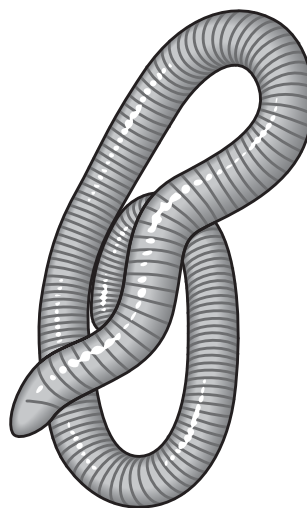This poem is by Eric Finney.

Don't Tread on Worms!

I'm asking you nicely:
Please don't tread on worms –
Even though you dislike
All their wriggles and squirms.
You see, there's a great deal
About the earthworm
That deserves your regard
And respect and concern.
First, the tunnel it makes
In the darkness down there
Let into the ground
Both water and air
And it swallows each day
Dead leaves and such stuff
Along with much earth –
It can't get enough!
Then out it all comes
As nice crumbly soil –
Saving the gardener
Much back-breaking toil.
If you think about that
You'll find it confirms
The idea that you shouldn't
Be nasty to worms.

(PS. They're food
For the birds and the fishes
Though these uses may well be
Against a worm's wishes.)

This text is from *The Usborne Book of Myths and Legends* by Anna Milbourne, Heather Amery and Gillian Doherty.

A Bag Full of Stories

For thousands of years, all around the world, people have been telling stories. Often, they weren't written down, but told aloud, passed along from person to person. You might come across similar stories from opposite sides of the world. However they travel, stories have a life of their own...

"Oh, please tell me another story. Please," begged Lom, even though his eyelids were heavy with sleep.

"No, it's late. You must go to bed now," said Lom's old servant. Reluctantly, Lom snuggled down, with the story he had just heard whirling around in his head.

Every night since he was a small boy, the old servant had told Lom wonderful stories – about powerful gods and goddesses, terrifying dragons and monsters, and all kinds of cunning animals. Lom would hang on to his every word, and wish and wish that each story would never come to an end.

Lom often boasted to his friends about the stories the old servant told him. "You just wouldn't believe how good they are," he'd say.

"Won't you tell them to us?" they asked again and again. "They sound so exciting."

But Lom refused. "They're *my* stories," he said, "and I won't tell them to anyone."

Sometimes, though, when Lom was by himself, he would whisper the stories into a bag. Now, this might seem like a very strange thing to do, but Lom did like to tell stories; he was just too selfish to share them with his friends.

The years passed and Lom grew into a handsome young man. The time came for him to marry.

The night before the wedding, the old servant was waiting for Lom in his room when he thought he heard whispering. It seemed to be coming from a bag hanging on the door.

"It's not fair. He's getting married in the morning," muttered a voice. "Think of all the fun he'll be having while we're all squashed in this smelly old bag."

"He should set us free," grumbled another voice. "Surely everybody knows stories need to be told. It's not right to keep us all to himself."

"No, it's not fair to treat us like this," said a third. "We should teach him a lesson."

"What sort of lesson?" came a whole chorus of excited voices from inside the bag.

Name:	Class:	Date:

Don't Tread on Worms!

1 Look at these lines from the poem. **Find** and **copy two words** which describe the way a worm moves.

> I'm asking you nicely:
> Please don't tread on worms –
> Even though you dislike
> All their wriggles and squirms.
> You see, there's a great deal
> About the earthworm
> That deserves your regard
> And respect and concern.

1 _____

2 _____

AF2

1 mark

---

2 *You see, there's a great deal*
About the earthworm
That deserves your regard
And respect and concern.

According to the poet, why do worms deserve your *regard and respect and concern*? Explain your answer as fully as you can, using **your own words**.

_____

_____

AF3

2 marks

---

3 *Saving the gardener*
Much back-breaking toil.

Think about the phrase *back-breaking toil*. Which of the following could replace it in the poem? Tick **one**.

a lot of wasted time ☐

much-needed money ☐

hard, painful work ☐

much-needed work ☐

AF2

1 mark

/ 4

Total for this page

4 Look at the *PS.* after the last verse.

a) What other use of worms is mentioned here? _____

b) How might the worms feel about this? _____

---

5 Write **one** word from the poem in each space below to complete the pairs of **rhyming** words. Two have been done for you.

worms	squirms
there	
stuff	enough
	wishes

---

6 Think about the whole poem. What are the main points that the poet makes? Tick **two**.

Worms make tunnels in the ground. ☐

Worms have a useful purpose. ☐

You should think more about gardening. ☐

Worms are nasty, wriggly creatures. ☐

You should treat worms kindly. ☐

---

7 Think about the language in the poem. How does the poet persuade the reader not to be nasty to worms?

_____

_____

Name:	Class:	Date:

A Bag Full of Stories

1 A long time ago, how were stories passed from one person to another?

_____

AF2

1 mark

2 Lom loved the old servant's stories.
How do you know this? Explain and support your answer fully, using the text to help you.

_____

_____

AF3

2 marks

3 **Draw lines** to **match** each phrase with what it shows you about Lom.

Phrase	Lom was...
whirling around his head	very tired
hang on to his every word	thinking about the stories
eyelids were heavy	listening very carefully

AF5

1 mark

4 Why did Lom whisper the stories into a bag instead of telling them to other people? Explain your answer as fully as you can, using the text to help you.

_____

_____

AF3

2 marks

/ 6

Total for this page

5 Look at this section of the text. **Find** and **copy a word or short phrase** that tells you the stories were not happy about being in the bag.

> It seemed to be coming from a bag hanging on the door.
>   "It's not fair. He's getting married in the morning," muttered a voice. "Think of all the fun he'll be having while we're all squashed in this smelly old bag."
>   "He should set us free," grumbled another voice.

_____

AF2

1 mark

6 Think about the whole text. What point is the writer making? Tick the **best** answer.

You hear the same stories all over the world. ☐

You should always try to teach people a lesson. ☐

Stories are for sharing, not just for one person. ☐

Stories are better when they are not written down. ☐

AF6

1 mark

7 The introduction says that *stories have a life of their own...*
How is this true in this text?

_____

AF3

1 mark

8 Which of the following descriptions best fits this text? Tick **one**.

a modern tale about a young boy ☐

an old legend with a message ☐

an ancient story about travelling ☐

a guide to telling a good story ☐

AF7

1 mark

/ 10

Total for this test