UNIT 3 · TERM 1 · WEEKS 7–9

Nature

"A finding fixes a fact from its year until a later finding replaces it. Method by division tells us about the parts; it never says what a thing is."

The kind of answer: found · Nature on the map

In a child's words. A fact is found by looking, and it stays found until a better look finds otherwise. Taking a thing apart tells you about its parts, not what it is.

The Institute habit

A manufactured fear presented as a fact: the Emergency, and the slogan that things must change now. Against it stands Reynie in the tile room, who looked at the floor and saw rectangles where the sign said squares.

The book

The hidden messages decoded, Sticky in the Waiting Room, the Whisperer discovered.

Week 1 · the kind of answer

Rebuild the tile room in painter's tape and let the child cross it. Begin a noon-shadow log: the length of a stick's shadow, measured every school day to the end of the term.

Week 2 · into the gap

Hang a pendulum over a lazy Susan and turn the base slowly: the swing keeps its plane while the floor turns under it. That is Foucault's finding of 1851. Nature is a gap on the map, so the child writes into it, in Kate's voice, who judges distances by eye: how I know a thing is so.

Week 3 · the case

Galileo. In 1616 the Holy Office's theologians called the sun at the centre heresy, and the Index suspended Copernicus. But whether the earth moves is a question the sciences answer, and a censure of heresy cannot be laid on it. As of 1700 the question is open. From Bradley's finding of 1729 it is settled, each later finding (Bessel in 1838, Foucault in 1851) taking the place of the one before, and the reading of Joshua as

astronomy drops out. “Is the sun at rest?” stays open until someone looks for a finding. Let the child look one up: the sun is moving too, as William Herschel worked out in 1783.

The workshop · suggested

For a child taking the workshop strand, Project 1, the gates. It goes on: the sixteen-wire chips and the multi-way chips. Each test is a finding: a fact you look at, which does not care what you hoped.

The end first

No one carves an acorn into an oak: a natural thing has its end inside it (*Physics* II.1). Bacon wanted only findings and called the search for final causes barren (*De augmentis* III.5). He is right that a finding never says what a thing is for. Ask what does.

Fridays

The honesty question: write down one thing you believed this term that turned out to be wrong, and what showed you.

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