Improving Your Reading with Summarising Sheba:
Three Friends

A canoe containing two boys and a man was moving slowly on one of the little lakes in the great northern wilderness of what is now the state of New York. The water, a brilliant blue under skies of the same intense sapphire tint, rippled away gently on either side of the boat, rising in heaps of glittering bubbles as the paddles were lifted for a new stroke. Vast masses of dense green shrubbery crowned the high banks of the lake on every side. Only the pink wildflowers just bursting into bloom gave a break from the solid emerald walls. Except for the canoe and a bird of prey, darting in a streak of silver for a fish, the surface of the water was still and silent.

The three who used the paddles were individual and unique – none of them bearing any resemblance to the other two. The man sat at the back. He was built very powerfully with large muscles. His face had been burned by long days in the sun. He was clothed in tanned deerskin adorned with many little coloured beads. A hatchet and knife were in the broad belt at his waist, and a long rifle lay at his feet.

1. Which of the following would be the most suitable new title for this extract? Tick **one**.

   - ☐ Friendship
   - ☐ Birds of Prey
   - ☐ The Great Outdoors
   - ☐ How to Canoe

2. Sum up the key message of this extract in 20 words or less.

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3. Describe the man in the extract using 15 words or less.

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4. Number the following summaries from 1-5 to show the order in which they appear. The first one has been done for you.

- [ ] A description of the setting is provided.
- [ ] The man's weapons are first mentioned.
- [1] The characters of the story are outlined.
- [ ] A description of the man is provided.
- [ ] The first animal of the text is introduced.

Answers

1. Which of the following would be the most suitable new title for this extract? **Tick one**.

   - [ ] Friendship
   - [ ] Birds of Prey
   - [ ] **The Great Outdoors**
   - [ ] How to Canoe

2. Sum up the key message of this extract in 20 words or less.
   Pupils' own responses, such as: Three friends paddle a canoe on a silent lake which is surrounded by dense shrubbery.

3. Describe the man in the extract using 15 words or less.
   Pupils' own responses, such as: The tanned man wearing deerskin had large, powerful muscles and weapons.

4. Number the following summaries from 1-5 to show the order in which they appear. The first one has been done for you.

   - [2] A description of the setting is provided.
   - [5] The man's weapons are first mentioned.
   - [1] The characters of the story are outlined.
   - [4] A description of the man is provided.
   - [3] The first animal of the text is introduced.