Question 1

1 Understanding ideas

Objective
- Identify ideas and information

The first question on Paper 1 is about ideas. Fiction texts are full of meanings and ideas. Some of them are clear and obvious. These are the explicit meanings. Other meanings are less clear, so you have to read between the lines and work out the meaning for yourself. These are the implicit meanings.

Read the text below then complete Activity 1.

The Dragon's Dream by Kate Thompson

Once upon a time and far, far away, there was a young king who lived in a castle high up in the mountains. The king was very wealthy, and the great hall in his castle was piled high with treasure, but still he was not happy. Noblemen came and went, and there were always servants scurrying through the castle, but even so, this king was lonely. He was lonely because in all the length and breadth of his land he could find no one who would marry him.

Now the reason that no one would marry him was that his castle was so cold. All through the winter it was covered in snow, and even during the summer, when the people in the valleys were enjoying the sunshine, icy winds blew through the castle in the mountains.

Activity 1

Even very simple texts like fairy tales have both explicit and implicit meanings. Read the text below and circle whether the following statements are explicit or implicit.

- The king lives in a castle in the mountains. explicit / implicit
- The king thinks love is worth more than riches. explicit / implicit
- The king has been searching for a wife for a long while. explicit / implicit
- The king has servants and noblemen at the castle. explicit / implicit

Activity 2

Some students were asked to write down four things they had learnt from the text about the king. Read the answers below and decide what is wrong with each of them. Write your answer on the dotted lines.

The king had lots of gold. ..............................................................
The king was greedy. ..............................................................
The king had no parents. ...........................................................
There were lots of servants. ......................................................

So, to answer this question, you need to identify explicit ideas from the text which are true, accurate and about the subject of the question.

Top tip
Put the subject of the question as the first words of your answer, for example 'The castle...'

Activity 3

List four things from this part of the text about the castle.

1. ..............................................................
2. ..............................................................
3. ..............................................................
4. ..............................................................