Year 4 Expected Standards

An Example of a Standard Fiction Text

The Girl Who Walked On Air

The Girl Who Walked On Air is written by Emma Carroll, an author and English teacher. It is about a girl called Louie who works in the ticket office of a circus, but dreams about performing in the circus herself. In this extract, she can't wait to see an evening performance.

The bigger the danger, the bigger the crowd. One look at tonight's punters said it all. With just minutes till show time, the big top was almost full and I was quite ready to burst with excitement.
5 Every last ticket was sold. And still the queue snaked out of the field and down the lane until all you could see were people's hats bobbing above the hedgerows.

First thing this morning, the posters had gone up
10 all over town. 'MORE DARING THAN EVER!' they'd said in blue and gold letters. 'WATCH MONSIEUR MERCURY DEFY GRAVITY ON HIS TRAPEZE!' To me, M. Mercury was just old Jasper, who lived with us in a tiny trailer, and who drank lapsang tea out of dainty cups and let me have first dibs on every pennut. Which was more than could be said for my mam. When I was just a baby she left me at the circus, the way most
15 people forget an umbrella.

Inside the ticket booth where I worked there wasn't space to swing a cat. I felt it specially tonight, jiggling from foot to foot, impatient to get finished so I'd be free to watch the show. My dog Flip sensed it too; sat beside me, he watched my every move. At last, the final punters filed past to claim their tickets. They were a noisy bunch, laughing
20 and rattering, their breath like smoke in the evening air. They'd be quiet soon enough. Once they were inside the big top, they'd squeeze onto a bench and look upwards. And what they'd see would leave them speechless.

A little shiver went down my neck. *Imagine if I was about to perform. All those eyes getting up at me. Just imagine it!*
25 I came back to earth with a bump. The circus owner, Mr Leo Chipchase, was in the doorway. He'd got on his best tartan waistcoat and was smiling, which made a change.
'Think of all those backsides on seats, Louie,' he said as he squeezed in beside me to count the takings. 'The bigger the danger...'
'... the bigger the crowd,' I finished for him.
30 He did have a point. There were grander circuses than ours, with more animals, more curiosities, more sparkle. Backsides on seats mattered. So, what better way to draw the crowds than a thrilling new routine. And tonight that's exactly what they'd get. Jasper would perform not a double but a TRIPLE somersault from his trapeze. No other circus boasted such a stunt. It was genius.

An extract from *The Girl Who Walked On Air* by Emma Carroll

Glossary
lapsang tea — a type of black tea with a smoky flavour

This is an example of the standard of fiction text that a Year 4 pupil should be able to read and understand. We would expect that a Year 4 pupil would be able to read this text fluently and with expression. We would also expect that they would be able to answer the following types of questions:

Questions about word meaning

Which word in lines 1-5 means the same as customers?

Questions that ask you to extract information from the passage

What is the name of the trapeze artist?

Questions that ask you to summarise the text

Describe what you know about Louie's job at the circus.

Questions that ask you to use the clues in the text to produce a reasoned answer

Why do you think the crowds are bigger when there is more danger?

Questions that ask you to use the text to make predictions

How do you think the evening performance will end?

Questions relating to the meaning of the whole text

Do you think the audience has looked forward to going to the circus? Explain your answer.

Questions about the author's choice of language

What does 'breath like smoke' (Line 20) tell us about the evening?

Questions that ask you to compare different parts of the text

How does the author compare the mood of the crowd before the performance to the mood suggested during the performance?