



Evie and the ANIMALS

Matt Haig 

EXTRACTS
AND NOTES
FOR KS2
TEACHERS



Illustrated by Emily Gravett



INTRODUCTION



Evie and the Animals by Matt Haig is suitable for teaching to children aged 8+. This Teachers' Pack includes extracts, discussion questions and activities that are aimed at developing children's awareness of the natural world around them, stimulating discussion around important themes in the story: the animal kingdom, Evie's supertalent, protecting the environment, and empathy and kindness.

CONTENTS

EXTRACT 1: PAGE 4

The Animal World (taken from *A Special Child*)

OBJECTIVES: Match up animals with facts about them; paint a picture of your favourite animal, labelling it with defining characteristics and features.

SUBJECTS: Literacy, Science, Design, Art and Technology

EXTRACT 2: PAGE 7

Evie's Supertalent (taken from *A Special Child*)

OBJECTIVES: Act out scenarios in which a pet can communicate with its owner; write a letter to your owner from the perspective of a pet.

SUBJECTS: Drama, PSHE, Speaking and Listening, Creative Writing: Writing in Role, Writing a Letter

EXTRACT 3: PAGE 10

Protecting the Environment (taken from *The Girl from the Jungle*)

OBJECTIVES: Consider the negative impact humans have had on the environment; design a leaflet persuading the public to do more to help protect the environment and the natural habitat of animals.

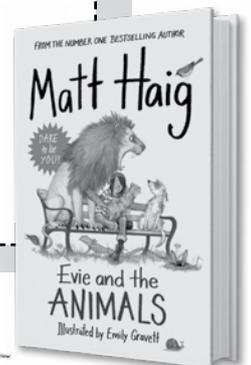
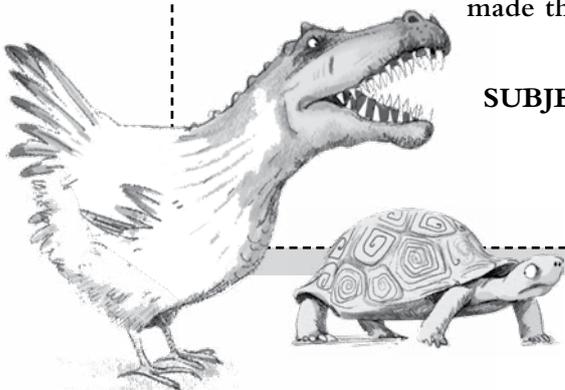
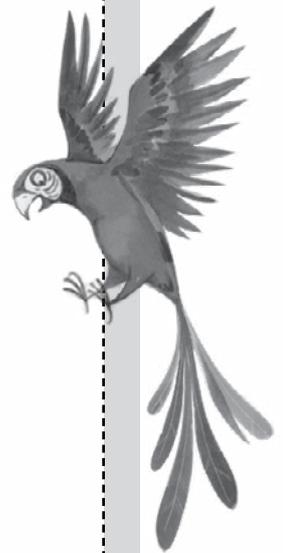
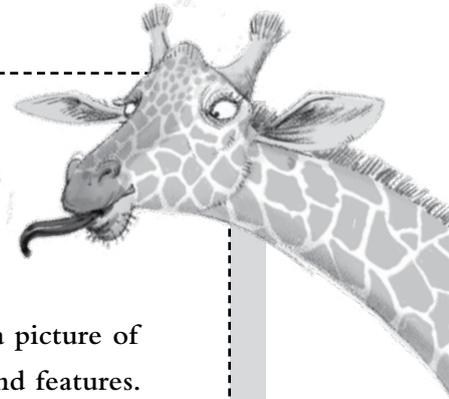
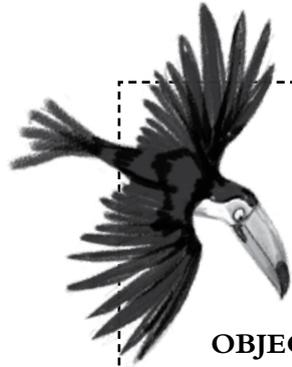
SUBJECTS: Literacy, Science, Geography, Creative Writing: Writing to Persuade

EXTRACT 4: PAGE 13

Kindness (taken from *A Good Life*)

OBJECTIVES: Design an acronym of your name using positive personal traits and talents you possess; create a storyboard of a time you made the world a better place for a person, animal or the environment.

SUBJECTS: Design, Art and Technology, Literacy, PSHE





ABOUT *the* BOOK



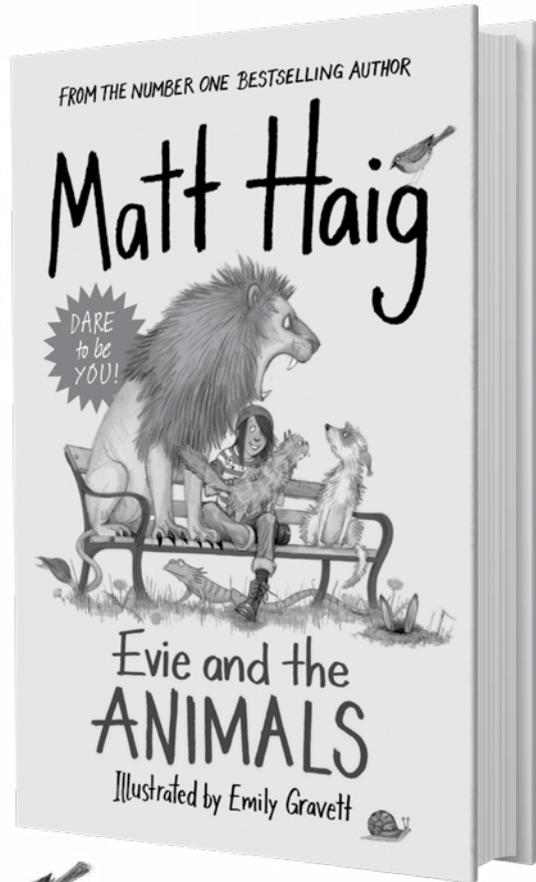
**Eleven-year-old Evie has a talent.
A SUPERTALENT.**

A talent that can let her **HEAR** the thoughts of an elephant, and make friends with a dog and a sparrow.

The only problem is, this talent is dangerous. **VERY** dangerous. That's what her dad says.

So when she frees the school rabbit from its tiny hutch, she vows to keep her talent a secret. But after a face-to-face encounter with a lion, things start to go very wrong. Her dad – and every animal in town – is now in danger. Evie is determined to save them. And to find the truth of her own past. To do that she must battle a mysterious man with a talent more powerful than any other.

As time runs out, she must seek help from the animals, and finally **DARE TO BE HERSELF . . .**



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

As well as being a number one bestselling writer for adults, **Matt Haig** has won the Blue Peter Book Award, the Smarties Book Prize and been nominated three times for the Carnegie Medal for his stories for children and young adults. He has sold more than a million books in the UK and his work has been translated into over forty languages. In 2018, *The Truth Pixie* was a *Sunday Times* children's bestseller.

Emily Gravett is an award-winning writer and illustrator. She won her first CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal with the picture book *Wolves* and received the award for a second time with *Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears*. Emily lives in Brighton with her family and their two dogs.



Image by Kam Lailey

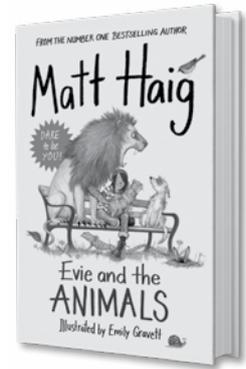


Image by Mik Gravett





Extract 1: *The ANIMAL WORLD*



Extract from 'A Special Child' – pages 1–2

'Once there was a girl called Evie Trench. Evie was not a normal child. She was a 'special' child. That's what her dad said. Special.

Evie often thought it would be a lot easier to be a normal child than a special child, but there you go. She was *special*. And the reason for this was . . . Well, it was complicated. Evie didn't really understand it herself. Before we get on to her specialness, let's start with a simple fact. Evie liked animals. Of course, lots of people like animals. But Evie liked *all* animals. Not just the cuddly ones.

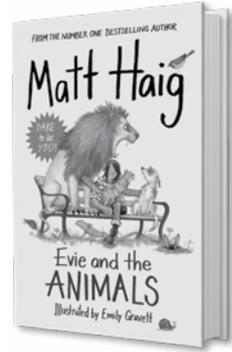
She liked dogs and cats, yes, of course, but also cockroaches, snakes, bats, vultures, hyenas, sharks, jellyfish and green anaconda snakes. She liked every animal. Well, apart from the Brazilian wandering spider – the deadliest spider in the world – which even Evie found hard to love, for reasons that will become clear. But, as a general rule, if it lived, she liked it. And she knew everything about the animal world. As much as anyone. There were probably professors of Animal Biology at extremely clever universities who knew less than her. By the time she was six years old she had read more than three hundred books on the subject.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1. What is your favourite animal and why? Which are the most popular animals in your class?**
- 2. Which animals does Evie like? Why is this unusual?**
- 3. Why might Evie find it 'hard to love' the Brazilian wandering spider? How is it described?**
- 4. Why is it important to care about all animals, not just cats and dogs?**
- 5. How does Evie know so much about 'the animal world'? Why is this impressive?**



Activity 1: ANIMAL FACTS



SUBJECTS: *Literacy, Science*

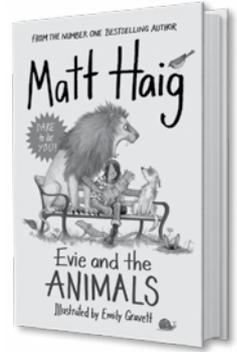
Evie cares for all animals, not just cats and dogs, and has spent many years researching them.

Using the table, match up some of the animals that are mentioned in extract 1 with facts about them. To really show off your knowledge of the animal world, work with a partner to include any other facts you know in your table.

ANIMAL FACTS	Which animal does the fact belong to? <i>Snake, jellyfish, bat, vulture, hyena or shark?</i>
1. Around 600 species of this animal are venomous. Many of them swallow their victims whole.	ANIMAL: EXTRA FACT I KNOW:
2. Known as 'scavengers', these birds are in danger of becoming extinct.	ANIMAL: EXTRA FACT I KNOW:
3. They eat thousands of insects every night, including mosquitoes!	ANIMAL: EXTRA FACT I KNOW:
4. The 'Great White' is one of the most famous predators on earth.	ANIMAL: EXTRA FACT I KNOW:
5. This animal looks similar to a dog. They are intelligent, skilled hunters.	ANIMAL: EXTRA FACT I KNOW:
6. This animal has no brain and is largely made out of water.	ANIMAL: EXTRA FACT I KNOW:



Activity 2: *My* FAVOURITE ANIMAL

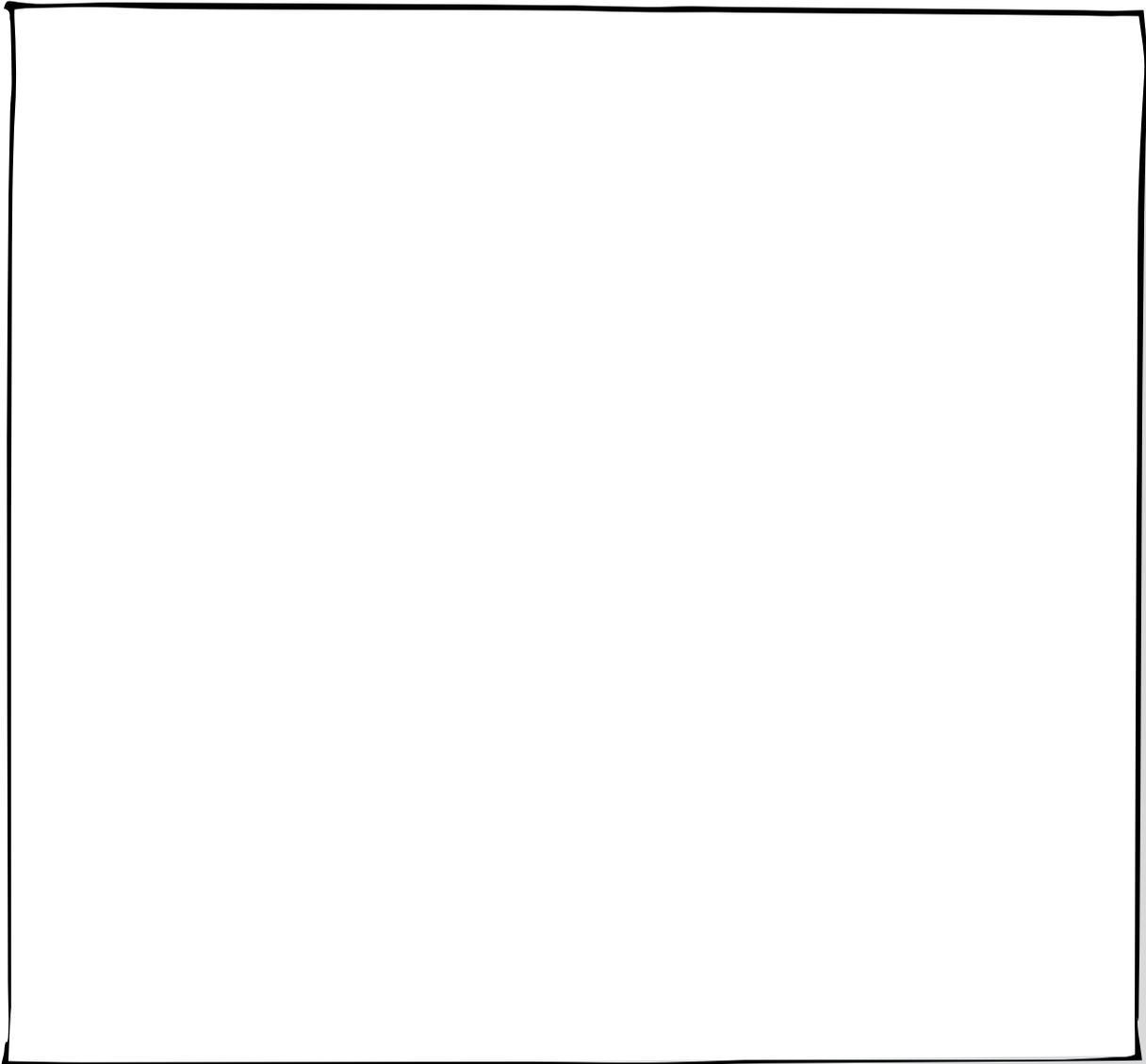


————— SUBJECTS: *Design, Art and Technology, Literacy, Science* —————

Using all that you know and have learnt about animals, choose your favourite animal in the world. It might be that you choose one of the animals that is mentioned in the text.

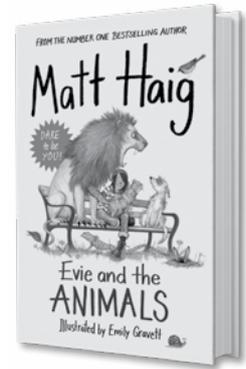
Note: it can't be a cat or a dog!

Paint your animal leaving some space so that you can label it afterwards. Once it has dried, write a few words labelling your painting with what makes your animal so special and why you have chosen it as your favourite.





Extract 2: EVIE'S SUPERTALENT

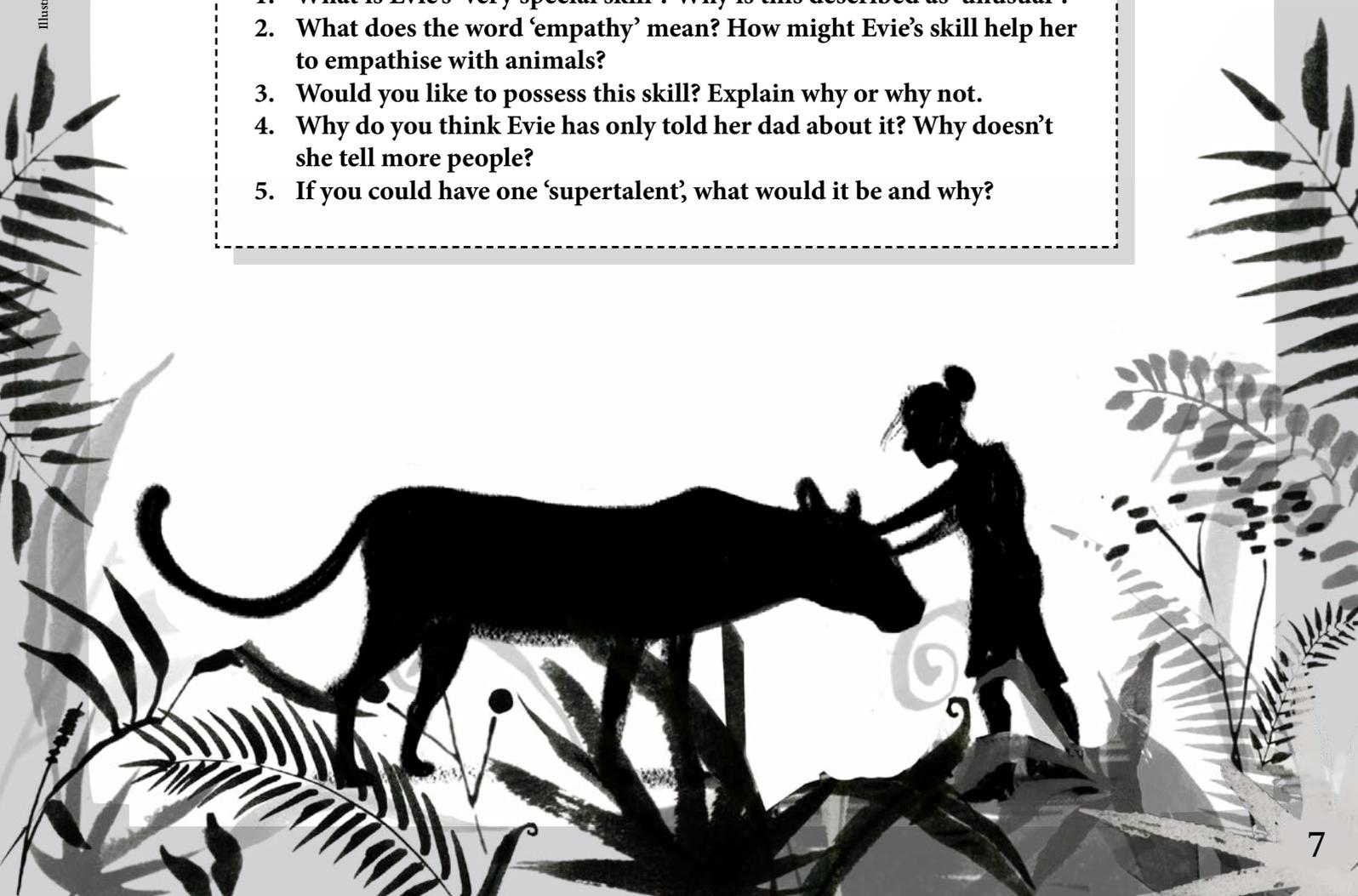


Extract from 'A Special Child' – pages 3–4

'But Evie didn't just *like* animals. She didn't just know *facts* about them. She also had a very special skill. A very unusual skill. The skill was this: she could HEAR what animals were thinking. And sometimes she could get animals to hear what she was thinking. Without moving her lips or making a sound, Evie could talk to animals. Evie had no idea how or why she could hear animals. She just could. And, as she got older, it seemed to be happening more and more often. And it was the best thing ever. It was her very own secret superpower. She had only ever told one person she could do this. Her dad. And he'd said that she must never tell anyone about it. Ever.'

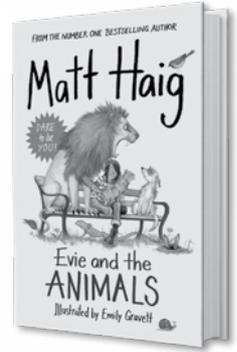
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is Evie's 'very special skill'? Why is this described as 'unusual'?
2. What does the word 'empathy' mean? How might Evie's skill help her to empathise with animals?
3. Would you like to possess this skill? Explain why or why not.
4. Why do you think Evie has only told her dad about it? Why doesn't she tell more people?
5. If you could have one 'supertalent', what would it be and why?



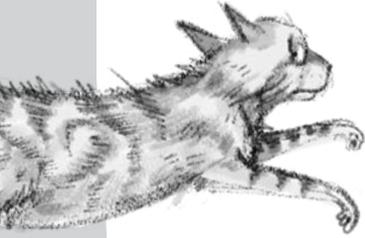


Activity 1: COMMUNICATING *with* ANIMALS



————— SUBJECTS: *Drama, PSHE, Speaking and Listening* —————

Imagine what animals might say to their owner and vice versa if they had the chance. If you have pets of your own, use them as inspiration or you can get ideas from the extract to help you.



Get into pairs with one of you acting as an owner and one of you acting as their pet.

Then, take it in turns pretending to be the following animals:
CAT, BUDGIE, GOLDFISH, DOG.



AFTER YOU HAVE BOTH ACTED OUT 2 OF THE ANIMALS, DISCUSS;

Does this activity make you think more about what it is like to be a pet?

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Will you treat your pet differently after this exercise?

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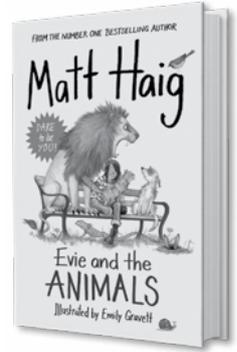
.....

Why?

.....



Activity 2: LOOK WHO'S TALKING!



————— SUBJECTS: *Creative Writing: Writing in Role, Writing a Letter, PSHE* —————

Using Activity 1 to get some ideas, write a letter to your owner from the perspective of a pet.

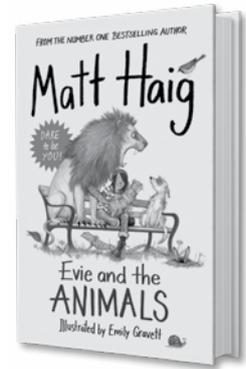
In your letter, you may wish to include descriptions of; what it feels like to be a pet; what makes you happy or sad; what makes a good owner; what you would change about your living conditions or routine if you could.

Read some of these letters out as a class. Discuss any common ideas or themes that come up. Consider issues such as: what makes a good owner? How might the world change if we could communicate with animals?

A large rectangular box containing 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



Extract 3: PROTECTING *the* ENVIRONMENT



Extract from *'The Girl from the Jungle'* – pages 61–63

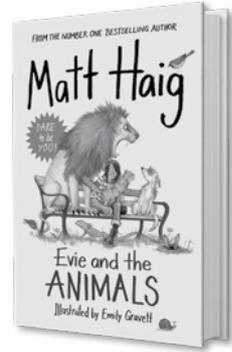
‘Evie nodded in a daze. She couldn’t believe there was still more to find out. She stared down at the birth certificate in her trembling hands. “Your mum had the Talent, Evie. Animal telepathy. Just like you, and she was hearing all the animals. The animals told her terrible stories about the humans who were destroying their land. And she helped them. She told the animals what was happening and where to hide. She was a hero to the people who wanted to save the rainforest. But other people didn’t like her. The business people. The loggers. The cow farmers. And one man in particular *really* didn’t like her.”’

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What important information does Evie learn about her mum in this extract?
2. Who wants Evie’s mum to stop what she is doing and why?
3. Why do animals need our help and protection? What is happening to their homes and land?
4. What can be done to protect animals and their environment?
5. Why is protecting the environment everyone’s responsibility? What will happen if we don’t take action?



Activity 1: HUMAN IMPACT



SUBJECTS: *Literacy, Science, Geography*

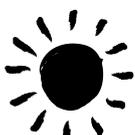


A major theme in the text is how humans have damaged and even destroyed the environment, including the natural habitat of many animals.



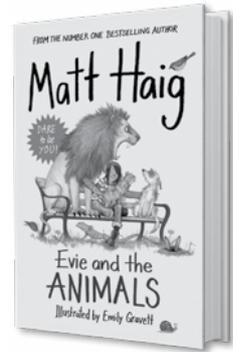
Using the table and the extract for ideas, make notes on some of the negative impacts that humans have had on the world and what can be done about it.

When completed, go through each human impact as a class to see if there is anything else you can add to your table. Including as much detail as possible will help you with Activity 2!

HUMAN IMPACT	What are the negative effects of this on animals and the environment?	What can be done to protect animals and the environment?
DEFORESTATION 		
PLASTICS & OTHER NON-BIODEGRADABLE GOODS 		
POACHING 		
CLIMATE CHANGE 		



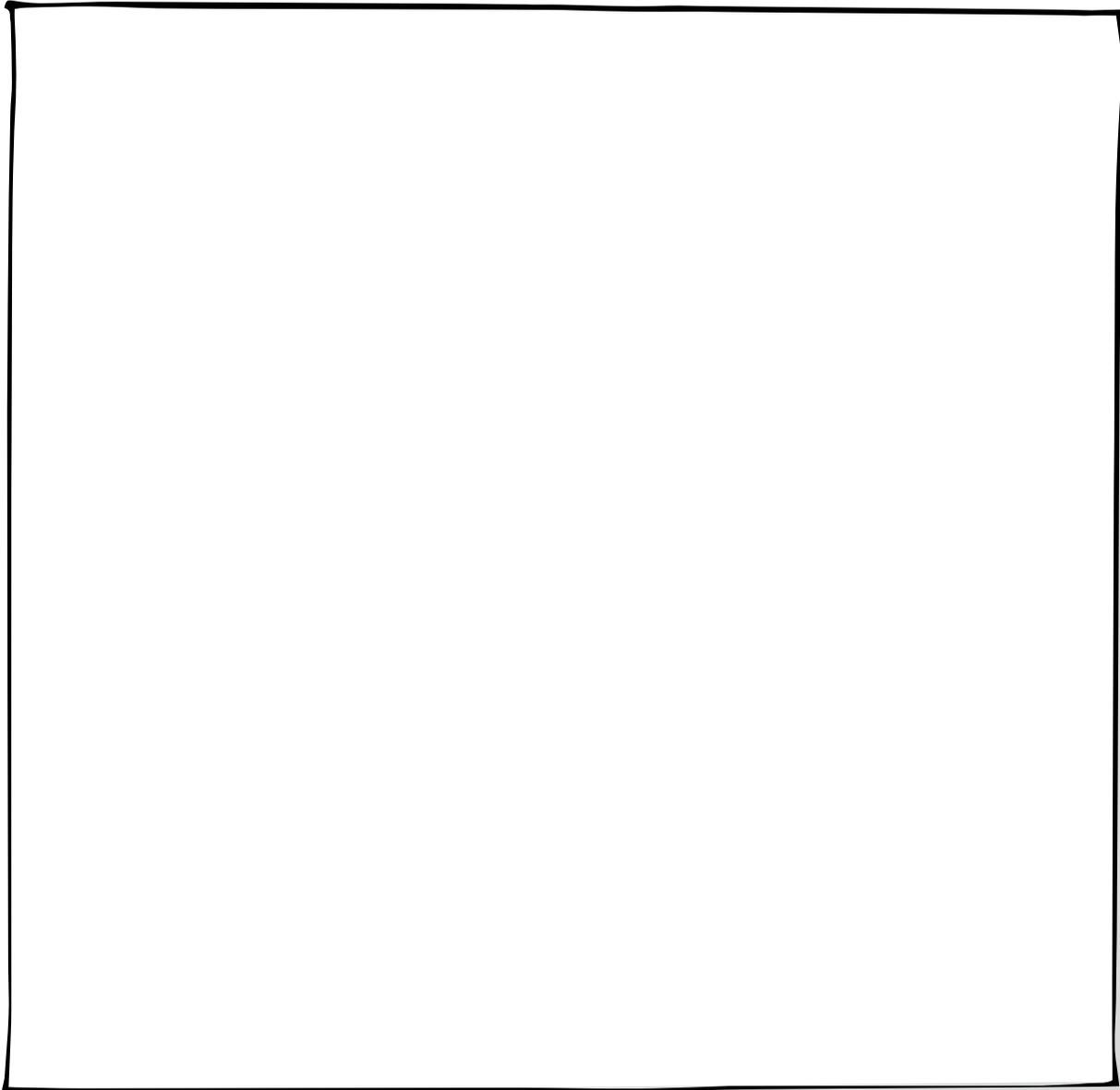
Activity 2: CREATING a LEAFLET



————— SUBJECTS: *Science, Geography, Creative Writing: Writing to Persuade* —————

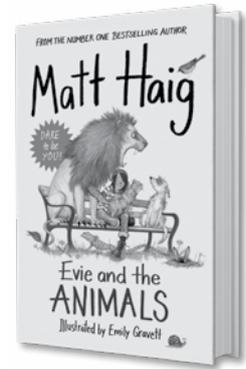
Create a leaflet to raise awareness about how human beings are negatively impacting the earth and the natural habitats of animals. In it, you will persuade people to do more to protect the environment.

Make your leaflet as eye-catching and informative as possible by using colour and illustrations, as well as your notes and discussions from Activity 1.





Extract 4: KINDNESS



Extract from 'A Good Life' – pages 238–239

'Granny Flora smiled her soft twinkly-eyed smile at Evie, her teeth stained with tea and liquorice.

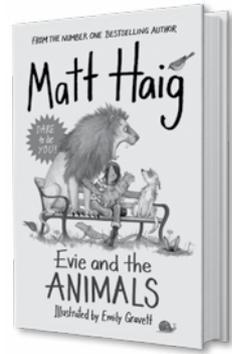
"Your real talent isn't talking to animals, Evie," she said after a while. "It's kindness. That's what made you stronger than Mortimer in the end. Kindness is a boomerang. You throw it out and you get it back. You had done kind things in the world, and you had been rewarded with kindness in return." Evie smiled a little. "Thanks, Granny." "Well, think about it. You were kind to that rabbit, and she then helped us escape. You helped that snake, and it saved your life. *Our* lives. You were kind to Scruff when you helped his poorly paw, and now he loves you. You were kind to Beak, and he pooped on your enemies . . ." She placed her cup of tea down and picked up Plato. "Your mother would be proud of you." Evie's dad was watching from the doorway. "Yes, she certainly would."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does Granny Flora believe Evie's 'real talent' is? Why is this a brilliant talent to have?
2. What is a boomerang? What does Granny Flora mean when she says that 'kindness is a boomerang'?
3. How does Evie's kindness help animals throughout the text? Pick out some examples.
4. Do you agree that Evie's mother would be proud of her? Explain your ideas.
5. As well as kindness, what other important personal traits and talents does Evie possess?



Activity 1: REAL TALENTS



SUBJECTS: *Design, Art and Technology, Literacy, PSHE*

On a coloured piece of card, write your name down the left hand-side in big letters.

Note: If your name is short, for example 3 letters long, you may wish to include your middle name or use your surname instead.

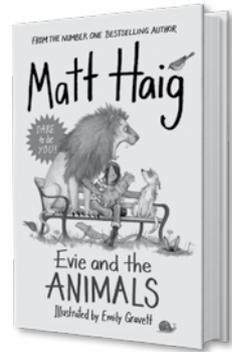
Use your name as an acronym for positive personal traits, characteristics or talents you possess or would like to develop as you get older. For example, K = Kindness, B = Bravery.

Decorate your card with symbols, colours, and anything else that you associate with these traits and talents.





Activity 2: STORYBOARD



SUBJECTS: *Design, Art and Technology, Literacy, PSHE*

Think about how your traits, characteristics and talents help to make the world a better place for humans and/or animals. Then, try to think of an example of a time you have shown one of these traits.

Create a storyboard showing step-by-step how this trait or talent had a positive impact on people, animals or the environment.

Underneath your sketches, write a few words explaining what is happening at that stage in the story. For example, it could be feelings or emotions that people or animals are experiencing, or it could be a setting like school, the park, or at home.

Swap your storyboards with a partner so that you can learn from each other's experiences.

We'd love to hear about how you're using these *Evie and the Animals* resources in your classrooms, libraries etc. Please share your photos and stories with us online! Tag us @canongatebooks on Twitter and Instagram and use the hashtag #EvieandtheAnimals