

BIG INTERVIEW



“I WONDER WHAT THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF A DRAGON IS?”

TOM Holland is the voice of Ian Lightfoot, a shy elf who gets an unusual present for his 16th birthday, in Disney Pixar’s *Onward*. We caught up with Tom at the première to find out more.



● **We meet Ian when he’s just turning 16. What’s his story?**

Yes, he’s coming up to 16 and is having a hard time fitting in at school – and his older brother Barley isn’t really helping the situation. He’s not very confident, he’s a bit of an introvert and, on his 16th birthday, his dad, who was a wizard before he died, leaves him a magic staff with the ability to bring him back for the day, so Ian will finally get to meet his dad. But it goes a bit awry, so it is up to Barley and Ian to go on this crazy quest to try to meet their dad.

● **What did you think when you first heard about the story?**

It is definitely an unusual concept! It’s a fantasy film set in a modern society and it explores the idea that technology is kind of taking over the magic of the world. I think sometimes we forget that the world we live in today is pretty magical. We’ve all been a bit obsessed with what is happening in the fake world that exists on our phones, on Instagram and Twitter and all that stuff. I think the most important message of this film is to help young boys understand that expressing your emotions is not something to be ashamed of. Expressing how you feel is something to be proud of and something that you should be rewarded for. I was always very open as a kid and was very lucky because my parents were always very eager to listen. I really hope this film will make people feel more comfortable in expressing or explaining how they feel.



Barley (Chris Pratt) and Ian (Tom Holland) Lightfoot are brothers on a quest

● **If you could bring back somebody for a day, who would it be?**

My grandad Bob is one of the nicest people I know and his dad passed away when he was a baby, so he never got to meet him. So I would bring back my great-grandad so that my grandad could spend the day with him. He doesn’t know what the film is about; he’s going to watch it for the first time at the première with my entire family, so I’m very excited to see how he responds. He’s a real crier though, he cries a lot.

● **What about if you could do magic?**

I’m obsessed with nature and wildlife, and scuba diving is one of my favourite things to do because it’s the only time you can truly be in

a private place. When you are scuba diving with a manta ray, no-one is taking pictures of you, they’re taking pictures of the manta ray. I’ve seen first-hand what plastic and pollution is doing to our oceans and I would really, really like to be able to do something to fix that. So that’s something I’d be very keen to sort out with a bit of magic.

● **How would you feel about being a wizard?**

I was a super *Harry Potter* fan. I was obsessed: I had all the audiobooks, I read all the books, watched the films, and I’ve been to the Wizarding World of *Harry Potter* a bunch of times too, so I would love to be a wizard.

● **The Lightfoot family have a pet dragon – which magical creature would you like for a pet?**

She’s a pretty useless dragon though! If you had a pet dragon that could fly, that would be pretty useful. I do a lot of flying in my life, so if I could have a more eco-friendly way of flying around, that would be great. I wonder what the carbon footprint of a dragon would be? I don’t think it would be that much, so if I could fly around on a dragon, that would be great!

● **What are your memories of being 16?**

I would have been doing my GCSEs, which I did find really tough. I was at secondary school and I’d just finished *Billy Elliot*, where I’d been doing a lot of ballet, so I had a bit of a hard time with bullies. It wasn’t the best time for me but I found my friends, who are still my friends to this day, and I was lucky to have them. A lot of people have it a lot harder than I did and I was very lucky to have my family, who are a strong influence in my life. But I don’t really look back on my 16th and 17th years as fondly as I would like.

● **What advice would you give to our readers who may be going through a similar thing?**

I think there’s no point tackling something by yourself; everything is easier with a bit of help. If you have help readily available, then go to those people. If you don’t, then I’m sure your school will have programmes where you can go and speak to someone if you want to talk to people. I really think that if you feel inclined to get something off your chest, then don’t feel ashamed or embarrassed. Go and speak to someone about it; that’s what I did and that’s what I still do with my parents and my brothers, and I’ve got to say it really helps!

Disney Pixar’s *Onward* is in cinemas now!

GLOSSARY

introvert – Someone who enjoys time to themselves and can be shy
awry – Wrong

manta ray – A large, flat sea fish
carbon footprint – The amount of greenhouse gases produced



Questions on: “I wonder what the carbon footprint of a dragon is?”

Part A: Find and explain the facts

A1. Answer the following quick-fire questions:

What is the title of the film that Tom Holland is being interviewed about?	
What is the name of the character he voices?	
Who voices the character of Barley?	

A2. Summarise the plot of the film.

A3. What would Tom Holland like to sort out with a bit of magic?

A4. Which famous wizard was he a “super fan” of?

A5. What advice does he give to people being bullied?

Part B: Deduce and infer information

B1. What does Tom Holland mean when he says: “I think we sometimes forget that the world we live in today is pretty magical”?

B2. Why would Tom Holland bring his great-grandad back for a day, even though he never met him?

B3. Why is it important to him that when scuba diving, “no-one is taking pictures of you”?

B4. Which of his memories of being 16 are positive and which are negative?

Positive	Negative

B5. Why did Tom Holland have “a bit of a hard time” with bullies?

Part C: Analyse the writing and presentation

C1. Look at the structure of the interview. Why do you think it ends with Tom’s advice?

C2. Tom Holland is quoted as asking: “I wonder what the carbon footprint of a dragon would be?” Suggest why that quotation is also used as the headline.

Part D: Writing task

During the interview, Tom Holland is asked: “Which magical creature would you like for a pet?” If you were asked the same question, what would you answer and why? Write a detailed response with clearly explained reasons for your choice.

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Teacher Answers

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS: News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news 'stories' are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE: The teacher answers are intended to provide a guide to the reading skill each question is practising. Suggestions are given for a starting point for responses that students would be expected to give at the start of KS3. Further suggestions then give fuller, more developed responses that students will work towards by the end of KS3, in preparation for the non-fiction elements of GCSE English language.

Questions on Big Interview with Tom Holland: "I wonder what the carbon footprint of a dragon is?"

PART A

A1. Answer the following quick-fire questions:

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

What is the title of the film that Tom Holland is being interviewed about?	Onward
What is the name of the character he voices?	Ian Lightfoot
Who voices the character of Barley?	Chris Pratt

A2. Summarise the plot of the film.

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point

• Ian Lightfoot is about to turn 16 and he is having trouble fitting in at school because he is quite shy. His older brother Barley isn't helping the situation. Then, on his 16th birthday, Ian finds out that his dad, who was a wizard, left him a magic staff.

Development

• The staff has the ability to bring Ian's dad back for the day. However, things don't go according to plan and Barley and Ian have to go on a quest to try to meet their dad.

A3. What would Tom Holland like to sort out with a bit of magic?

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point

• Tom Holland would like to be able to use magic to fix the problems caused by plastic and pollution.

Development

• Scuba diving is one of his favourite things to do, so he has seen first-hand what plastic and pollution is doing to our oceans.

A4. Which famous wizard was he a "super fan" of?

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point

• He was a super Harry Potter fan.

Development

• He had all the audiobooks, read all the books, watched the films and he went to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter a few times. Indeed, he said he "was obsessed."

A5. What advice does he give to people being bullied?

READING SKILL — Find and explain information

Possible answer

Starting point

• He said that you shouldn't try to tackle the problem by yourself and that you should ask for help.

Development

• He said that if you don't have help readily available then you should ask for help at your school as there are likely to be programmes where you can go to speak to someone.

• He also said that you shouldn't feel embarrassed or ashamed, and that speaking to others really helped him.

PART B

B1. What does Tom Holland mean when he says: “I think we sometimes forget that the world we live in today is pretty magical”?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- I think Tom Holland means that we don’t always appreciate how amazing our world is because we are too obsessed with being on our phones and checking our Instagram and Twitter accounts.

Development

- The film is about magical supernatural forces and the idea that technology is taking over the magic of the world. Holland isn’t being this literal. He is referring to our world being “magical” in terms of it being wonderful. He is obsessed with nature himself so he seems to be encouraging people to stop and appreciate their environment once in a while. He wants people (especially young boys) to have the confidence to harness their emotions without being embarrassed.

B2. Why would Tom Holland bring his great-grandad back for a day, even though he never met him?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- He would bring his great-grandad back for a day because it would please his grandad.

Development

- He is obviously very fond of his grandad because he refers to him as “one of the nicest people [he] know[s].” His grandad never got to meet his dad because he passed away when he was a baby. Therefore, Tom Holland would like to be able to give them the opportunity to spend the day together.

B3. Why is it important to him that when scuba diving, “no-one is taking pictures of you”?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- It is important to Tom Holland that when scuba diving, “no-one is taking pictures of [him],” because, as a celebrity, he must have to put up with people taking pictures of him and intruding on his privacy all the time.

Development

- However, when he is scuba diving with manta rays, everyone is more interested in taking pictures of the manta rays than of him. Therefore, he can feel like an ordinary person and just enjoy being in nature. Indeed, he states that scuba diving is one of his favourite things to do because “it’s the only time you can truly be in a private place”.

B4. Which of his memories of being 16 are positive and which are negative?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answers

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He had just done <i>Billy Elliot</i>, which was obviously a huge achievement. • He found friends who are still his friends to this day. • He has a supportive family who were able to help him when he was going through a hard time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He found doing his GCSE examinations “really tough”. • He was bullied.

B5. Why did Tom Holland have “a bit of a hard time” with bullies?

READING SKILL — Infer information and justify with evidence from the text

Possible answer

Starting point

- He had a hard time with bullies because when he did *Billy Elliot*, he did a lot of ballet.

Development

- Bullies tend to pick on anyone who is doing something different and, stereotypically, ballet is associated with girls. There is often a lack of acceptance of boys wearing tights and dancing gracefully to classical music. It is also likely that the bullies were jealous of Tom’s success and were trying to find any excuse to be unkind.

PART C

C1. Look at the structure of the interview. Why do you think it ends with Tom’s advice?

READING SKILL — Identify benefits of text organisation and presentation

Possible answer

Starting point

- It is appropriate that the interview ends with Tom’s advice because it is a positive note to end on after the mention of

bullies.

Development

• First News is aimed at young people, so some readers might be experiencing the same problems that Tom had when he was a teenager. Ending with his advice is reassuring and as it is the last thing that readers will read, it makes it memorable.

C2. Tom Holland is quoted as asking: “I wonder what the carbon footprint of a dragon would be?” Suggest why that quotation is also used as the headline.

READING SKILL — Explain methods used by the writer with appropriate use of terminology

Possible answer**Starting point**

• Using the quotation as the headline makes it really quirky and funny.

Development

• Environmental issues are always in the media at the moment, but this headline stands out because of the mention of the carbon footprint of a dragon! It is a much more interesting and original headline than if the title of the film was given as the headline. Yet it still links to the film because the Lightfoot family in Onward have a pet dragon. Tom Holland is also pictured next to the quotation, so it makes the reader curious to know what he was talking about and thus it hooks the reader.

PART D – WRITING TASK

During the interview, Tom Holland is asked: “Which magical creature would you like for a pet?” If you were asked the same question, what would you answer and why? Write a detailed response with clearly explained reasons for your choice.

READING SKILL — Develop personal ideas from reading news stories

Possible answer

If I could have a magical creature as a pet then I would choose a phoenix. A phoenix looks like an eagle, but it has stunning golden and red plumage so it would make a beautiful pet.

Phoenixes are really positive creatures because they can regenerate and the idea of rebirth is extremely exciting. I also think that it would be incredible to watch because the birds burst into flames and then rise out of their ashes. How amazing is that? The phoenix is the ultimate symbol of strength because it never truly dies. That also means that I would never have to mourn for a beloved pet!

Furthermore, the tears of a phoenix are said to be very special because they have healing powers. They can heal any wound. Therefore, having a pet phoenix would be like having your own medical assistant. No more annoying plasters for me!

Phoenixes are pretty and powerful. What more could you want in a magical pet?