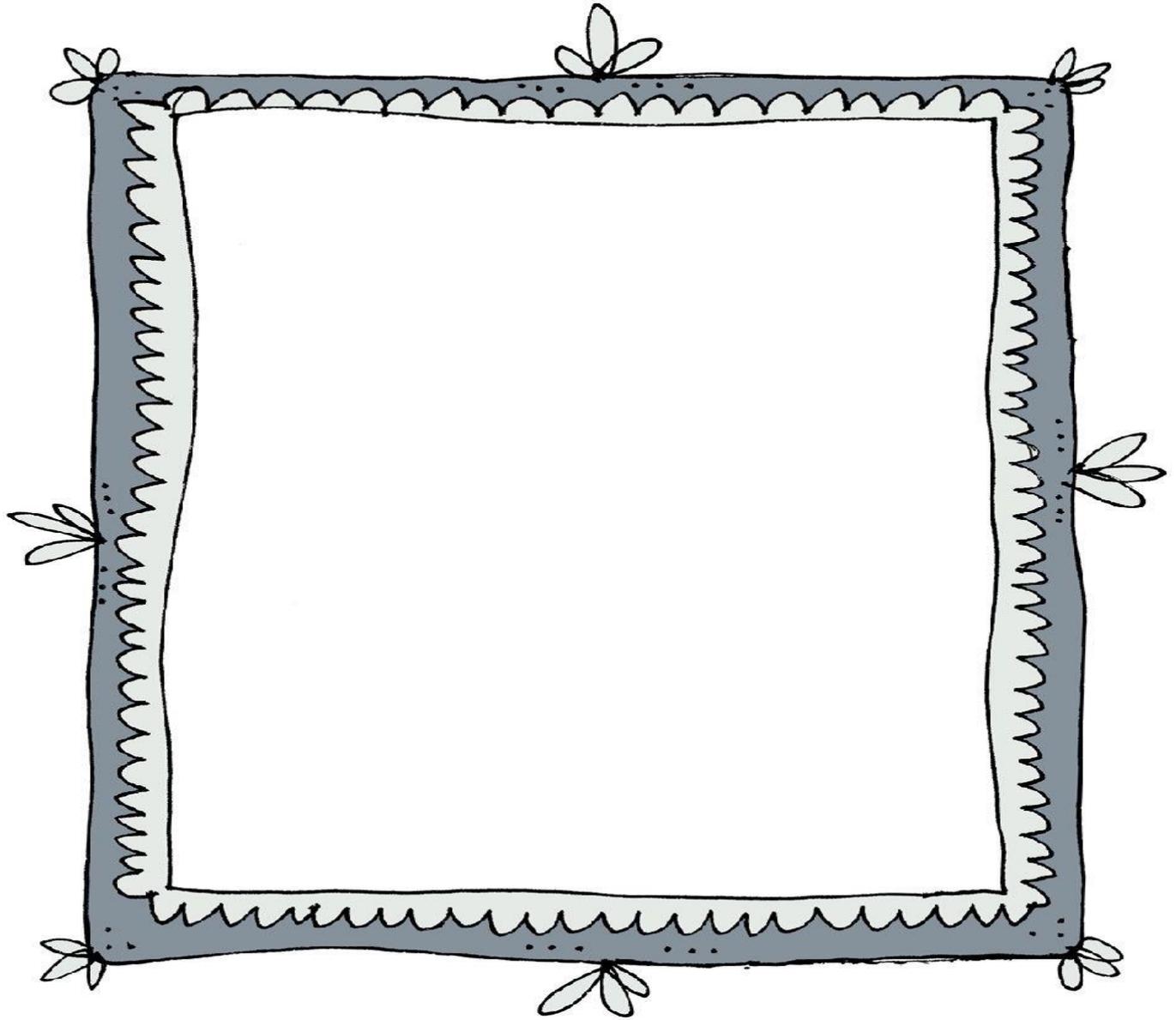
The miniature spotted-winged horse hides in supermarkets where it can easily access food. It is very small, well camouflaged and can change its spots depending on the background, like the chameleon-winged horse.

The tianma is a Chinese winged horse that is found in clouds. They are a mist-grey colour, are excellent flyers and breath fog when threatened.

Now, it is time to make your mind up. Which type of flying horse will you be writing about? Write a couple of sentences to explain which type of unicorn you are going to write about, where they live and what they look like. Use the pattern of the above sentences as a model.

Activity 13: Draw your chosen species of unicorn or flying horse and label

To help you get a real picture of what your flying horse is like, have a go at sketching one. Then label basic information.



Activity 14: Read and raid

Here is an example of an entry from the 'Ultimate Guide to Unicorns and Flying Horses'. Notice what the different paragraphs are about, taking ideas that you might employ in your writing. Also, magpie any useful vocabulary that you can use in your own writing. Have a read below and listen to me read the text aloud here: <https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/water-pegasus/s-21kB8vMkXdf>

The Water Pegasus

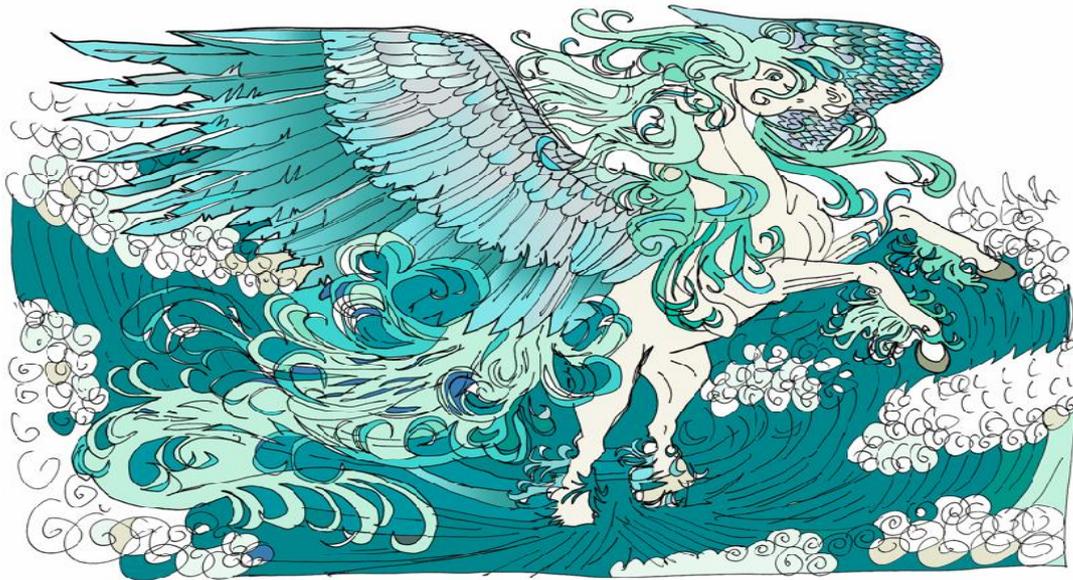
The Water Pegasus is a rare type of flying horse that is found near coastlines. Every weekend, unicornologists gather on cliffs and remote beaches to find out more about these beautiful creatures. During recent lockdown periods, these winged horses have become bold and travelled inland and up rivers. To the delight of many citizens, the Water Pegasus has now been seen in parks taking advantage of empty boating pools and outdoor swimming pools. However, not much is known about the Water Pegasus.

Would you be able to recognise a Water Pegasus if you saw one? Like most winged horses, they have a flowing mane, long tail and powerful wings. The main feature of this fantastic creature is its extraordinary wings which are webbed. They have the ability to fly and swim. Amazingly, they have gills like fish so that they can breathe underwater. This is why they have often been referred to as 'dolphins of the sky'. Up close, you can see their pointed ears, flared nostrils and very bright green eyes. Generally, they are an amazing blue-green colour which means that they are hard to see when swimming but do stand out when flying. The majority have scales under their fur which keep them warm in the water and when flying at an altitude. However, a rare minority are completely covered in golden scales which glimmer in the sunlight.

The Water Pegasus lives on coastlines and cliff areas where they are close to the water. They make their nests out of driftwood and can be seen in rocky places where they rear their young. The nests are hidden on cliffs which means that they are hard to find. Water Pegasi must live near water otherwise their bodies run the risk of overheating. They like to wander up and down deserted beaches, drinking from salt water pools and foraging for rare gemstones that may have been washed ashore. They love flying over the sea where they dip and dive, alongside marine birds.

These shy and wonderful winged horses feed off seaweed which they find on the shoreline as well as plankton and other small fish. They are especially fond of cloudberry but, if they eat too many, they run the risk of turning a strange custard-yellow colour! They can live for long periods of time without feeding. In this way, Pegasi have often been likened to the flying camel which can exist for days without drinking as they store water in their humps. The Pegasus is able to store food as a layer of fat under its scales so that it can last for weeks without eating. This enables it to make long sea journeys to other lands.

To relax, the Water Pegasus collects gemstones and they make collections which are hidden on cliff faces and in rocky caves. These treasure stores have, in the past, been mistaken for the lair of a dragon and this has led to the Water Pegasus being hunted. Adult Water Pegasi enjoy stretching their wings and rising higher and higher on warm thermals. They can be seen floating in the sky, spiraling up and up. At night, they sing like an ethereal choir.



The Water Pegasus is a gentle creature. They are shy but fun-loving and easily interested in anything that glitters! They will only become aggressive if they fear that their young are in danger. Of course, their gentle nature can make them easy prey to predators, such as unicorn hunters who have been known to slaughter these wonderful animals, mistaking them for their horned relatives, the sea unicorn.

Many people believe that the Water Pegasus can grant magical wishes but this has yet to be proved. If you believe that one is living in the local area, it is probably best to keep this as a secret. They enjoy being fed seaweed by hand if you have gained their trust. Remember, though, these are wild creatures so do not try to ride on them as they resent such an intrusion! Let's keep these graceful creatures safe for future generations.

Activity 15: Planning

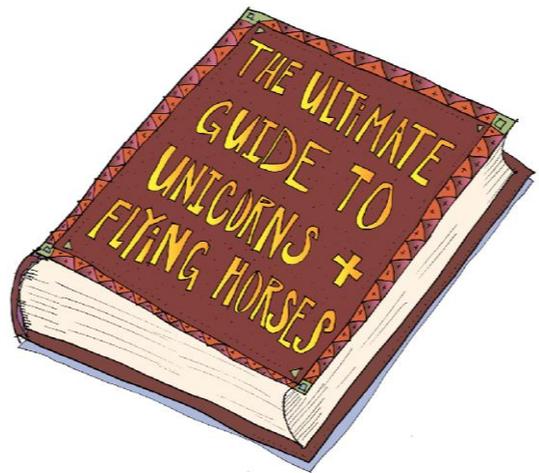
Now you are going to organise your ideas into a boxed-up planner to help structure your writing. Remember, to pick extra topics other than appearance, habitat and diet. I have left four blank sections for extra sections. I have also left the right-hand column blank so you can bullet point in your ideas. Do NOT write the whole text in the right-hand column – use bullet points to list ideas. This is a planner.

Structure of information text	<i>Plan your ideas using bullet points</i>
Type of creature	
Opening hook – to make the reader interested in finding out more. Fascinating fact for interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ...
Habitat Information about the area the creature lives in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ...
Appearance Information about what the creature looks like	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ...
Diet Information about what the creature eats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ...
Behaviour Information about what the creature does	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ...
Ending – involving the reader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... • ...

Activity 16: Talk your plan through

It is really important to have a good read through your plan to make sure that it makes sense. Why not read it aloud to someone in your house/class and see if they have any suggestions for how to improve it. Then try saying out loud exactly what you are going to write.

Activity 17: It's time to write your report about your chosen type of flying horse or unicorn for the 'Ultimate Guide'.



To help you with your writing, there are lots of things to help you:

- ✓ The texts about the Frost Unicorn and the Water Pegasus
- ✓ The boxed up plan and structure and toolkit
- ✓ Your ideas page
- ✓ The vocabulary we magpied from the model
- ✓ And, most importantly, your plan

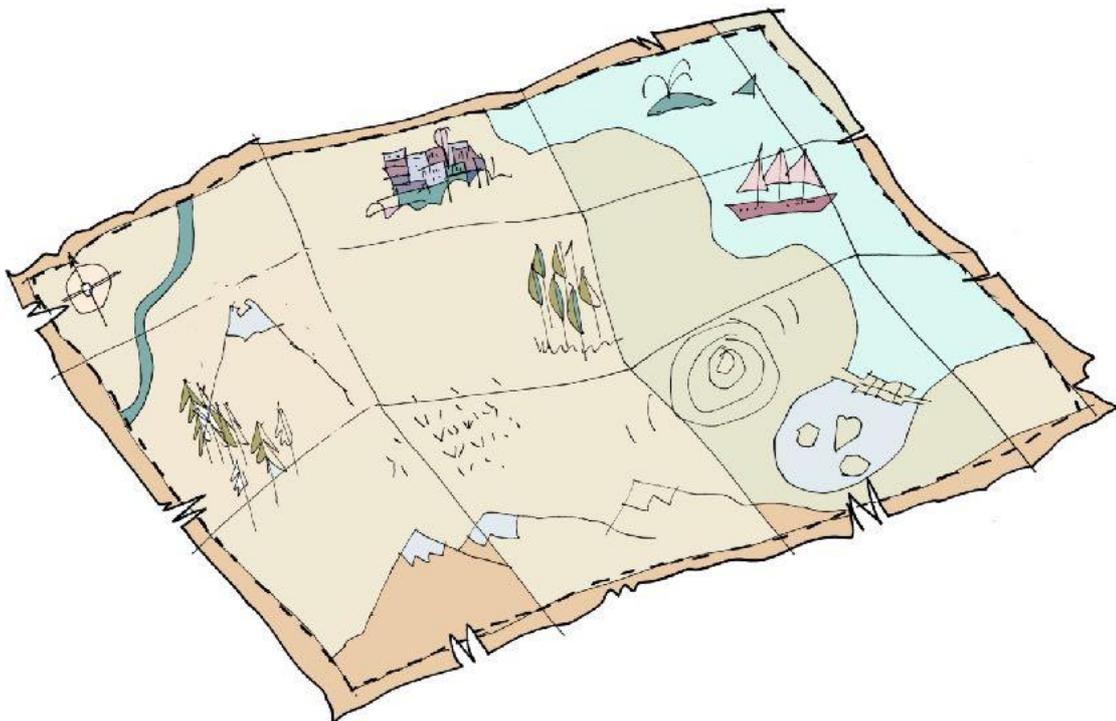
Draft your ideas and edit, thinking about the following:

- Make sure that when you read the text aloud, it flows. If you find a sentence hard to read aloud, then so will your reader.
- Check that you haven't muddled up the information.
- Does it sound like my texts?
- Read it through again to check spelling and punctuation.
- Then write your final draft.
- Add in some design and illustrate.

Activity 18: Map your imaginary land

One of my favourite things about reading children's books is when you find a map right at the beginning showing the land in the story. I keep referring to the map as I read about the different locations and settings in the story. I am sure that you have done the same. I thought it would be a great idea for you to design and draw your own map of where your type of unicorn or Pegasus lives. If you can, check out on the internet to see how Kieran Larwood, author of *Podkin One-Ear*, draws maps of his story worlds: <https://www.kmlarwood.com/resources/>

- ★ **Step 1: draw the outline of your map**
- ★ **Step 2: fill in the landmarks: trees, rivers, boulders, mountains, volcano, cities, sea, swamps**
- ★ **Step 3: make up names for the different areas of your map**
- ★ **Step 4: stain the map to make it look old by using a used (and cool) tea bag to turn the paper brown. You don't need to get it that wet for it to change colour**
- ★ **Step 5: When it is dry, cut or rip the edges of the paper to make it look old and worn.**



Activity 19: Extension writing choices

You are not finished yet! There are lots of different bits of writing you could do if you are enjoying this unit. You could even create and illustrate a whole booklet about your chosen creature:

- Write another report about a different mythological creature (elf, sprite, Pegasus, griffon, ogre, giant, phoenix, dragon, goblin).
- Write a fact-file for your chosen creature.
- Write a story about your chosen creature, using your ideas from the passport. What would happen if you found your creature hiding near your house or flat?
- Write a newspaper report about a sighting of your creature.
- Write up an interview with a unicorn.
- Write a set of Instructions for How to trap a Unicorn (***see next page for a model set of instructions***).
- Write an explanation about why unicorns are rare.
- Write a discussion, 'Should Unicorns be hunted?'
- Write an advert for a unicorn whisperer.

Design a WANTED poster calling on the public to help hunt down and capture a unicorn predator that is on the loose before it is too late. You might want to include:

- ★ A reward
- ★ What the predator has done / is trying to do
- ★ Why the predator is dangerous
- ★ Why this matters to the locals
- ★ Where the predator was last spotted
- ★ What needs to be done (you must.../ we need you to...) State skills needed
- ★ If successful – suggest a bonus
- ★ Use all your persuasive powers!
- ★ End on details such as who to contact

Activity 20: Extra task - instruction writing

How to Look after a Pet Unicorn

Have you just been given a pet unicorn to look after? Are you wondering how on earth you will manage to take good care of such a precious creature? Fear not. Read these instructions and you will be able to enjoy your pet and have the pleasure of watching it develop healthily.

What you need: living quarters, a soft blanket, shade, water bowl and edible flowers, grass and leaves, plenty of kindness.

What to do:

1. Create an enclosed space where your pet will be happy but cannot escape and get into danger.
2. Provide a soft blanket for your unicorn to sleep on and make sure there is a shaded, leafy area.
3. Provide regular water in case of thirst as well as fresh leaves, grass and edible flowers as a basic diet. The also love sunflowers.
4. Talk to your unicorn and stroke it gently as they like nothing more than human contact.
5. Exercise your pet daily by taking it outside to trot around. However, be very careful that there are no dogs or cats around that might frighten a baby unicorn.
6. Unicorns like music so sing to your pet and play the radio quietly. If you are lucky, your pet may dance!

Unicorns make wonderful pets but, eventually, will outgrow any house. You will have to release your pet into the wild. This will be a sad day but if you have treated it well then it will return. Unicorns are faithful to those who treat them kindly.

Book recommendations

If you enjoyed this unit then here are some exciting books: 'I believe in unicorns' by Michael Morpurgo; 'Spellhorn' by Berlie Doherty; 'The little white horse' by Elisabeth Goudge; 'Elidor' by Alan Garner; 'Guardians of the Wild Unicorns' by Lindsay Littleton; 'The secret lives of unicorns' by Dr Temisa Seraphina; 'Unicorns! Unicorns!' by Geraldine McCaughrean; 'The naughtiest unicorn' by Pip Bird; 'The last unicorn' by Peter S Beagle.

Answers to vocabulary on page 4:

Word from the text	Definition
breed	type of
camouflages	makes it difficult to see
grant	give
tinge	a touch of a colour
blend	mix together
vegetation	plants, trees and flowers
defence	protection
environments	surroundings
scarce	not a lot
hibernate	sleep during winter
stable	not likely to change
enchant	put a spell on
tempt	make someone want to do something
translucent	see-through
curious	interested

I hope you have enjoyed working through this workbook. Please share any work produced by tweeting me @piecorbett

Pie Corbett was a Head Teacher, Inspector and Teacher Trainer. He now works as a poet and author, and leads Talk For Writing.

Edited and designed by Julia Strong

Prepared for online distribution by Nick Batty

To find out more about Talk for Writing, visit www.talk4writing.com.

This resource is copyright. All materials herein, texts and supporting resources are © Pie Corbett & Talk for Writing 2021. They are to be used to support children/staff/parents in home-learning ONLY and not for commercial gain or for training or sharing widely, in their original form or any variations. They must also not be shared online or on any social media platforms.

Thanks to Jon Ralphs for the illustrations: jonralphs.com