Reading Booklet

Year 6 Reading Assessment - Non-Fiction



The Telephone Box

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The famous British red telephone box has been around now for nearly a century. It is a well-known symbol for tourists to Great Britain, similar to black London taxis or red double-decker buses.

Before the invention of the mobile phone, and even before it became common to have a telephone in the house, the public telephone box was a valuable facility for making calls to friends and family. Nowadays with most people owning mobile phones, there is far less demand for the public telephone box. Consequently, tens of thousands have been removed.

History

There have been a number of different designs for the public telephone box in Britain. Known as kiosks, the first standard version was introduced in 1921 and many slightly redesigned models have appeared since.

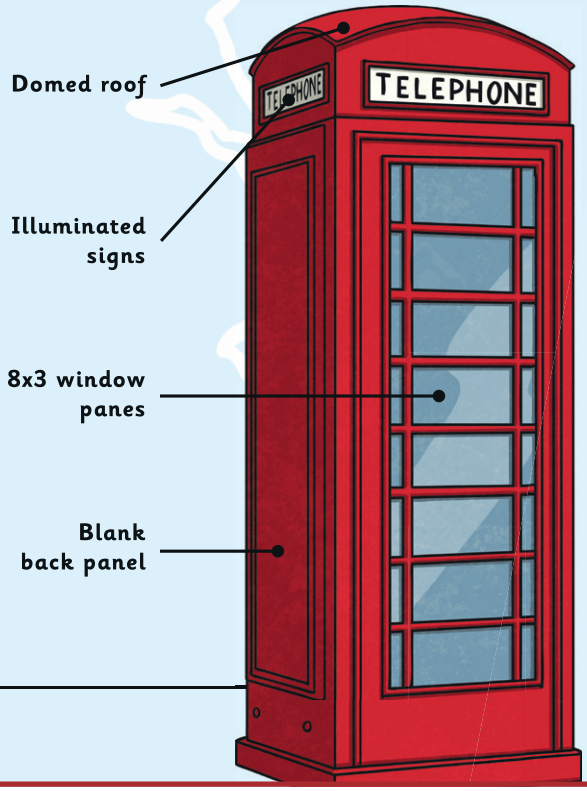
Versions K2 and K3 were designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, who also worked on famous landmarks such as Liverpool Cathedral, Waterloo Bridge and Battersea Power Station. Other models which followed directly after were also modelled on this design, though credited to the Engineering Department of the General Post Office.

The K6 design (Kiosk Number 6) is the most recognised version of the red telephone box. It has a concrete base and cast-iron sections bolted together with a domed roof. At the back is a 'blank' panel, whilst on other sides are an array of 3x8 window panes. Above each side is an illuminated 'Telephone' sign. It was first introduced in 1936 and continued production until 1968 with around 60,000 kiosks installed around the country. This made it the first version to be extensively used outside London. Although now in decline, thousands still remain in place.

The Kiosk No.6 (K6) design featured 8 x 3 window panes with a domed roof, illuminated signs at the top and a 'blank' back panel.

A Modern Redesign

Thankfully, in 2009, an 'adopt-a-kiosk' scheme was introduced where rarely used telephone boxes could be adopted for other uses. This idea has happily helped to preserve the famous phone boxes – even if some of them have begun to look a little different now! More than one has been converted into a tiny library; a London phone box has become a coffee shop; another in North Yorkshire became an art gallery whilst some have even been used to install life-saving defibrillator equipment to treat heart failures.



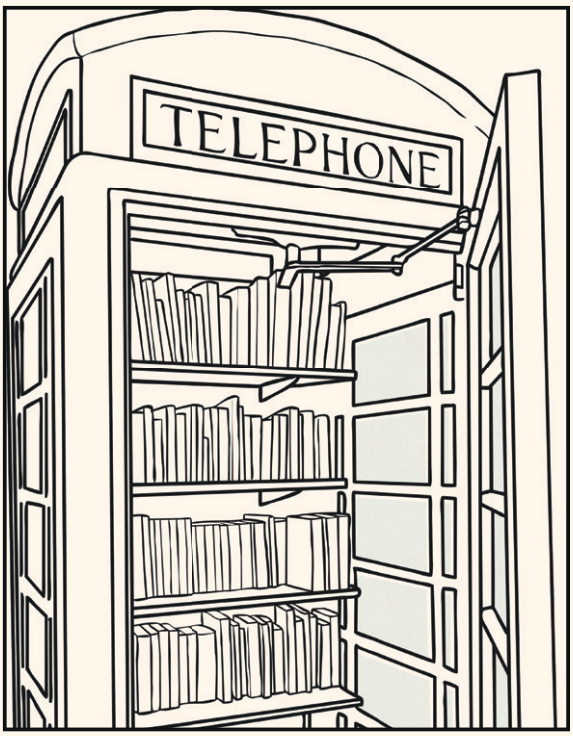
NOVEL IDEA FOR VILLAGE PHONE BOX!

A rarely used village telephone box has been given a new lease of life after being bought by local people and turned into a miniature library.

Campaigners in the rural village of Smallsden were able to purchase the iconic red telephone box for just £1, after it had stood unused for several years.

Local resident Eileen Greenhouse from the Smallsden Book Club said that they had been missing out on a library for years and this was the perfect solution.

'We have a village post office and newsagent, but we really wanted somewhere that we could borrow and exchange books. The phone box is right in the middle of the village green but it was starting to look a bit shabby and neglected. Now it has not only been spruced up, it has a genuine use for local people to enjoy again.'



Surprisingly, the telephone box is not the first in the country to be turned into a library. Others in Derbyshire and Somerset, amongst other places, have set the trend. Now, the folks of Smallsden can choose from up to 200 books housed inside the tiny space – all of them donated by residents. Although the phone box is locked at night, it is open six days a week, relying on visitors to borrow or exchange books for their own unwanted novels.

Parish Councillor Albert Johnson said the new library was not just a valuable resource but was swiftly becoming a local landmark, bringing people into the area.

'We've had visitors coming from neighbouring towns and cities just to look at our old phone box! Hopefully, the new tourists will also pop into the village pub for a drink or a bite to eat and take a souvenir from the newsagents' gift selection whilst they're here!'

The telephone box is now thought to be the smallest library in the country.