Comprehension Homework

Week beginning 18/05/20
This week the text is 'I Can Jump Puddles' by Alan Marshall. If you can get a copy of the book, it is a really good read.

Alan Marshall was born in South Eastern Australia in 1902. As a child, he suffered from Infantile Paralysis, also known as Polio. This illness left Alan unable to walk without crutches. In this extract, Alan describes how people around him reacted when he fell.

Glossary for words in the text:

- **Buggy** - horse drawn carriage
- **yarn** - chat
- **Colts** - young male horses
- **chaff house** - farm building
- **Fell** - deadly
- **pole-axed** - stunned
- **steer** - young bull
I had not long started school when I contracted Infantile Paralysis. The epidemic that began in Victoria in the early 1900s moved into the country districts from the more populated areas, striking down children on isolated farms and in bush homes. I was the only victim in Turalla, and the people for miles around heard of my illness with a feeling of dread. They associated the word 'Paralysis' with idiocy, and the query 'Have you heard if his mind is affected?' was asked from many a halted buggy, the driver leaning over the wheel for a yarn with a friend met on the road.

For a few weeks the neighbours drove quickly past our house, looking hurriedly, with a new interest, at the old picket fence, the unbroken colts in the stockyard and my tricycle lying on its side by the chaff house. They called their children in earlier, wrapped them more warmly and gazed at them anxiously when they coughed or sneezed.

'It hits you like a blow from God,' said Mr Carter, the baker, who believed that this was so. He was the Superintendent of the Bible Class and proclaimed in his weekly announcements, as he faced his pupils with a sombre look:

Next Sunday morning at Divine Service the Rev. Walter Pobertson, B.A. will offer up prayers for the speedy recovery of this brave boy sorely stricken with a fell disease.

'They say you breathe the germ in,' he said. 'It's just floating about in the air-everywhere. You never know where it is. It must have been just floating past his nose when he breathed in and that was the end of him. He went down like a pole-axed steer. If he'd been breathing out when that germ passed he'd've been right.'

He paused, then added sadly, 'Now you're praying for him.'
Questions on the text week beginning 18/05/20

1. Which word could the author have used instead of query?

2a. Which of the following words best describes the local community's response to Alan's illness?
   i. Happiness  ii. anger  iii. confusion  iv. curiosity

2b. Use evidence from the text to explain your answer to part a?

3. Why do you think people wrapped their children up 'more warmly' while Alan was ill?

4. Write down one simile from paragraphs 2 and 3.

5. Do you think Alan’s father felt optimistic or pessimistic about Alan’s chances of recovery? Explain your answer.

6. The title of Alan’s book is 'I Can Jump Puddles'. What does this title suggest about Alan’s attitude towards his disability? Explain your answer.
1. Question

2a. iv. Curiosity

2b. They ask questions about him and they look at his house “with new interest” This shows they are curious about his illness.

3. Because they are worried their children would catch polio too and they thought that they might be able to prevent them from getting ill by wrapping them up warmly.

4. “It hits you like a blow from God”

5. I think he felt pessimistic. He says “that’s the end of him,” which suggests that he didn’t think Alan would recover or have much of a life.

6. It suggests that he didn’t let his disability stop him doing the things he wanted to do. Even though the illness meant that it was difficult for him to walk, he still found a way to jump puddles.