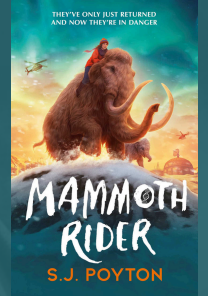


NEURODIVERSITY IN MAMMOTH RIDER

Exploration and Discussion Sheet



Introduction

This worksheet is designed to be used with the book to help pupils/ children to think about neurodiversity, it's challenges and its benefits, to better understand what it is like to live with neurodiversity and hopefully build empathy. Although the extracts are printed here it would have more impact if read directly from the physical book. Alternatively listen to the extract on the audio book.

Neurodiversity in Mammoth Rider

Mammoth Rider has been written and designed with neurodiversity at its heart and readability prioritized.

Ash – the main character in *Mammoth Rider* is neurodiverse, she has undiagnosed dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia.

Being neurodiverse means your brain works in different ways to most 'neuro-typical' people. Neurodiverse people's struggles are not due to lack of brain power – but because the world is designed for neuro-typical brains. Neurodiversity does pose challenges but it is also a gift that bring benefits and skills.

Dyslexia

Dyslexia – is when your brain struggles to process written words, meaning learning to read can be difficult and it can also cause issues with spelling.

Dyslexia Depiction in *Mammoth Rider*

Extract - page 25 of *Mammoth Rider*.

Set context – Ash experience of schooling with dyslexia.

'The three of them spent five hours at their computers with earphones rammed in their ears, having lessons, Ash hated it. She tried to keep up, but the class was too fast for her to read anything. Ash needed time to concentrate on following the words on the monitor. Sounding them out in her head, syllable by syllable, letter by letter, it was so much effort, and she needed to let it sink in if she was to have any chance of understanding what the text said.'

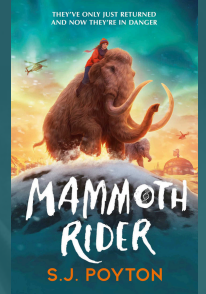
Read extract - page 27 of *Mammoth Rider*.

Set context – Ash is worrying about doing a talk live to her class.

'Just the thought of the letters playing tricks on her, and her trying to sound coherent , made her head dizzy.'

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Discussion Questions...

- How do you think the reading difficulties make Ash feel?
- Why do you think Ash feels extra worries about reading to class?
- What could be done to help Ash?

Dyscalculia

Dyscalculia – is like dyslexia but with numbers, learning times-tables, understanding mathematical principles, or even counting can be stressful.

Dyscalculia Depiction in *Mammoth Rider*

Read extract - page 80 of *Mammoth Rider*.

Context – Ash is at home alone in the evening trying to do her math homework.

‘Her maths homework was sprawled out in front of her, an avalanche of numbers falling across the countertop. She’d been trying to do it hours, but she didn’t get the formula. The harder she concentrated, the more tired she got, and the more the numbers played, switch places and changing sequence, making it impossible to get the answer right.

Her eyes stung, her head hurt, frustration and disappointment bubbling up in her stomach.’

Followed by extract - page 81 *Mammoth Rider* (or read the whole way from the first extract to this one.)

‘Ash’s feeling surged and she picked up her maths book and lobbed it across the room. It flew through the air, lose pages fluttering out, landed with a thud by the door.’

Discussion Questions...

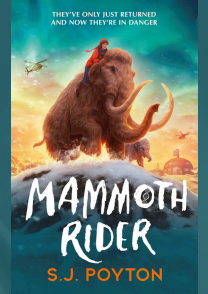
- Why do you think Ash threw her maths book?
- Do you think that the time of day was impacting her experience? It is late in the evening - do you think tiredness can make it worse?
- How do you think having difficulties with decoding numbers may impact day to day life?

Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia - is like the other two but with coordination and dexterity, it can take a long time to work out if you are left or right-handed. It can be a struggle to tell left from right. People with dyspraxia are often mistaken for being clumsy.

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Dyspraxia Depiction in *Mammoth Rider*

Read extract - page 14 *Mammoth Rider*.

Context setting – many people with dyspraxia, have coordination challenges and find things like tying shoelaces, and doing up buttons very tricky.

‘Ash grabbed her keycard, lobbed her rucksack over her shoulder and pulled her trainers on, tucking the laces inside the shoe. She did not have the time to painstakingly try to tie them now, not if they were going to get to school on time.’

Discussion Questions

- Do you think Ash may be embarrassed about her coordination challenges?
- How do you think coordination and difficulties getting dressed could impact day to day life?
- Can you think of any things that could make Ash's life easier?

Neurodiversity – Gifts and Skills

In *Mammoth Rider* Ash uses her skills of observation to see connections and patterns other people don't see.

She uses these skills to interpret the mammoths' behaviours helping save the day.

Ash is also very empathic, caring of others, animal and human.

- Can you think of an example in the book of Ash using these skills?
- How do you think she could use these skills more?

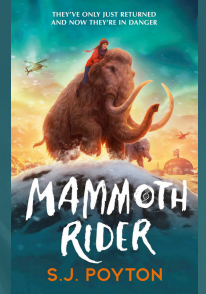
Mammoth Rider Accessibility

Mammoth Rider has been designed to make it as readable as possible. It has been typeset to the Dyslexia Associations Guidelines with dyslexia friendly font with more spacing and justified to the left to make tracking easier.

- Do you find reading *Mammoth Rider* easier than other books?
- Would you like to see more books with text like this?

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Notes about the Author

Mammoth Rider is an own-voice, which means the writer S.J. Poyton is neurodiverse with dyslexia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia, and draws on her own lived experiences to write Ash's character. She was still struggling to read key stage one texts in secondary school. She has found coping mechanisms and learnt to ask for help. Which means she was able to write this book.

To Sum Up

You probably know someone with neurodiversity, or maybe you are neurodiverse yourself. Neurodiversity can cause challenges and frustrations, but also brings skills - some of the most intelligent people to ever have lived were neurodiverse – including Leonardo DaVinci who was dyslexic and invented a flying machine four centuries before flight was achieved! Here are some things to think about...

- How do we ensure neurodiversity does not define or limit anyone.
- How can we help support neurodiverse people, to lessen their struggles and to help them reach their potential.

For more educational resources and mammoth content visit www.mammothrider.com

