Thistledown Lane

Goodbye, Swallows: Reading Comprehension

KS1 · Year 1 and Year 2

Free · with answers



- Year 1: a short retelling and 6 questions
- Year 2: the whole story and 9 questions, with reading domains
- Answers for both, and a mark scheme for Year 2

Watch the episode free at **thistledownlane.co.uk/episode-goodbye-swallows**

A gentle claymation series about kindness, friendship and the seasons on an English country lane.

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For grown-ups

How to use this pack

Two levels from the same story. **Year 1** is a short retelling with picture-friendly questions: tick, order and true or false. **Year 2** is the whole story as told in the episode, with questions tagged by KS1 reading content domain (1a to 1e) and a mark scheme. You can watch the episode together first, read it aloud, or use it as an independent reading task.

KS1 reading content domains

- **1a** draw on knowledge of vocabulary to understand texts
- **1b** identify and explain key aspects of texts, such as characters, events and information
- **1c** identify and explain the sequence of events in texts
- **1d** make inferences from the text
- **1e** predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far

The story

Skye the swallow is flying far away for the winter. It's alright to feel sad when a friend goes away.

The lesson

It's alright to feel sad when a friend goes away. Missing someone shows how much you like them.

Curriculum links

English, Year 1 and Year 2 reading comprehension: listening to and discussing stories, discussing word meanings, predicting, making inferences and checking the text makes sense. PSHE: feelings, missing someone, saying goodbye.

Year 1: Goodbye, Swallows

Name: _____





Skye is a swallow. She is very fast. She always says, “See you in spring!” Her friends think it is a joke.

One morning, lots of swallows sat in a row on the wire. “It’s time for us to go,” said Skye. The swallows were flying all the way to Africa, where it is warm.

Bramble felt sad. She ran home to Mam. “I’m going to miss her,” said Bramble. Mam said it is alright to be sad.

Then Bramble had an idea. She made a big swallow out of leaves on top of the wall, with Moss and Lilly. Moss found a little purple leaf for Skye’s neckerchief.

Skye saw it from the wire. She flew down and landed on it. “Is that really me?” she asked. “I’ll miss you too.”

Then the swallows flew away. “See you in spring!” everybody shouted. Old Wren stayed. Wrens stay here all winter long.

Year 1 questions

Name: _____

1 What kind of bird is Skye?

☐ a wren ☐ a swallow ☐ a robin

2 Where were the swallows going?

☐ to the woods ☐ to the big field ☐ to Africa

3 How did Bramble feel when Skye said she was going?

☐ sad ☐ happy ☐ sleepy

4 What did the friends make for Skye?

☐ a cake ☐ a swallow made of leaves ☐ a nest

5 Put these in order. Write 1, 2 and 3 in the boxes.

☐ The swallows flew away.

☐ Bramble ran home to Mam.

☐ They made a leaf swallow.

6 True or false?

Skye will come back in the spring. **True** ☐ **False** ☐

Old Wren went to Africa too. **True** ☐ **False** ☐

Moss found a purple leaf. **True** ☐ **False** ☐

Year 2: Goodbye, Swallows

Name: _____





All summer long, there had been someone very fast on Thistledown Lane. Up the lane, down the lane, round the gatepost and back again, faster than anybody. “Morning, Bramble! Morning, Moss! Morning, Lilly!” said Skye. That was Skye. Skye was a swallow, with a forked tail, and a lilac neckerchief, and she never, ever stayed still.

“Morning, Skye! Are you staying to play?” asked Bramble. “Can’t stop! Lots of flies to catch! See you in spring!” said Skye. “She always says that. And then she comes back after lunch,” said Lilly.

“It’s her joke. See you in spring!” said Moss. And Skye laughed, and flicked her tail, and was gone.

But the next morning, something was different. Up on the long wire over the lane, there were swallows. Not one swallow. Lots and lots of swallows, all in a row, chattering away. “Look at them all! Is it a party?” asked Moss. “Is it a swallow party? Can we come?” asked Lilly.

Skye fluttered down from the wire and landed on the wall beside them. And for once, she sat quite still. “It isn’t a party. We’re getting ready. It’s time for us to go,” said Skye. “Go where?” asked Bramble.

“A long, long way. Over the hills, and over the sea, and over the great big desert, all the way to Africa. Where it’s warm,” said Skye. “All that way? On your own wings?” asked Moss. “On my own wings. There aren’t any flies to catch here in the winter. So all the swallows go where the flies are,” said Skye.

“But when are you coming back?” asked Lilly. “In the spring. That’s why I always say it. See you in spring!” said Skye. “That’s not a joke. That’s ages. That’s the whole winter,” said Bramble.

And Bramble felt something heavy in her tummy, and before anybody could stop her, she turned round and trotted off home. “Bramble?” asked Skye.

Mam was in the kitchen, stirring a big pot, when Bramble came in and sat down with a bump. “Hello, love. That’s a very big frown for such a little hedgehog,” said Mam. “Skye’s going away. All the way to Africa. For the whole winter. And I’m cross,” said Bramble.

“Are you cross? Or are you sad?” asked Mam. “...Both. Mostly sad. I’m going to miss her,” said Bramble. “Do you know what missing someone is, Bramble? It’s love with nowhere to go yet. You only miss the people you really like,” said Mam.

“So it’s alright to be sad?” asked Bramble. “It’s alright to be sad. But don’t let Skye fly away without a proper goodbye. You’d be sorry all winter,” said Mam. “But how do you say goodbye to someone who’s going to be right up in the sky?” asked Bramble.

“Well. Perhaps you make something she can see from up there,” said Mam.

So Bramble ran back up the lane, as fast as her little legs could go. “Moss! Lilly! I’ve got an idea. We’re going to make Skye a goodbye. A big one, that she can see from the sky,” said Bramble. “Ooh. What sort of goodbye?” asked Lilly.

“A swallow. Made of leaves. All along the top of the wall,” said Bramble. So they fetched leaves. Brown leaves for the wings, and the darkest leaves for the back. And two long thin leaves for the forked tail. And Moss found one tiny purple leaf, just the colour of Skye’s neckerchief.

“For her neckerchief,” said Moss. “It’s the best swallow I ever saw. Apart from Skye,” said Lilly. And high up on the wire, a swallow with a lilac neckerchief looked down, and saw it.

Down she came, one last time, and landed right on the leaf swallow's head. "Is that me? Is that really me?" asked Skye. "It's so you can see us from the sky. And so you know we'll be missing you. I'm sorry I ran off," said Bramble.

"I'll miss you too. All of you. But I'll come back. Swallows always come back to the very same place. To the very same barn. Even to the very same nest," said Skye. Just then, Old Wren hopped along the wall, his little tail sticking up, as always. "Old Wren, why don't you go to Africa too?" asked Moss.

"Me? Oh, no. Some of us are goers, and some of us are stayers. I'm a stayer. Wrens stay here all winter long. Somebody's got to keep an eye on the lane," said Old Wren. And then, all along the wire, the swallows stopped chattering. And one by one, they lifted up into the sky.

"That's me! Goodbye! Goodbye, everybody!" said Skye. "Goodbye, Skye! See you in spring!" said Bramble. "See you in spring!" said Skye.

And everybody shouted it together, as loud as they could. See you in spring! And Skye flew up to join the others, and the swallows went round the lane once, and twice, and then away, away, over the hill. And Old Wren sat on the wall beside them, and didn't say anything at all for a while, which was exactly the right thing to say.

"It's alright to feel sad when a friend goes away. Missing someone just means you really like them. And Skye's coming back. In the spring. She promised," said Bramble. And the leaf swallow stayed on the wall all autumn long, keeping a place for Skye, until the spring.





Year 2 questions

Name: _____

1 Why do the swallows fly away for the winter? (1 mark) 1b

2 Mam says, "That's a very big **frown** for such a little hedgehog." What is a **frown**? (1 mark) 1a

☐ a cross or worried look on your face ☐ a big smile ☐ a loud shout

3 Find and copy **one** word that tells you the colour of Skye's neckerchief. (1 mark) 1a

4 Name **two** things Skye will fly over on her way to Africa. (2 marks) 1b

5 Number these events from 1 to 4. (1 mark) 1c

- ☐ Skye lands on the leaf swallow's head.
- ☐ Bramble talks to Mam in the kitchen.
- ☐ The swallows line up on the wire.
- ☐ The swallows fly away over the hill.

6 Bramble said, "That's not a joke. That's ages." Why did she say this? (1 mark) 1d

7 Mam said that without a proper goodbye, Bramble would "be sorry all winter". Why? (1 mark) 1d

8 At the end, Old Wren "didn't say anything at all for a while, which was exactly the right thing to say." Why was saying nothing the right thing? (1 mark) 1d

9 Skye says swallows come back "to the very same barn. Even to the very same nest." What do you think will happen in the spring? Use the story to explain. (1 mark) 1e

Answers

Year 1

1. a swallow
2. to Africa
3. sad
4. a swallow made of leaves
5. 1 Bramble ran home to Mam. 2 They made a leaf swallow. 3 The swallows flew away.
6. True; False (wrens stay here all winter long); True

Year 2 (total 10 marks)

1. There aren't any flies to catch here in the winter, so they go where the flies are. (Accept: to go where it's warm.)
2. a cross or worried look on your face
3. lilac (accept: purple)
4. Any two, 1 mark each: the hills; the sea; the great big desert.
5. The swallows line up on the wire (1); Bramble talks to Mam in the kitchen (2); Skye lands on the leaf swallow's head (3); the swallows fly away over the hill (4).
6. She realised "See you in spring" was true, and Skye would be gone for the whole winter, which is a very long time.
7. Skye would be gone all winter, so Bramble could not say goodbye later, and she would keep wishing she had.
8. Any sensible answer, for example: the friends were sad, and Old Wren kept them company quietly instead of talking.
9. Any sensible answer linked to the story, for example: Skye will come back to Thistledown Lane, because swallows always come back to the very same place, and the leaf swallow is keeping a place for her.