

Tarka the Otter
Henry Williamson

Blurb at the back of the book:

Read the blurb in your head.

Scan the blurb to find the word 'fend'. Read the sentence this word is in – what do you think 'fend' means?

'Deadlock, his most fearsome enemy'. Which words make you realise what this character is like? What do you think this character is going to be like? Why do you say this?

On a page at the back of the book, it explains why Henry Williamson wrote a book about an otter. What was the reason?

The First Year

Chapter One: inference

1. In the first paragraph copy out three phrases that let you know what the scene is like. What does each phrase tell you about the setting at this time? 3 marks

2. Page 3: what do you think 'thriven' must mean? 1 mark

3. Page 4: where is personification used? 2 marks

4. What must 'voles' be? Copy the phrases that help you realise this. 2 marks

5. Page 7: why was Deadlock holding her breath? 1 mark

6. What do you think the purpose of this first chapter is? 3 marks.

Chapter Two: Retrieval

1. Page 26: why does Tarka stop biting? What happens just before this line? 1 mark

2. Page 28: Why do you think Tarka is frightened of humans but not of trains? 1 mark
Copy the phrase that shows the conclusion Tarka had come to about trains

3. Page 29: 'tissed' is used twice on this page. Find where this is. What do you think this word could mean? 1 mark
4. Page 30: why did the dog decide to drag the cubs out? Find the evidence just before this part. 1 mark
5. Page 34: what does the nightjar do to signal danger? 1 mark
6. Page 38: why did Tarka push his sister away? 1 mark
7. Page 39: what tells you the sound must be getting nearer- just before this part is written in the book? 1 mark

Chapter Three

1. Page 47: the chapter starts off with morning. Why is there more 'gold' than there would be at noon (12 o'clock)? 1 mark
2. Page 48: what is a 'brook'? Which word in the same line, helps you realise what it is?
3. Page 48: Why did the otter swim to the shore? Copy the phrase from the text that tells you so. 1 mark
4. Page 49 (top): why is it surprising the sycamore still gives leaves? Copy the phrase that helps you answer this question 1 mark
5. Page 53: (top): what must 'shamming' mean? 1 mark. What do you think of mother pretending to be dead?
6. Page 53: why did the otters sometimes bite (snap) at stones and roots? 1 mark
7. Page 62: What are 'sedge warblers' Several things in this last paragraph help you realise what they are. Find and copy two parts. 2 marks

Chapter Four

1. Page 63: why is the 'heart of the otter beating quickly'? Read what is happening in the paragraph before this. 2 marks
- 2.

Chapter Five: Characters' Behaviour

1. Copy the phrases that hint an ackymal is a bird. 3 marks
2. Page 79. A scene is built up to describe how the fish is eaten. Copy three phrases from this scene and say what each phrase tells you about the way the fish is being eaten. 3 marks
3. Page 80 ' he waited' before plunging the spear into the water to get the otters- why do you think he waited?

What had the otters been doing when the keeper spotted them?

4. Page 81: mother plays another trick on her cubs – which trick is this one? 1 mark
5. How does mother signal to let her cubs know where she is? 1 mark
6. Why are there humans in this chapter? What are they doing? 1 mark
6. Page 88. ' None of the men answered'. Why did they not answer? 1 mark

Chapter Six

1. Page 91. ' Otters were devourers of eels'. What does this mean? 1 mark
2. Page 92. Eating eels is a 'slimy sport'. Why do you think this is? You may want to look up what an eel looks like! 2 marks

3. Page 93. What phrases are used to support the otter they have met is old? 3 marks

4. Page 94 to 95: why were the kingfishers being killed? 2 marks

5. Page 96: Why does Tarka stay close to his mother? Copy the phrase that supports your answer 1 mark

6. Page 97-98: Work out what 'constellation' means from the text. 1 mark

7. Page 99. The lights on the bridge 'ceased to twinkle' When the otters had been further away the lights had been twinkling why do you think this was?

8. Page 100: which word tells you that Tarka had not eaten crab before? 1 mark
Why do you think he had not eaten crab before? 1 mark

9. Page 103: what had scared Tarka? 1 mark

10. Why do you think mother can play with the dog but Tarka does not?

Chapter Seven

1. At the start of the chapter it says Tarka's 'cubhood' has ended. This means he is no longer a child. What do you think this will mean for Tarka? 2 marks

2. Page 108. Tarka hears hooves 'but the noises grew remote' so Tarka curled up to sleep again. What do you think 'grew remote' must mean? 1 mark

3. Page 108. Tarka thinks of food; of 'warm flesh'. What does this do to Tarka? Read the sentence before this to find two things. 2 marks

4. Page 110: Tarka plays with the young otter. Find three phrases that tell us what otters do when they are playing. 3 marks

5. Page 114: what does Tarka do at the water to 'cool his tongue'? What do you think this movement is? 2 marks
6. Why do you think GreyMuzzle becomes 'dear' to Tarka? This means Tarka likes GreyMuzzle. Find three pieces of evidence from the text to back up your view points. 3 marks

Chapter Eight

1. At the start of the chapter, it says the trees shed their 'dry tears'- what do you think this is referring to? Think of what trees do...

Why do you think the author refers to this as shedding *tears*?

2. Page 117- where did Tarka and Greymuzzle sleep during the day? 1 mark
3. Page 118: when do we know that Greymuzzle is expecting a child? Copy the phrase that tells us so. 1 mark
4. Why is the character Muggy referred to as an 'enemy'? 1 mark
5. How do you feel the Pollack managed to escape from being eaten?
6. What lets you know that a cormorant is a bird? 2 marks
7. Page 130. How did the man know where the otters were? 1 mark
8. Page 131-132. How did the man know many seals had died in the cave? Copy from the text to support your answer. 1 mark
9. At the end of the chapter, how did the man calm the seal? 1 mark
What does the writer say the seal does to show the seal is unhappy before he is calmed? Copy from the text the phrases: 2 marks.

Chapter Nine

1. Page 134: why would the otters be alarmed by the arrival of the man?
2. Page 136: what do you think the word 'plumage' means? 1 mark

3. Page 136: why would the feet of the owl mean death for ducks and rabbits? 1 mark
4. Page 138: the paragraph at the top of the page describes a blizzard. Describe a blizzard in 3 ways, supporting each view with evidence from this part of the text. 3 marks
5. Page 139 line 5 to 6: why could Grey Muzzle be easily seen? Page 1
6. Page 139: why does the cold weather make the fish harder to see? Read what the ice does. 1 mark
7. Page 140: there is a 'change in the note' of the duck. Why is this? What has just happened to the duck? 1 mark
8. Page 144: what stopped Tarka from his play with Marland Jimmy? 1 mark

Chapter Ten

1. Page 147 (top) why did the otters have blisters on their tongues? 1 mark
2. Page 147 – why had the fox wandered far? 1 mark
3. Why do you think the animals are hungry at this time of the year? 1 mark
4. Page 150 – why had the swan died? What happened to it? 2 marks
5. Page 151 why was the fox (Fang-over-lip) determined to eat the swan too? Copy the phrase that backs up your answer. 1 mark
6. Page 151 – find the sentence that tells us why the boar cannot be hurt by an otter. 1 mark
7. Why did all the animals look at the cottage? Pages 151-152
8. Page 153- why do you think the baby otter cannot 'carry its head' and trembled? 1 mark

9. Page 156- what was hiding the stars? 1 mark

10. Page 159: why did the farmer not need to use his gun (cartridge) to kill Greymuzzle?

The Last Year

Chapter Eleven

1. From this chapter, how would you describe Tarka? Form three opinions and back up each opinion with evidence from the text.

Chapter Twelve

1. Page 180: why does Tarka hesitate? Why would this make him hesitate do you think? 2 marks

2. Tarka meant to go back but did not. Why? 1 mark

3. Page 183: name the three items used to make nests. 3 marks

4. Page 185: Tarka's claws are 'worn' (worn down). How does this affect his tussle with the eel? 1 mark

5. Why do you think Tarka bites the eel at the back of the neck? (what does this stop the eel from being able to do at the same time?)

6. Did you think Tarka would get the eel in the end? Why did you think this? Form 3 opinions and refer to the text. You may not be able to copy out exact evidence but do refer to the text as you justify your opinions. 3 marks

Chapter Thirteen

1. Page 202. Tarka was hurt by the hound dogs. His 'wounds smarted'- what does 'smarted' mean in this context? Read the whole sentence this phrase is in 1 mark

2. Page 205. Tarka did not focus on his pain. What did end up being focused on? 1 mark

3. How does Tarka eventually manage to get the fish? Name three things he does and copy the part from the text that tells you so. 3 marks

4. Page 211 Why did Tarka eat at the blades of grass? 1 mark

5. Page 215 Why did the rat jump onto the otter's back? What was it scared of? 1 mark

6. At the end of the chapter a fish escapes from Tarka (the carp). Why does the carp escape – look at the text to find out what we are told about the carp... 2 marks

Chapter Fourteen

1. Page 221-222. Who tries to stop the killing of the wild animals? Why do they do this? 2 marks
2. Page 224 – top. What was making the ripples in the water? How were they making the ripples? 2 marks
3. Page 224. Why would the bull-frogs go to where the raven was? 2 marks
4. Page 226. What do you think of the friendship between the raven and Tarka? Support your view points with evidence from the text. 2 marks
5. Page 230. Why do you think Tarka wants to hide when it is sunlight? Think of two plausible reasons. 2 marks

Chapter Fifteen

1. Page 231. What wakes Tarka? 2 marks
2. What does Tarka do to escape the hounds? Find the parts that explain the strategies he uses. 3 marks
3. Page 240. How was the water 'friendly' to Tarka? What did it help Tarka to do... 1 mark
4. Page 241. Tarka was master of the whirlpools. How did he become so familiar with them? The next part of this line helps you answer this question. 1 mark
5. Page 244. What does Tarka do to Deadlock? What makes him stop doing this? 2 marks

6. Think of three words to describe Tarka from this chapter. Use evidence from the text to back up each choice of words. 3 marks

Chapter Sixteen

1. Page 246. What was Tarka searching for ? 1 mark
2. Page 246. Tarka found a crab to eat but did not eat it- why? 1 mark
3. Page 247. Why did Tarka try to look for more herrings? Use the text to find the exact answer. 1 mark
4. Page 250. Why would fog 'hide' the stars and cliff-tops? 1 mark
5. Page 255. What did Tarka find to eat? 1 mark
6. Why do you think Tarka was happy to find White Tip? Think of three possible reasons referring to the text to make your answers seem plausible. 3 marks.

Chapter Seventeen

1. Page 261: why did the voices become faint? 1 mark
2. Page 267: how did Tarka and White Tip keep themselves entertained? Write three things they did. 3 marks
3. Page 282: why did Tarquol not continue on with Tarka? 1 mark

Chapter Eighteen

1. Page 284: why were the hounds happy? 2 marks
2. Page 286: find and copy phrases that show how the hunters are dressed. 3 marks
3. What do their clothes tell us about them?
- 4.