

# Nicholas Nickleby



## The story

Ralph and Nicholas Nickleby were brothers who grew up on a farm in Devon with their mother and father. When their parents died, Nicholas lived on the farm with the cows and the sheep. Ralph moved to London so that he could make a lot of money. Nicholas fell in love and married his neighbour's daughter. They had two children, a boy, Nicholas, named after his father, and a daughter, Kate. The children were sent to the best schools.

However, the money did not last and they could not afford to pay the bills. Nicholas, the father, worried but he was not able to make money like his brother Ralph. Nicholas died of a broken heart when his son was almost nineteen and Kate was seventeen. The farm had to be sold and Nicholas's wife took her son and daughter to London. She wrote a letter to Ralph Nickleby and asked him to take care of them. Ralph was unhappy about giving his money to his dead brother's wife and children. He visited them and showed his nephew an advertisement in the newspaper for the job of assistant schoolmaster at Dotheboys Hall in Yorkshire. The pay was only five pounds a year and it was very far from London. Ralph told Nicholas that if he got the job, Ralph would help his mother and sister. If he refused the job, he would do nothing for any of them. So Nicholas went with his uncle to talk to the schoolmaster, Mr Wackford Squeers, and he got the job.

Nicholas hated life at Dotheboys Hall because Mr Squeers was cruel to the boys, giving them little food and very old clothes. Mr Squeers gave his son, young Wackford, the clothes that belonged to the other boys. Smike, a servant boy at the school, was treated even worse than the others. He was often beaten by Mr Squeers. One day Smike ran away, but he did not get far before Mr Squeers found him. Mr Squeers wanted to teach him a lesson, so he beat Smike violently in front of everyone. Nicholas had had enough. He took the cane from Mr Squeers and beat him badly. Nicholas packed his bags and left Dotheboys Hall forever. When Nicholas, who had no money, was walking back to London, Smike caught up with him and begged Nicholas to take him with him.

Back in London, Ralph had moved Nicholas' mother and sister to a smaller house, which was dirty, cold and dark. He found Kate a job in a dressmaker's shop, working very long hours. Nicholas found out where his family had moved. When he arrived, his uncle was there. Ralph had received a letter from Mr Squeers' daughter, telling him that Nicholas almost killed her father and stole one of the boys. Nicholas left London, with Smike, to look for a job. Nicholas and Smike found jobs with a travelling theatre group, working for Mr Vincent Crummles. Nicholas and Smike worked hard, and were very happy.

One day Nicholas got a letter from his sister Kate, telling him that she and their mother wanted Nicholas to come back to London. Nicholas returned and was given a job in a firm run by the Cheeryble brothers. They also provided Nicholas, his mother, sister and Smike with a cottage to live in at a low rent.

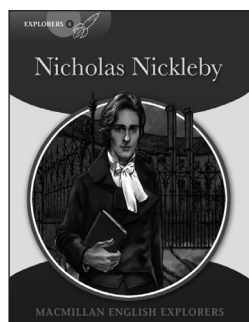
One evening, Mr Squeers and his son kidnapped Smike. But before getting Smike back to Yorkshire, John Browdie, who knew about Mr Squeers' cruelty, rescued the poor boy. Ralph Nickleby then tried to help Mr Squeers get Smike back, but failed. Squeers agreed to help Ralph get a will from an old woman, by stealing it from her. Mr Squeers was caught and sent to prison. The boys at Dotheboys Hall celebrated and they all escaped the horrible school.

Smike was weak and becoming more and more ill, so Nicholas took him to Devon. There, Smike died. Afterwards, Ralph Nickleby discovered that he was the father of Smike. This news shocked him and he realised his life was worth nothing, so he disappeared, never to be seen again.

After Nicholas took over the Cheeryble brother's business, he and his wife, Madeline, and their children visited Smike's grave often. The family returned to the farm in Devon and lived in peace and happiness.

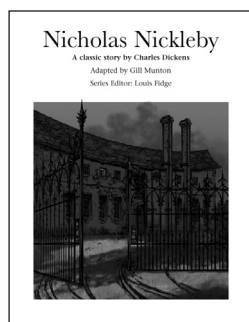
## Introducing the book

### The cover



- Hold up the cover. Read the book's title to and with the class.
- Talk about the picture. Ask *When do you think the story takes place? Why do you think the man is holding a book? Where do you think he is?*
- Ask *What do you think the story is going to be about?*

### The title page



- Ask the children to turn to the title page. Ask *Who is the author?*
- Hold up your own book and point to the picture. Ask *Does this look like a nice place to live? Why (not)?*
- Ask *Would you like to live in this big house? Why do you think there is a big fence and gates round the house?*
- Explain that the story has been adapted (made simpler) by another writer.

## The contents page

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- Ask the children to turn to the contents page. Explain that the Contents list tells us what is in the book.
- Ask *How many chapters are there?* Read the chapter titles to and with the class. Briefly explain any unfamiliar words (most will be covered in the chapter notes). Ask the children what page each chapter starts on.
- Point out that at the end of the book there is a poem (on page 90) and some information about Victorian schools (beginning on page 92), as well as some information about the author Charles Dickens (on page 96).
- Ask questions about each chapter title to stimulate the children's interest, for example:
  - Chapter 1: *Who do you think you will read about in this chapter?*
  - Chapter 4: *Where do the letters come from?*
  - Chapter 6: *What city do the Nicklebys move to?*
- Tell the children to do the related activity on page 1 of their Workbook.



You can play the audio download of the story at any time you choose. See [www.macmillanenglish.com/younglearners](http://www.macmillanenglish.com/younglearners)

# Chapter 1

## The Nickleby family history

### Pages 3 to 11

"That's the job for you, Nicholas!" said Ralph. He folded the newspaper and put it back in his pocket. "You can be a schoolteacher at Dotheboys Hall!"

Kate spoke for the first time. "But the pay is very low, sir," she said. "It is only five pounds a year! And Yorkshire is so far away."

"If Nicholas doesn't like the job I have found for him, he must find another job for himself," replied Ralph angrily.

"If I do take this job, sir, what will happen to my mother and my sister?" Nicholas asked.

"I will look after them. But if you don't take the job, they will get no help from me!" Ralph replied.

"Then let us go at once, Uncle Ralph!" cried Nicholas. "Let us go to the Snowball Hotel and meet Mr Wackford Squeers!"

CHAPTER 1  
The Nickleby family history

Ralph and Nicholas Nickleby were brothers. They lived in a farm in Devon with their mother and father. The brothers stayed at school during the week but they went home to see their parents each weekend.

One Saturday evening, the two brothers were sitting by the fire with their mother.


"Tell us about when you were young, Mother," said Ralph.

"When we got married, your father and I were very poor," their mother replied. "We never had enough money for food and life was very hard."

"We're not poor now, Mother," said Ralph.

"No – one day, your father's uncle died and left him five thousand pounds!"

"Five thousand pounds! That's a lot of money!" said Nicholas.



Their mother continued with her story. "We bought this farm with some of the money and began to grow our own vegetables. We were careful with the money because we didn't want to waste it."

"When I grow up, I am going to have lots of money," Ralph said. "I will do whatever I can to get it."

Nicholas said nothing. He was thinking about his future. He decided to be careful with his money. He didn't want to take any risks and lose it all. He decided that he wanted to stay on the farm. Life was not very exciting there, but it was safe.

When the brothers returned to school on Monday, Ralph started to make money straight away. He gave his toys and books to other boys in his class – but they had to pay to borrow them! When the other boys needed money, Ralph gave them money, too – but he made them pay back more than they borrowed. The two brothers grew up and left school. Ralph left the farm and went to London to earn money. When their parents died some years later, Nicholas stayed on the farm and lived a quiet life with his cows and his sheep.

One day, Nicholas went to visit a neighbour and he fell in love with his neighbour's daughter. After a short time, they got married and lived together on the farm.

Nicholas and his wife had two children, a boy and a girl. The boy was called Nicholas, like his father, and the girl was called Kate. The Nicklebys wanted their children to have a good education so they sent them to the best schools.

One day, Nicholas was looking at some papers. "Look! Here's another bill from Kate's school. It is very expensive to give a child a good education!" he said.

"Yes, it is," his wife replied. "But young Nicholas is nearly sixteen now. He will leave school soon and get a good job. And Kate is fourteen – she will leave school soon, too. Then there won't be any school bills."

"That is true," Nicholas said. "But I don't have much money. I've spent so much! I don't have enough money to pay this school bill."

"You could try to be a businessman and make some money, like your brother Ralph," his wife said.


"But you can lose all your money in business!" Nicholas replied.

"It's the only answer," his wife said. "We need to make more money, Nicholas."

So Mr Nickleby tried to be a businessman for some years. But he was not as good at business as his brother.

"I am not very good at this. I've lost all my money!" Nicholas said to his wife.

"Now we will have to sell our farm to pay the bills!" He sat in his chair and put his head in his hands.



"Don't give up," his wife said. "Your luck will soon change!"


But Nicholas went to bed. The doctor came to see him. All the neighbours came, too. Everyone told Nicholas to get out of bed, but he didn't want to.

As he lay in bed, he talked about his school days with Ralph and the happy times they had. Then he said to his wife, "I am going to leave this world now, my dear. Look after our children!"

With that, Mr Nicholas Nickleby went to sleep. He never woke up.

Ralph Nickleby lived in a big house in London, in Golden Square. On the front door there was a brass plate with the words 'Office' on it. In the office, Ralph did business with the help of his assistant, Newman Nogs. Newman Nogs was a tall, thin man with a red nose. Every day, he sat in a little room from nine-thirty until five o'clock. Ralph made his assistant work hard and didn't pay him much money.

One day, Ralph was returning from a business meeting when Newman Nogs came out to meet him in the street.



"This letter came for you, sir," he said. Ralph took the letter and stared at the envelope. "It was posted in the Strand, London," he said. "And the envelope has a black border – that tells me that someone has died."

Ralph looked at his gold pocket watch. He did not have much time. He opened the envelope and pulled out the letter. He read it quickly.

"I was right!" Ralph said. "My brother Nicholas has died. He has left a wife and two children, Nicholas and Kate. They are all here in London. The letter says that I am to look after them all! He was angry. My brother never did anything for me. Do you think that's fair, Newman?"

"I don't know, sir," Newman replied.

"I've never met those children. Oh, well. You can go home now, Newman, and I will close the office. I can go to the Strand," Ralph said.

Ralph Nickleby knocked on the door of an old house in the Strand. A servant girl with a dirty face answered the door.

"Can I help you, sir?" she asked.

"I am looking for Mrs Nickleby. Is she at home?"

"She lives upstairs, sir," the girl replied.

Ralph went in and climbed the narrow stairs. At the top, he knocked on the door. He was tired after the long climb.

A pretty girl of about seventeen opened the door. Ralph took off his hat and went in. Inside the room, he saw a woman dressed in black clothes. A young man was sitting next to her.

The young man stood up to welcome him.

"You must be my nephew, young Nicholas Nickleby," said Ralph.

"That is my name, sir," the young man replied.

Then Ralph looked at the woman and spoke to her. "And you must be my sister-in-law – the wife of my poor dear brother. How do you do, my dear?" Ralph said. He took her hand. "I am very sorry."

"He was a good man," said Mrs Nickleby sadly. Then she wiped her eyes with a white handkerchief.

"I'm afraid good men die every day," replied Ralph. "What illness did your husband have? You didn't tell me in your letter."

"I don't know. I think he died of a broken heart," said Mrs Nickleby.

"That can't be true!" Ralph said angrily. "People die of a broken neck, but no one dies of a broken heart!"

The young man, Nicholas, did not like his uncle talking to his mother in this way.

"Some people have no heart to break," he said quietly. Ralph turned and stared at his nephew.

"How old is this rude young man?" he asked.

"Nearly nineteen," Mrs Nickleby replied.

"Tell me, Nicholas, how are you going to earn money?" Ralph asked.

"I don't know, sir. But I will not take money from my mother," Nicholas replied proudly. "And I will not ask you for money!"

"Mrs Nickleby, tell your son to be careful what he says to me," Ralph shouted.

"Be quiet, Nicholas. Let your uncle speak," Mrs Nickleby said quietly to her son.


Ralph turned back to his sister-in-law.

"Do you have any money?" he asked her.

"None," she replied. "I am not worried about myself, but I hope you will help your brother's children."

"Hmmm. I see," said Ralph. "You have got no money, and now you want some of mine?"

Ralph walked angrily to the end of the room and then walked back again.



"And what about your daughter? What kind of work can she do?" Ralph asked.

"Kate went to a very good school. She can speak French ...," replied Mrs Nickleby.

"Pah! That's no good! She must become a dressmaker or something like that," Ralph said. He turned back to Nicholas. "Do you want to work, young man?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," Nicholas replied.

Ralph pulled a newspaper from his coat pocket. He unfolded it and put it on the table.

"Read that!" he said. He pointed to an advertisement on one of the pages.

Nicholas read the advertisement aloud:

**DOTHEBOYS HALL**  
GRETA BRIDGE  
YORKSHIRE

AT THIS EXCELLENT SCHOOL, SCHOOLMASTER MR. WACKFORD SQUARES TEACHES ALL SUBJECTS.  
BOYS ARE GIVEN THE BEST FOOD AND CONSIDERABLE LODGINGS.  
BOOKS, CLOTHING AND CHRISTMAS POCKET MONEY.

FEES: TWENTY POUNDS A YEAR  
THIS BEING MR. WACKFORD SQUARES' SHARE OF BOARD AT THE SNOWBALL HOTEL, SNOW HILL, LONDON.

NOTE: ASSISTANT SCHOOLMASTER REQUIRED  
PAID FIVE POUNDS A YEAR.

### Active vocabulary

<i>advertisement</i>	find the verb <i>advertise</i> in <i>advertisement</i>
<i>borrow</i>	the opposite of <i>lend</i>
<i>continue</i>	the third syllable 'ue' sounds like <i>you</i>
<i>decide</i>	'c' sounds like 's'
<i>expensive</i>	three syllables: <i>ex + pen + sive</i>
<i>fair</i>	rhymes with <i>hair, chair, pair</i>
<i>fold</i>	change 'f' to 'g' to make a new word
<i>luck</i>	add 'y' at the end to make this noun an adjective
<i>safe</i>	the opposite is <i>unsafe</i>
<i>wipe</i>	rhymes with <i>pipe</i>

### Passive vocabulary

<i>assistant</i>	<i>business</i>	<i>education</i>	<i>fees</i>
<i>generous</i>	<i>give up</i>	<i>lodgings</i>	<i>pocket money</i>
<i>require</i>	<i>risks</i>	<i>schoolmaster</i>	

### Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activities on page 2 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.

- Read the title of Chapter 1 again. Discuss with the children what a family history is. Ask *Who do you think you will read about?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 3. Ask *How old do you think the two boys are? What is their mother holding? What do you think she is saying? Where do you think they are?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 5. Ask *Who do you think the man is? What do you think he is holding in his hand? How does he feel? How does the boys' mother feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 6. Ask *What is the tall, thin man giving the other man? Where are they?* Discuss how the men are dressed.
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 9. Ask *What do you think the older man is saying to the young man? How does the young man feel? How does the young woman feel? Who do you think the older woman is? How does she feel?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.
- The story begins in Devon, in the south-west of England. It then continues in London, where young Nicholas meets his uncle in an old house on the Strand. The Strand is a big, busy street in the centre of the city. His uncle wants him to get a job in Yorkshire, in the north of England, far from London.
- Dotheboys Hall, in Yorkshire, is a boarding school for boys. The advertisement for the job of Assistant Schoolmaster in Chapter 1 is full of lies, although the reader does not know this in Chapter 1. It is not an 'excellent school', boys are not 'given the best food and comfortable lodgings', and they are not given 'generous pocket money'. It is a school run by a cruel headmaster who steals from the boys and makes their lives miserable. Many of the boys have physical problems or deformities. Sadly, boarding schools like Dotheboys Hall did really exist in Victorian England. Schools like these were run by people who wanted to make money and they did not really care at all about the children, who were treated very badly.
- Read the chapter expressively to the class (or play the audio download). Do not stop to explain anything or to ask questions. Ensure the children are following in their books.
- Choose whichever of the following options is most appropriate for your class:
  - Read the chapter again and encourage the class to read it with you.
  - Read the chapter again, a paragraph at a time, and ask the class (or individuals) to read each paragraph aloud after you.
  - Do not read again yourself. Ask groups or individuals to read the chapter aloud, a paragraph at a time.

## During reading

- The story begins with an account of the family history. The first Nicholas Nickleby in the story is the father of Nicholas Nickleby, the main character. He sends his two sons, Ralph and Nicholas to an expensive boarding school, where they live from Mondays to Fridays. The boys go home to their parents' farm at the weekends.

- Read (or play) the chapter again, a paragraph at a time. Explain the meaning and pronunciation of the words listed as passive vocabulary (and any other unfamiliar words).
- Discuss how the pictures can help the reader guess the meaning of the text.

### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 3 of their Workbook.

- 1 *Where did Ralph and Nicholas Nickleby live?*
- 2 *Why didn't they live with their mother and father seven days a week?*
- 3 *How much money did their father's uncle leave to their father when he died?*
- 4 *What did Ralph and Nicholas's father do with the money?*
- 5 *What did Nicholas decide he was going to do with his money in the future?*
- 6 *What did Ralph do with his toys and books when he went back to school?*
- 7 *Who moved to London when he left school?*
- 8 *How was Nicholas's life different from his brother's life after their parents died?*
- 9 *What were Nicholas's children called?*
- 10 *Why did the Nicklebys want their children to go to the best schools?*
- 11 *What did Nicholas's wife say when he said their children's education was very expensive?*
- 12 *What did Nicholas's wife want him to try to do, so they could pay the school bills?*
- 13 *What happened when Nicholas tried to be a businessman like his brother?*
- 14 *What did the Nicklebys have to do when Nicholas lost all his money?*

- 15 *What happened to Nicholas, the father of Nicholas and Kate?*
- 16 *Where was Ralph Nickleby's office?*
- 17 *Who was Newman Noggs?*
- 18 *Was the letter to Ralph Nickleby posted in Devon or in London?*
- 19 *Who was the letter from, and what did it say?*
- 20 *What did Mrs Nickleby say her husband had died from?*
- 21 *Why did young Nicholas say, 'Some people have no heart to break'?*
- 22 *How old were Nicholas and Kate?*
- 23 *What did Mrs Nickleby tell Ralph she hoped he would do?*
- 24 *What did Ralph decide Kate must become?*
- 25 *What was the name of the school in the advertisement? Where was it?*
- 26 *What was the name of the schoolmaster?*
- 27 *What did the school require?*
- 28 *What did Kate say about the pay and about Yorkshire?*
- 29 *What did Ralph say he would do if Nicholas took the job, and if he didn't take the job?*
- 30 *Why did Nicholas go with his uncle to the Snowball Hotel?*

- Ask the children to find examples of people speaking in the chapter. Draw attention to the speech marks and discuss how they are used. In each case, ask the children what the exact words were that were spoken by the person. Elicit that these are the words that go inside the speech marks. Discuss the various words used to describe how the person spoke, for example *said, replied, asked, shouted*.

- Ask the children to find examples of exclamation and question marks in the text. Read the sentences in which they appear and talk about when we use them. Point out that the intonation used for questions and exclamations is different.
- Ask the children to find and read any two-syllable words in the text. Ask them to tap out the syllables as they read the words (for example, mo – ther).
- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *How do you think the parents of Ralph and Nicholas said to each other when they received the five thousand pounds?*
- 2 *What do you think Ralph meant when he said, 'I will do whatever I can to get it.'?*
- 3 *Why do you think Nicholas decided he wanted a safe life and not an exciting life?*
- 4 *Whose plans for the future are more like yours, Ralph's or Nicholas's? Why?*
- 5 *Whose life do you think will be easier, Ralph's or Nicholas's? Why?*
- 6 *Why was Nicholas worried about losing his money in business?*

- 7 *Do you think Nicholas's wife liked her idea of her husband becoming a businessman? Why (not)?*
- 8 *How do you think the father Nicholas felt when he went to bed and would not get up?*
- 9 *What do you think Nicholas's neighbours said to his wife?*
- 10 *Why do you think Newman Noggs had a red nose?*
- 11 *How did Ralph feel when he read that his brother had died? Why?*
- 12 *What do you think Newman Noggs thought of Ralph Nickleby?*
- 13 *What do you think Ralph thought of the place where his brother's family lived in the Strand? Why?*
- 14 *What did Ralph mean when he said to his sister-in-law, 'How do you do? I am very sorry'?*
- 15 *Why did Mrs Nickleby say her husband died of a broken heart?*
- 16 *What did Nicholas think of his uncle? How do you know?*
- 17 *Why do you think Ralph wanted Nicholas to take the job in Yorkshire?*
- 18 *Do you think that Dotheboys Hall was a good school? Why (not)?*
- 19 *Do you think Ralph Nickleby treated his brother's family well? Why (not)?*

### Stage 2 comprehension (extra)

*Author's style and use of language* It is important to get a story off to a good, exciting start so that it encourages the reader to want to continue and find out how the story develops. Ask *Do you think the author has succeeded in making you want to read on? Was the first chapter interesting? What has happened that you want to find out more about? Do you want to find out if Nicholas takes the job at Dotheboys Hall? Do you want to find out if Ralph really will help his sister-in-law and Kate?* Look back at some of the descriptions in the chapter and discuss them. Ask *Did the author use interesting words and expressions?* Ask the children to write down some of their favourite words and phrases from the chapter.

- Discuss what the children discovered about some of the characters in this chapter, for example young Nicholas Nickleby, Kate Nickleby, Ralph Nickleby and Newman Noggs. Discuss with the children the difference in character between the two brothers, Nicholas and Ralph, when they were children and later when they were adults. Ask the children which of the two men they would prefer as their father, and why.
- Write on the board: *businessman, schooldays, schoolmaster, snowball*. Ask the children which two words make up each of these compound words. Elicit other compound words they know.
- Write the word *Dotheboys* on the board. Ask the children to find words 'hiding' inside this word (do, the, boys). Then ask them to use the letters in this word to make new words (for example, *toys, they, both*, etc.).
- Talk about 'luck' in this chapter. Ask *Who had bad luck in this chapter? Who had good luck?* Ask the children to talk about times when they have had good luck and bad luck.
- Explain that in the past people looked for jobs in newspaper advertisements. Write *advertisement* on the board. Explain that this is a noun, which comes from the verb *advertise*. Elicit from the children what they know about Dotheboys Hall so far. Ask *Would you like to go to this school in Yorkshire? Why (not)?* Discuss the meaning of 'generous pocket money'. Ask the children if they receive pocket money and how much would be 'generous' today.
- Bring a map of England to the class and point out Devon, London and Yorkshire on the map. Talk about how long it took to travel to these places in Victorian times. You could ask the children to do a little research into Victorian England.
- Talk about the clothes people wore at this time in England. Ask the children to look at the pictures again and describe the clothing.
- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*

# Chapter 2

## Mr Wackford Squeers

### Pages 12–20

CHAPTER 2  
Mr Wackford Squeers

Mr Wackford Squeers was sitting in the coffee room of the Snowball Hotel. He was staring out of the window. He was a small, thin man with only one eye and a scary face. He was dressed all in black.

He looked at the coffee room clock. 'Half-past three,' he said. 'I don't think I'll get any more customers today.'

He turned to look at a small boy who sat in a corner on a little wooden trunk. The boy looked frightened.

Mr Squeers hit the boy on the side of his head. The boy was doing nothing wrong, but the schoolmaster was cross. He continued talking to himself.

'When I came to London last summer, I took ten boys back to the school with me. Twenty times ten is two hundred pounds! I am leaving very early tomorrow morning and I have only five boys! Twenty times five is one hundred pounds. Only one hundred pounds! Where are all the boys? Don't their parents know what a good school I have and how cheap it is?'

The boy coughed. Mr Squeers stared at him. 'What's the matter, boy?' he shouted. 'No-nothing, sir,' the boy said quietly. 'Nothing,' asked the schoolmaster. 'Please, sir, I coughed.' The little boy began to shake with fear, and the trunk he sat on shook too.

'You coughed? Then why did you say, "Nothing"?' shouted the schoolmaster. The boy began to cry, so Mr Squeers hit the side of his head again. 'When you are in Dotheboys Hall, I will give you something to cry about!' he shouted angrily.



12

13

Then a waiter came into the coffee room and Mr Squeers turned and smiled at him. 'Two gentlemen are here to see you, sir,' said the waiter. 'Ask the gentlemen to come in!' Mr Squeers said. He turned to the little boy and whispered, 'Stop crying.' Mr Squeers did not look at Ralph and Nicholas Nickleby when they came into the room. He continued to talk to the boy, but now he spoke in a gentle way. 'Don't cry, my dear child. I know you are sad to leave your family, but you will be so happy at Dotheboys Hall. I will be like your father, and the lovely Mrs Squeers will be your mother. We give all our boys the best food and comfortable rooms...'

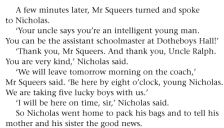
Ralph Nickleby stopped him. 'Mr Squeers! We have something to say to you!' 'How do you do, gentlemen?' said Mr Squeers, turning to look at the men. 'Please sit down. Now, what can I do for you? Do you have a boy for my school?' 'No,' replied Ralph. 'But I did bring a boy to you once. Do you remember him?' Mr Squeers nodded his head. 'Yes, I do. His name was Dorker. Sadly, he...'

'He died at Dotheboys Hall.' Ralph finished the sentence for him. 'Yes, the poor boy,' said Mr Squeers. 'Mrs Squeers did everything she could – she loved that boy! We did our best for him.'

Ralph smiled and said, 'This young man is my nephew, Nicholas Nickleby. He is looking for a job – and you are looking for an assistant.'

Mr Squeers looked at Nicholas. 'He's too young!' he said. 'But think how useful he will be!' cried Ralph. 'His father is dead and he needs to earn some money. Let us talk alone, Mr Squeers.'

Then Mr Squeers and Ralph went into the corner and talked quietly. Nicholas could not hear what they were saying, and he began to feel nervous.



A few minutes later, Mr Squeers turned and spoke to Nicholas. 'Your uncle says you're an intelligent young man. You can be the assistant schoolmaster at Dotheboys Hall!' 'Thank you, Mr Squeers. And thank you, Uncle Ralph. You are very kind,' Nicholas said. 'We will leave tomorrow morning on the coach,' Mr Squeers said. 'Be here by eight o'clock, young Nicholas. We are taking five lucky boys with us.'

'I will be here on time, sir,' Nicholas said. So Nicholas went home to pack his bags and to tell his mother and his sister the good news.

14

15

Just after seven o'clock the next morning, Nicholas arrived at the Snowball Hotel. He found Mr Squeers at the breakfast table with five little boys sitting in a row opposite him. On the table in front of him, Nicholas saw a pot of coffee, fresh bread and a large plate of cold meat. Mr Squeers held out a cup to the waiter. 'Just put a little milk in here – not too much! Milk is expensive. Now put in some water,' he said. 'Water, sir?' the waiter asked. 'Yes, fill the cup to the top. And don't forget – bring bread and butter for these people.'

The five little boys opened their eyes and licked their lips. They were very hungry.



16

Mr Squeers put a large piece of meat into his mouth. Then he waved to Nicholas. 'Come in and sit down,' Nicholas cried Mr Squeers. 'We are having our breakfast.'

Mr Squeers was the only person eating, but Nicholas just smiled and said nothing. The waiter brought the cup of milk and water. 'Here you are, boys!' cried Mr Squeers. 'You are very lucky. Think of all the poor boys on the streets of London who don't drink milk for breakfast! Now, wait until I tell you to start.'

He gave the cup to the nearest boy and took more meat and some bread for himself. The boys watched hungrily. When he finished eating, Mr Squeers drank his coffee and wiped his mouth. Then he told the first boy to drink. 'Drink a little, then give the cup to the next boy!' he said. 'There's lots of milk for everyone!'

The waiter brought the bread and butter and Mr Squeers cut it into five small pieces. 'As you see, Nicholas, this is enough for five boys. Too much bread is bad for a boy.'

He gave the bread to the five boys. 'Hurry up, now,' he told them. 'We don't want to be late for the coach!' When the coach arrived, they all went outside. The coachman put the trunks and bags on the roof. The horses stamped their feet.

Nicholas was finding seats for the little boys when he heard a voice he knew. 'I have come to say goodbye!' It was his uncle, Ralph Nickleby. 'Your mother and your sister Kate are here, too.'

17

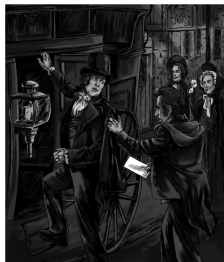
18

'I am so happy that we are not too late,' Nicholas said Mrs Nickleby. She looked at her son sadly and wiped her eyes. 'We will miss you, my dear boy.'

She was stopped by Mr Squeers, who shouted to his new assistant. 'Get into the coach and look after those boys, Nicholas. If one of them falls out, I will lose twenty pounds a year!'

Kate was shocked. 'Who is that horrible man, Nicholas?' she whispered. 'He is the schoolmaster,' her brother replied. 'His name is Mr Wackford Squeers. He is quite rude, but I hope he is a good man. Now I must get into the coach. Goodbye, Kate! I will think of you often.'

As Nicholas climbed up into the coach, he felt someone pulling his coat. He looked round and saw a man with a thin, worried face and a large red nose. It was Newman Nogg.



18

19

'Take this letter!' Nogg whispered. He put an envelope in Nicholas's hand. Newman Nogg looked quickly at Ralph Nickleby, who was talking to Mr Squeers. 'Take it and read it,' he continued. 'You will need it – your new life will not be easy.'

'Wait a minute!' cried Nicholas. But the doors of the coach shut with a bang. The coachman was ready to go. Nicholas Nickleby looked at the sad faces of his mother and his sister. Then he went to start his new life at Dotheboys Hall.

20

### Active vocabulary

**alone** point out the word *one* 'hiding' inside – when there is only one person, they are **alone**

**comfortable** point out the word *fort* in the middle of the word; point out that inside a **fort**, people feel **comfortable** and safe

**corner** teach the children the rhyme: *Little Jack Horner sat in the corner eating a Christmas pie, he put in his thumb and pulled out a plum and said what a good boy am I.*

**early** *ear* is 'hiding' inside this word but it is pronounced like 'er'

**gentle** 'g' is soft and sounds like 'j'

**intelligent** a four syllable word: *in + tel + li + gent*; 'g' is a soft 'g' sound

**job** change 'b' to 'y' to make a happier word

**late** remember the phrase: *Never be late for an important date*

**piece** the 'ie' sounds like long 'e' as in *we*; *piece* and *peace* are homophones

**voice** a one syllable word; 'c' sounds like 's'

### Passive vocabulary

*coach coughed cross gentlemen nervous shocked stamped trunk whispered*



## Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activity on page 4 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.
- Read the title of Chapter 2. Ask *What do you think the chapter is going to be about? Do you think this name is a nice name?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 13. Ask *What do you think the man is saying to the boy? How does the man feel? How does the boy feel? Where do you think they are?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 15. Ask *How does the boy feel now? Who do you think the young man is? Who do you think is sitting next to the boy?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 16. Ask *How many young boys are there? What are they doing? How do you think they feel? What is the man sitting across from them doing? Why is the young man carrying a large bag? How does the young man feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 18. Ask *How does the woman feel? Who do you think the young man and young woman are? Who do you think the older man is? What are the two other men doing?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 19. Ask *What is Newman Noggs doing? What do you think he has in his hand? Where do you think the young man is going? What are the two women doing?*

- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

## During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 5 of their Workbook.

- 1 *What did Mr Wackford Squeers look like?*
- 2 *Why did Mr Squeers hit the young boy?*
- 3 *How many boys did Mr Squeers say he took back from London last summer?*
- 4 *How much money did Mr Squeers get for only five boys?*
- 5 *How did the little boy feel after he coughed? Why?*
- 6 *What did Mr Squeers say to the boy after Ralph and Nicholas Nickleby walked into the room?*
- 7 *What happened to Dorker, the boy Ralph brought to Mr Squeers?*
- 8 *Why did Nicholas say thank you to Mr Squeers and his uncle?*
- 9 *What time did Mr Squeers tell Nicholas to be back at the hotel the next day?*
- 10 *What did Nicholas do when he went home?*
- 11 *What time did Nicholas arrive the next morning?*

- 12 *What did Mr Squeers tell the waiter to put in with the milk? Why?*
- 13 *How much bread and butter was the waiter told to bring?*
- 14 *What was Mr Squeers eating for his breakfast?*
- 15 *What did Mr Squeers say about too much bread?*
- 16 *Who came to say goodbye to Nicholas?*
- 17 *What did Mr Squeers say would happen if a boy fell out of the coach?*
- 18 *What did Newman Noggs give Nicholas as he was climbing onto the coach?*
- 19 *What were Newman Noggs' last words to Nicholas?*

- Write on the board: *angrily, quietly, hungrily, quickly*. Ask the children to find and read aloud sentences with these adverbs ending in 'ly'. Discuss what verbs they describe.
- Write on the board: *cross, gentle, sad, happy, comfortable, poor, useful, nervous, intelligent, kind*. Ask the children to find these words on pages 12–15. Ask *Who or what does each word describe?*
- Talk about the difference in the way Mr Squeers spoke to the young boy before and after Ralph and Nicholas Nickleby arrived. Invite the children to read the words spoken by Mr Squeers in the chapter, using correct intonation.
- Ask the children to find and read aloud any words containing double consonants (for example, *sitting, dressed, cross, matter, coffee*). Ask the children if the double consonant comes at the end of the word or inside the word.

- Ask the children to find and read aloud any three- or four-syllable words in the text. Ask them to tap out the syllables as they read the words (for example, *customers, gentlemen, schoolmaster, tomorrow*, etc.).
- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *Why was the young boy afraid of Mr Squeers?*
- 2 *What do you think Mr Squeers was going to do to the boy when they got to Dotheboys Hall?*
- 3 *Why do you think Mr Squeers was nicer to the boy after Ralph and Nicholas arrived at the hotel?*
- 4 *Do you think that Mr and Mrs Squeers really did everything they could for the boy Dorker? Why (not)?*
- 5 *What do you think Ralph Nickleby said to Mr Squeers when they went into a corner and talked quietly?*
- 6 *How do you think Nicholas felt about going to Dotheboys Hall after meeting Mr Squeers?*
- 7 *How did the waiter feel when he heard Mr Squeers ask him to fill the milk with water?*
- 8 *Why do you think Mr Squeers gave the boys very little food and drink?*

- 9 How did Nicholas's family feel when they came to say goodbye to him at the Snowball Hotel?
- 10 Do you think Nicholas thinks Mr Squeers is a good man?
- 11 Why do you think Newman Noggs came to warn Nicholas about his new job?
- 12 How do you think Nicholas felt when the coach doors shut?

### Stage 2 comprehension extra

**Characterisation** The children have learned quite a bit about Ralph Nickleby, Mr Squeers and young Nicholas Nickleby in Chapters 1 and 2. As a class, brainstorm ideas and build up a picture of Mr Squeers. Ask *Do you think he hits the children in his school? Do you think he is a generous man? What do you think is more important to him, the children or the money? Do you think he has a kind wife? Do you think his school is a happy school?* After a number of facts have been suggested, ask the children to each write ten facts about Mr Squeers in their books.

- The man who drove the coach was called a coachman. The names of many men's jobs, especially in the past, ended in 'man' or 'master'. Write these words on the board: *business\_ \_ \_ , coach\_ \_ \_ , school\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ , head\_ \_ \_ \_ \_*. Ask the children to complete each job with 'man' or 'master' and say what each person does. Elicit other jobs that end in 'man' (for example, postman, milkman, dustman, fireman, policeman).
- Remind the class that the advertisement in the newspaper made Dotheboys Hall sound like a wonderful school. Point out that sometimes the words in an advertisement can be the opposite of the real situation. Look back at the advertisement with the class. Ask *What is the opposite of these words from the advertisement: excellent, best, comfortable, generous?* Ask the children to look at page 17 and find the opposite of these words: *small (large), unlucky (lucky), rich (poor), a lot (a little), a little (lots of), big (small), good (bad), early (late)*.
- Write the word *wiped* on the board. Ask the children to find it on page 17 and on page 18. Ask them to read the sentences in which they find it and to do the actions. Ask *Do you think Mr Squeers wiped his mouth with a piece of cloth or with his hand? What did Mrs Nickleby use to wipe her eyes? Why did she wipe her eyes?* Discuss the meaning.
- Write on the board: *hit, hold, take, drink, bring, cut, give, put, hear*. Tell the children to find the past tense of these verbs in the chapter and to read the sentences aloud. Write the past tense next to each verb and practise pronunciation.
- Discuss Newman Noggs' actions. Ask *What did Nicholas think when he saw Newman Noggs' face? How did Noggs speak to Nicholas? What do you think is in the letter?*
- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*

# Chapter 3 Dotheboys Hall

Pages 21 to 29

CHAPTER 3  
Dotheboys Hall



The journey to Yorkshire took two days and one night. The weather was very bad. It was cold and it was snowing heavily. The passengers sat in their coats and talked and laughed to forget the cold. Nicholas slept to make the time go faster. But he woke up often and felt cold. Nicholas liked it best when they stopped at an inn to change the tired horses and to eat a hot meal. Once there was a problem with the coach and they had to wait for another one to come from a nearby inn. At six o'clock in the evening of the second day, the coach arrived at Greta Bridge. Nicholas climbed down with Mr Squeers and the five little boys. The coachman handed the two men the trunks and bags. They put them into a small cart with the five boys. Nicholas and Mr Squeers climbed into a second cart and they began the final part of the journey.

21



They are all right. But Fitcher is ill. He is always ill. I think he does it to make me angry. We should hit him more often! Nicholas coughed and Mr Squeers remembered that he was there. This is the new assistant schoolmaster, my dear. Mr Squeers said. Mrs Squeers looked at Nicholas angrily and said nothing. He will eat with us and start teaching the boys tomorrow. Will there be a bed for him? asked Mr Squeers. I'll find somewhere for him! Mrs Squeers replied. They both laughed and Nicholas suddenly felt very worried.

23

Mr Squeers put his hand into his pocket. I've got some letters for the boys, he said. Smike banged the plates on the table and looked at the letters in Mr Squeers' hand. Is there a letter for me? he whispered. No! shouted Mr Squeers. No one is going to write to you! You've lived here since you were a little boy but no one's ever paid me any money. I don't even know where you came from. I feed you and give you clothes because I am a kind man! Smike looked sadly at the floor. Then he limped out of the room as fast as possible. Nicholas didn't enjoy his food. As Mr and Mrs Squeers talked, he felt more and more worried about the poor boys at this terrible place. Mrs Squeers said, I'll take the clothes from the five new boys and I'll lock them in my cupboard to keep them safe. We will give them other clothes to wear. I am sure Mrs Squeers will dress the boys in dirty old clothes which are full of holes, thought Nicholas. I think I will put the five new boys in the same bed. Mrs Squeers said, It's very late now, so I won't give them any food. At last, Mr and Mrs Squeers finished their meal. Time for bed! said Mr Squeers. You can sleep in here tonight, Nicholas. Smike will bring you a blanket. We'll find you a bed tomorrow. Let's see - who is in Brooks's bed, my dear? Mrs Squeers counted on her fingers. Brooks, Jennings, Boldet and the other one, she replied.

25

Nicholas's bed was very uncomfortable but after such a long journey, he slept well. In the morning, Mr Squeers came in and said, The pump is frozen, Nicholas, so you can't wash! Hurry up and get dressed - the boys are waiting! Then Mrs Squeers ran into the room with an angry look on her face. She opened a cupboard and looked inside. I can't find the school spoon! she cried. The boys must have their medicine! We give the boys medicine every day, Nicholas, said Mr Squeers. Without it, they become ill! The medicine also means that the boys aren't very hungry and don't want so much food! his wife said. She looked in the cupboard again. When she couldn't find the spoon, she cried, Smike! Come and help me, you silly boy! As Smike looked for the spoon, Mr Squeers hit him on the head. At last Smike saw the spoon. It was in her pocket! Mrs Squeers hit Smike again. Then she took the spoon and pushed the boy out of the room. Mr Squeers smiled proudly at his wife. She's like a mother to those boys! he said happily. Nicholas said nothing. Now, let us go to the schoolroom, Nicholas, Mr Squeers said. He took the new assistant schoolmaster across the garden and opened a door. Here we are! Welcome to the schoolroom! he cried.

27

When they arrived at Dotheboys Hall, it was dark. There was only one light and the place looked unwelcoming. It did not look like a school. The building was long and low and there was a hole in the roof. Mr Squeers jumped down from the cart and shouted loudly. Smike! Where are you? Come here now! Nicholas heard the sound of someone opening the gate and then a tall, thin boy appeared with an oil lamp in his hand. Mr Squeers told the boy to put the horses into the stable and to take the trunks and bags into the Hall. Mr Squeers then took the five little boys round to the back door.

Nicholas waited outside the front door in the cold. He looked at the dark windows of Dotheboys Hall, and thought about his new life. He was far away from his mother and Kate, and he only knew Mr Wackford Squeers. At last, the front door opened. Come in, come in and get warm, Nicholas! Mr Squeers cried. Inside the Hall, it was only a little warmer than outside. They were in a small, dark room with some broken chairs and a long table. There was an old, yellow map on the wall and some dirty plates on the table. Suddenly, a very large woman came into the room. She wore a dirty coat over her nightgown and a dirty old cap on her head. She was very pleased to see Mr Squeers. She must be Mr Squeers' wife! thought Nicholas. How is my Squeery? the lady asked and hugged her husband. Very well, my dear, Mr Squeers replied. And how are the boys?

22

Then Smike arrived with the food and a jug of water. In the poor light, Nicholas saw him more clearly. He was about eighteen, but he wore a child's suit. The suit's arms and legs were much too short and Nicholas could see the boy's thin, white hands and feet. His shoes were very old and broken, and one of his feet was badly injured. That must be the suit he wore when he arrived here as a child, thought Nicholas. The poor boy!



24

Min. Brooks's bed is full, said Mr Squeers. Don't worry, Nicholas. We'll find you a bed tomorrow. I'll show you the pump now so you can have a wash. There's a bit of soap by the window and Mrs Squeers will tell you whose towel you can share. Nicholas stared at him. What a terrible place! he thought. When he was alone in the room, Nicholas began to get ready for bed. Working in this school is going to be horrible, he thought sadly. But if I don't stay at Dotheboys Hall, Uncle Ralph will not look after my mother and sister. As he took off his coat, something fell out of the pocket on the floor. He picked it up and looked at it. Of course - it was the letter from the strange man he met at the Snowball Hotel in London. Nicholas opened the letter and began to read:

My dear Nicholas  
Your father was kind to me, but I was never able to tell  
back his kindness.  
I think your new life will be difficult for you.  
If you need somewhere to stay, go to the Queen Who in  
Silver Street. They will tell you where I live.  
From your friend, Newman Noggs

26

The schoolroom was dark and dirty. Two of the windows were broken and the glass was covered with brown paper. The walls were very dirty and the wooden desks were old and broken. The floor was also very dirty. But the boys worried Nicholas even more. They were very thin with pale, nervous faces. Some of them had injured legs and some looked half-blind. They were all dressed in dirty, old clothes. Children should look happy! he thought. But these boys never smile. They are treated badly. What good can I do here? How can I help these poor boys? Mrs Squeers came in and put a huge bowl on one of the wooden desks. She put the school spoon into it and one by one, she gave the boys their medicine. They all looked miserable when they drank it and Nicholas could see that the medicine didn't taste good. In one corner of the schoolroom sat the five new boys. They sat close to each other to keep warm. They were not wearing their own clothes. They were now wearing dirty old clothes like the other boys. They were watching Smike, who was putting a pair of new shoes on another boy's feet. This boy was dressed in a new jacket and trousers. Nicholas thought that the boy looked very much like Mr Squeers. That boy is Mr Squeers' son! he thought. Now I understand what happens to the boys' good clothes! The son gets them, and the boys must wear those terrible old clothes!

28

Suddenly Mr Squeers hit the desk with a long wooden cane. Have the boys had their medicine, my dear? he asked. Yes, Wackford, replied Mrs Squeers. Take away the bowl, Smike! She wiped her hands on a little boy's hair and took everyone to the kitchen. In the kitchen, there were a number of little wooden bowls on the long table. As the boys sat down, Mrs Squeers put some thin, brown porridge into each of the bowls. She then put a small piece of dry bread next to each bowl and the boys began to eat. It looked and tasted horrible, but the boys ate it because they were hungry. Mrs Squeers gave Nicholas a bowl of porridge, too. Because he was the assistant schoolmaster, Mrs Squeers also gave him some bread and butter. Then Nicholas and the boys returned to the schoolroom and waited for lessons to begin.



29

## Active vocabulary

cover the 'o' is pronounced 'u' as in *cup*

journey 'our' sounds like 'er'

life rhymes with *wife* and *knife*

medicine a three-syllable word: *med + i + cine*; 'c' sounds like 's'

nervous a two-syllable word: *ner + vous*

problem find *rob* 'hiding' inside *problem*; if someone robs you, you have a problem!

stable find the word *table* 'hiding' inside *stable*

strange find the word *ran* 'hiding' inside *strange*

ugly 'ug' sounds like the 'ug' in *mug*

warm point out the word *arm* hiding inside *warm*

## Passive reading

cane cart injured limped miserable  
oil lamp pale passengers porridge pump

## Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activity on page 6 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.

- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.
- Read the title of Chapter 3. Ask *What do you think the chapter is going to be about?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 21. Ask *What time of year is it? How long do you think the journey from London to Yorkshire took by coach? Do you think it was a comfortable journey? Why (not)?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 23. Ask *Where do you think Nicholas is now? Who do you think the woman might be? Does she look rich or poor? Does she look clean or dirty? How does she feel? How does Mr Squeers feel? Does the room look nice?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 24. Ask *What is Mr Squeers doing? What is the boy doing? How does the boy feel? Is the boy wearing nice clothes? How does Nicholas feel? What is the woman doing?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 28. Ask *Does this boy look poor and dirty like the other boys?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 29. Ask *What is the woman doing? What are the boys doing? Does the food look good? How do they feel? How does Nicholas feel?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

### During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activities on page 7 of their Workbook.

- 1 *What was the weather like on the journey to Yorkshire?*
- 2 *What did Nicholas like best about the journey?*
- 3 *Where did the coach arrive on the second day?*
- 4 *Where did Mr Squeers, Nicholas and the five boys go on the final part of their journey?*
- 5 *What did Mr Squeers shout loudly when he arrived at Dotheboys Hall?*
- 6 *What was inside the hall?*
- 7 *Who was the large woman in dirty clothes?*
- 8 *What did Mrs Squeers think they should do with Pitcher? Why?*
- 9 *Why did Nicholas suddenly feel worried?*
- 10 *What was wrong with Smike?*
- 11 *Why was Smike wearing a child's suit?*
- 12 *Were there any letters for Smike? Why?*
- 13 *Where was Mr Squeers going to put the new boys' clothes?*
- 14 *Where were the five new boys going to sleep? Were they going to eat some food?*
- 15 *Where was Nicholas going to wash?*
- 16 *What did Nicholas think about Dotheboys Hall when he was alone in the room?*
- 17 *Why did Nicholas think he had to stay at Dotheboys Hall?*
- 18 *Where did Newman Noggs' letter say Nicholas could go if he needed somewhere to stay?*
- 19 *Why couldn't Nicholas wash in the morning?*
- 20 *Why did Mrs Squeers give the boys medicine?*
- 21 *Where did Smike find Mrs Squeers' spoon?*

- 22 *What did Mr Squeers say proudly to his wife?*
- 23 *What did the boys look like when they tasted the medicine? Why?*
- 24 *Was the schoolroom a nice room? Why (not)?*
- 25 *What did Nicholas notice about the boys?*
- 26 *Why did the new boys sit close to each other? What were they wearing?*
- 27 *Who was the boy dressed in a new jacket and trousers?*
- 28 *What were the boys given to eat? Why did they eat it?*

- Ask the children to find some commas in the text. Have them read the sentences aloud. Discuss the purpose of the comma. Remind the children that commas tell the reader to pause briefly, to help the reader make more sense of the sentence. Read a few more sentences to demonstrate.
- Ask the children to find and read aloud sentences on page 22 with the following prepositions: *at, in, into, to, outside, from, on, over*. Then tell the children to close their books. Ask questions, such as *Where did Nicholas and Mr Squeers arrive?*
- Point out the word *somewhere* on page 23. Elicit that the word is in italics to show emphasis. Read the sentence to the children with the correct emphasis. Discuss what Mrs Squeers meant and why she and her husband laughed.
- Ask the children to find in the chapter and read aloud sentences with following words: *dark, unwelcoming, broken, old, dirty, uncomfortable, miserable*. Then ask *How do you feel about Mrs Squeers? How do you feel about Dotheboys Hall? How do you feel about the boys at Dotheboys Hall?*

- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *Why do you think the journey took so long from London to Yorkshire?*
- 2 *Do you think Nicholas enjoyed the journey? Why (not)?*
- 3 *Do you think Dotheboys Hall was what Nicholas had expected? Why (not)?*
- 4 *Why do you think it was so cold in Dotheboys Hall?*
- 5 *Do you think Nicholas was already missing his family when he arrived at Dotheboys Hall?*
- 6 *Why did Mrs Squeers look at Nicholas angrily when she met him?*
- 7 *Why did Mrs Squeers keep hitting Smike? Had he done something wrong?*
- 8 *What do you think the boys told the five new boys about the school?*
- 9 *Did Mrs Squeers treat the boys like a real mother?*
- 10 *Why did all the boys except their son wear old clothes?*
- 11 *What did Nicholas think of Mr and Mrs Squeers?*
- 12 *How do you think the boys felt about eating porridge and dry bread?*

- 13 How do you think Nicholas felt after he read the letter from Noggs?
- 14 What was the worst thing about the part of the story about the school spoon? Why?
- 15 How do you think Smike felt about Mr Squeers' son?
- 16 What do you think Mr and Mrs Squeers said to each other about Nicholas?
- 17 Who do you feel most sorry for in this chapter? Why?

### Stage 2 comprehension extra

*Author's use of language* The author creates a lot of tension and excitement in this chapter by her good use of language. Re-read the section on page 28. Discuss why this is exciting. Discuss the use of words, such as *thin, pale, nervous, injured, half-blind, miserable*.


- Discuss the conversation between Mr and Mrs Squeers about a bed for Nicholas. They planned to put the five new boys in the same bed. Ask the children to find small words 'hiding' (like cold boys in the same bed!) inside longer words (for example *someone*). Write on the board: *passengers, shouted, nightdress, nothing, somewhere, plates, cupboard, alone, schoolroom*. Ask the children to find any smaller words 'hiding' inside each longer word.
- Talk about temperature. In the morning, Nicholas couldn't wash because the pump was frozen. Discuss at what temperature water freezes. Ask the children if they have ever had the water freeze in the pipes in their homes. Discuss ways of heating a house and preventing pipes from freezing in winter.
- Write the words *kind* and *kindness* on the board. Discuss the use of these words in Newman Noggs' letter. Ask *Did Mr or Mrs Squeers show any kindness towards Smike?* Explain that the suffix 'ness' changes some adjectives to nouns. Write the following adjectives on the board and ask the children to add the suffix 'ness': *sad, ill, loud, dark, strange, blind, horrible, happy, dirty, ugly*. Point out that they must change the 'i' to a 'y' before adding the suffix. Help the children to use these words correctly in a sentence.
- Write *laughed* and *coughed* on the board. Discuss the spelling and pronunciation of 'gh' (sounds like 'f') in these words. Ask the children if they can think of other words ending in 'ough' (*enough, rough, tough*).
- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*

# Chapter 4

## Letters from home

### Pages 30 to 38

CHAPTER 4  
Letters from home



The boys sat at their desks. They didn't talk or laugh. They just looked very sad – except for young Wackford Squeers. He was named after his father. He smiled and tried to stamp on the other boys' feet in his new shoes.

Nicholas shook his head sadly. 'That boy is cruel, like his father,' he thought. Mr and Mrs Squeers also had a daughter called Fanny. She was about twenty-three years old and was cold and hard, just like her mother. They were a terrible family!

Mr Squeers came into the schoolroom. He was holding his stomach after a good breakfast. The boys all stood up when he came in. Then they sat down at their desks and waited for him to speak.

'The lesson this morning is spelling,' Mr Squeers said. 'Who's the first boy?'

'Please, sir, he's cleaning the kitchen window,' said one little boy.

'Of course he is,' said Mr Squeers. 'I remember now. Well, Nicholas, this is how we teach spelling here at Dotheboys Hall. That boy has learned how to spell "clean" – c-k-e-a-n. Now that he has learned how to spell it, he is doing it! Where is the second boy?'

'Please, sir, he's working in the garden,' said another boy.

30

A few hours later, the boys were all back in the schoolroom.

'Now it's your turn, Nicholas,' said Mr Squeers. 'You can do something useful to earn your money. I want you to listen to the boys' reading.'

Nicholas wasn't surprised to hear the boys read slowly, in quiet voices. They made lots of mistakes.

At one o'clock it was time for lunch – which was as horrible as breakfast.

After lunch, Mr Squeers said, 'Now it's time for my report, Nicholas. When I come back from London, I always tell the boys news of their families. Sometimes there are letters for them.'

When all the boys were in the schoolroom, Mr Squeers came in with a few papers in his hand. In his other hand he was carrying his cane.

'If any boy speaks, I will hit him with this!' Mr Squeers shouted, showing the boys his cane.

Then Mr Squeers began his report.

'I have been to London, boys, and now I have returned to you all! I feel very well and very strong!'

The boys tried to smile.

'Your parents are pleased to hear how well you are,' Mr Squeers continued. 'And they have all paid your school fees – except for Mr Bolder's father. He still has to pay me two pounds. Where are you, Bolder? Come here!'

A small boy slowly made his way up to Mr Squeers' desk and held up his hands. They were very red.

'Bolder, what have you done to your hands, boy?' Mr Squeers asked.

32

'Stand up, Greysmarsh!' said Mr Squeers. 'Your aunt is pleased that you are so happy at school. She likes Mrs Squeers and me very much. She says that you must try hard to make us happy. She has written a very nice letter!'

Mr Squeers looked at his papers again.

'Mobb! Your mother tells me that you do not like the food! She wants me to hit you. And she has stopped your pocket money.'

Then Mr Squeers hit Mobb with his cane and sent him out of the room.

There were more letters. If they contained money, Mr Squeers put it in his pocket. If there were any clothes, he took them. They were the wrong size for any of the other boys, he said, but just right for his son, young Wackford.

Then he went to his warm sitting room to talk to his wife and son. He left Nicholas to look after the boys.

Nicholas and the boys went to the kitchen. They ate bread and little pieces of cheese. As it grew dark, the kitchen became very cold.

Nicholas felt terrible. There was so much cruelty and unhappiness in this place! He wished he was at home in London – but if he left the school, his Uncle Ralph would not look after his mother and sister. He knew he must try to be happy and try to like his new job.

Then Nicholas saw Smike sitting on the kitchen floor. When Nicholas looked at him, Smike started to shake.

'Don't be afraid of me, Smike,' he said. 'Are you cold?'

'It is always cold,' Smike replied.

'You poor boy!' Nicholas said. Smike began to cry.

34

Back in London, Kate Nickleby was in Miss La Creevy's sitting room. Miss La Creevy lived below Kate and Mrs Nickleby's apartment in the Strand. She was an artist. Kate was sitting very still because Miss La Creevy was painting her.

'It's going to be a good picture. It looks just like you, my dear!' said Miss La Creevy.

'You are very clever!' Kate said.

'And you are very pretty!' Miss La Creevy replied.

Just then, Ralph Nickleby arrived. Kate went upstairs to sit with him and her mother.

'I have found you a job in a dressmaker's shop, Kate. It is owned by Madame Mantalini,' he said. 'You can start tomorrow. I am a very kind uncle, aren't I?'

Kate did not want to work in a dressmaker's shop, but she knew she had to say yes.

'You will work from nine in the morning until nine in the evening. You will have your meals with Madame Mantalini. She will pay you six shillings a week,' Ralph said.

'I will do my best,' replied poor Kate. Then she remembered her happy life on the farm with her mother, her father and her brother, and she began to cry.

36

'Look what your uncle has given us,' said Mrs Nickleby. 'He is very kind!'

'Yes. He is very kind,' replied Kate, and she tried to smile.

They didn't know it, but it was not Ralph who had left the milk and tea. It was Ralph's assistant, Newman Noggs. He had bought the tea and milk and the few pieces of furniture with his own money.

When they heard the front door close behind Newman Noggs, Mrs Nickleby and Kate were left alone to think about their new life.

38

### Active vocabulary

<i>cruel</i>	add 'ty' to the end of the word to change it from an adjective to a noun
<i>furniture</i>	'ture' sounds like 'cher'
<i>mistake</i>	take away 'mis' to find the opposite of <i>give</i>
<i>pain</i>	add 't' at the end to make a new word
<i>report</i>	change 'r' to 'd' to make a new word
<i>river</i>	change the 'r' to 'sh' to make a word about what we do when we step into a cold river
<i>shake</i>	change 'h' to 'n' to make a new word
<i>shine</i>	change the 'i' to 'o' to make the past tense
<i>sigh</i>	an onomatopoeic word (have the children practise sighing!)
<i>surprised</i>	find <i>rise</i> 'hiding' inside <i>surprised</i>

### Passive vocabulary

*coat hard news pence pounds shillings wicked*

### Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.



- Ask the children to do the activities on page 8 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.
- Read the title of Chapter 4. Ask *What do you think the chapter is going to be about?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 31. Ask *Where are the boys? What are they doing? What is Mr Squeers doing? How do the boys feel? Which boy is Mr Squeers' son? How does he feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 33. Ask *What has Mr Squeers got in his hand? What do you think he uses it for?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 35. Ask *Who is Nicholas talking to? Why is his hand on the boy's shoulder? What do you think the boy is saying?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 36. Ask *Who is in the picture? Where do you think they are? What do you think Ralph is saying to Kate and her mother?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 37. Ask *Do Mrs Nickleby and Kate look happy? Why do you think they are with Ralph Nickleby's assistant, Newman Noggs?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

## During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

## Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 9 of their Workbook.

- 1 *What did young Wackford Squeers try to do to the other boys? Why?*
- 2 *What kind of family did Nicholas think the Squeers were?*
- 3 *How did the boys learn spelling at Dotheboys Hall?*
- 4 *What did Mr Squeers tell the third boy to do after he answered the vocabulary question?*
- 5 *What did Mr Squeers tell the rest of the class to do? Why?*
- 6 *Did Nicholas think that the boys were learning anything in the classroom? Why (not)?*
- 7 *How did the boys read? Was Nicholas surprised?*
- 8 *What did Mr Squeers do every time he came back from London?*
- 9 *What did Mr Squeers say he would do if any boy spoke?*
- 10 *Whose father had not paid two pounds of the fees? What did Mr Squeers do to the boy?*
- 11 *What news from home did Mr Squeers tell Cobbey?*
- 12 *Why did Mr Squeers keep Cobbey's eighteen pence?*
- 13 *What did Mr Squeers tell Greymarsh?*
- 14 *Why did Mr Squeers hit Mobbs with his cane?*
- 15 *What did Mr Squeers do with the clothes and money that the families sent?*
- 16 *Why did Nicholas feel terrible? Why didn't he leave?*
- 17 *Who did Nicholas find on the kitchen floor? Why was the boy shaking?*

- 18 *Why did Smike say he thought his heart would break?*
- 19 *What did Smike say he did not have? What does he say is all he has?*
- 20 *What was Kate Nickleby doing when her uncle came to the house?*
- 21 *Where did Ralph Nickleby find Kate a job? Did she want the job?*
- 22 *Why did Kate start to cry? What was she thinking about?*
- 23 *What was the house like that Ralph found for Kate and her mother?*
- 24 *What did they find inside the house after they got there?*
- 25 *Why were there a few pieces of furniture and some tea and milk in the house?*

- Ask the children to find the spelling of *clean* and *garden*. Point out that in a text, we put dashes (–) between the letters to show that each letter should be read separately. Ask *Do you like Mr Squeers' way of teaching spelling? Why (not)? Why did Nicholas say, 'It seems to work, sir'? How do you like to learn spelling?*
- Ask the children to find and read aloud three words in the chapter that mean 'very bad' (terrible, horrible, wicked). Ask the children to tap out the syllables as they say the words. Ask the children to find in the text other three-syllable words and to tap them out.
- Play a rhyming game. Select and write some words from the story on the board, for example *dead, strong, cold*. Brainstorm as a class, and write on the board, as many words that rhyme with each word as possible (for example, *dead: bed, fed, head, led, lead, red, shed, sped, wed*).

- Talk about the word 'no' as it is used on page 35: *There is no hope for me! I have no home, no family, no friends, and no hope*. Point out that this is another way of saying 'don't have' or 'haven't got'. The use of 'no' adds emphasis and should be spoken with emotion. Ask the children to talk about things they do not have, using 'no' (for example, *I have no sister/no pets/no TV in my room/ etc.*).
- Point out that when Nicholas and the boys speak to Mr Squeers, they call him 'sir'. Explain that this is a polite way to address a man teacher. Also point out that the boys say, 'Please, sir' when they answer a question. Point out that this was common in the past but not now. Ask the class to find and read aloud sentences with 'sir' in them. They must try to sound very respectful.
- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *What do you think the boys at Dotheboys Hall said to each other about young Wackford?*
- 2 *Why do you think Mr Squeers taught spelling and vocabulary in the way that he did?*
- 3 *How do you think the boys felt about working for Mr Squeers instead of learning?*

- 4 How do you think the boys felt when they read for Nicholas?
- 5 Why did Mr Squeers say, 'I feel very well and very strong!'?
- 6 What do you think Mr Squeers said to the parents in London about their sons?
- 7 Do you think the parents ever visit their sons in Yorkshire? Why (not)?
- 8 How do you think Mr Squeers felt when he used his cane on Bolder's hands?
- 9 How do you think Cobbey felt when Mr Squeers gave him news about his family? Why?
- 10 Do you think that Mr Squeers told the truth to Greymarsh and Mobbs? Why (not)?
- 11 Why was the sitting room warmer than the rest of Dotheboys Hall?
- 12 Do you think Nicholas can be happy and find a way to like his new job?
- 13 Why do you think it might be difficult for Smike to leave Dotheboys Hall?
- 14 Do you think Smike has ever been happy? Why (not)?
- 15 Why was there a bedtime bell?
- 16 How do you think life was for Kate and her mother when they lived in the apartment in the Strand?
- 17 Why do you think Kate did not tell her uncle she did not want the job at the dressmaker's shop?
- 18 How do you think Mrs Nickleby felt when Kate began to cry? Does she really think Ralph is kind?
- 19 What do you think Miss la Creevy said to Mrs Nickleby and Kate when they left?
- 20 Why did Newman Noggs leave the milk and tea for Mrs Nickleby and Kate?

- 21 How do you think Mrs Nickleby and Kate felt when they were left alone to think about their new life?

### Stage 2 comprehension extra

**Characterisation** In this chapter the author gives the reader more information about Mr Squeers and his family. Review what the children have learned about the Squeers family so far.

1 Mr Squeers thought only about himself and his family. He took the school fees from the boys' parents but he did not teach them anything nor give them the basic necessities of life (food, clothing and warm lodgings). He told lies to the parents about their sons. He kept the boys' pocket money to pay for school repairs. He enjoyed giving them bad news from their families because he liked to break their hearts. He gave their nice clothes to his son. He hit them cruelly with his cane because he enjoyed hitting them. He made them do his jobs, such as cleaning, gardening, brushing his horse and pumping water.

2 Mrs Squeers, who we learned about in Chapter 3, gave the boys very little food and the food she did give them was terrible. She gave them medicine every day so that she did not have to feed them much food. She never cleaned the school and she did not keep herself clean. When a boy was ill, she thought he was ill to make her angry. She thought only of herself, her husband and son. She was very unwelcoming to Nicholas. Like her husband, she hit the boys because she enjoyed hitting them.

3 Young Wackford Squeers was the only boy who smiled and enjoyed life. He wore nice clothes, which his parents took from the other boys. He tried to stamp on the other boys' feet in his new shoes. He was cruel, like his father.

4 Fanny was cold and hard, like her mother.

- Write the words *dirty*, *river*, *hurts* on the board and read them. Ask the class what they notice about the underlined letters in each word. (They make the same sound.) Write these words on the board: *furniture*, *sir*, *Saturday*, *cover*, *first*, *nervous*, *corner*, *third*, *turn*. Ask the children to read them, explain their meanings and divide them into three sets according to their common letter patterns.
- Write the word *unhappy* on the board. Point out that the prefix *un* changes the meaning of a word to the opposite meaning. Ask the children to add 'un' to change the meaning of these words: *clean*, *comfortable*, *well*, *paid*, *happiness*, *kind*.
- Write on the board: *pound*, *shilling*, *pence*. Ask *What do you think a shilling was?* Explain that people stopped using shillings in England in 1971. (There were 12 pennies, or pence, in a shilling and 20 shillings in a pound.)
- Ask the children to find and read aloud words with double consonants. Ask them to spell the words aloud (for example, *spell*: s-p-e-double l). Point out that when there are double consonants, we say 'double + the name of the letter.'
- Talk about boarding schools with the children. Ask them if they would like to live at school with their classmates and teachers. Talk about how children at boarding schools miss their families, their friends and their homes. Explain that there are many reasons why parents send their children to boarding schools. Ask *What would you say if your parents told you that you were going to a boarding school in England next year?* Encourage the children to discuss their feelings.
- Point out that winters in Yorkshire are much colder than winters in London. Ask *Why did Nicholas ask Smike if he was cold? What was Smike's answer?* Ask the children if they have ever been really cold? Have they ever visited a very cold climate? What kind of food do people want to eat when the weather is very cold?
- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*

# Chapter 5 Smike

Pages 39 to 47

CHAPTER 5  
Smike


It was hard at Dotheboys Hall, but Nicholas always tried to help the boys. He taught them as well as he could and listened to all their problems.

Mr Squeers hit Smike with his long wooden cane nearly every day. Nicholas tried to help Smike – but when Mr Squeers saw that Nicholas was friendly with Smike, he hit Smike even more.

Then, one day, something happened to change things at Dotheboys Hall. Smike ran away!

Mr and Mrs Squeers started to shake with anger. They made everyone look for the boy, inside and outside the school. Then Mr Squeers went to get his horse and cart.

‘The silly boy won’t be far away! I’ll find him!’ he cried and he hit his horse to make it go fast.




39

Nicholas waited at Dotheboys Hall for a day and a night. On the second day, he looked out of the window and saw the cart coming towards the school.

‘I’ve tied his legs together. He won’t run away again!’ cried Mr Squeers. He smiled his most horrible smile.

‘Help me to bring him in, Nicholas! He will be sorry for this!’ shouted Mr Squeers.

Smike could hardly walk but Mr Squeers pushed him towards the door of Dotheboys Hall.



40

‘Get back in there where you belong!’ shouted Mr Squeers. Then he pushed Smike into a small, empty room and locked the door. ‘I will talk to you after lunch!’

That afternoon, after a good lunch, Mr Squeers walked into the schoolroom. His wife and daughter, Fanny, walked behind him. Under his arm, he carried the long cane.

‘Is every boy here?’ he shouted.

The boys were very frightened and did not reply. They just looked down at their feet.

‘Nicholas! Sit down!’ cried Mr Squeers.

Then Mr Squeers hit the desk in front of Nicholas with his cane. Nicholas sat down.

Mr Squeers left the room. Everyone waited silently. When Mr Squeers came back, he was pulling Smike behind him.

He held the cane high in the air.

‘Do you have anything to say, you wicked boy?’ Mr Squeers shouted at Smike.

Smike looked round the room for help. Nicholas felt the boys looking at him but he looked down at the floor. He did not know what to do.

‘Please, sir, don’t hit me!’ cried Smike.

‘You terrible boy!’ shouted Mrs Squeers. And she hit Smike on the side of his head.

And then Mr Squeers began to hit Smike with his cane. He hit him harder and harder. Nicholas had seen this many times at Dotheboys Hall, but this was much worse than anything he had seen before.

41

Smike cried out in terrible pain. Suddenly, Nicholas jumped to his feet. ‘Stop that!’ he shouted.

There was silence. Everyone – Nicholas, the boys, Mrs Squeers, Fanny and Smike – waited to see what would happen next.

Very slowly, Mr Squeers turned to face them. He held the cane above his head.

‘Who speaks?’ he shouted angrily.

‘I did,’ said Nicholas. He walked towards Mr Squeers.

‘This must stop!’

‘You want me to stop?’ Mr Squeers asked.

‘Yes!’ Nicholas’s voice was very loud and his face was red. ‘You must stop hitting Smike – or I will stop you!’

Mr Squeers put the stick down and stared at his assistant.

‘You have been cruel to this poor boy for years,’ Nicholas said. ‘He is very frightened of you. He had to run away – it was the only thing he could do.’

‘Sit down!’ shouted Mr Squeers at Nicholas. Then he lifted the cane in the air and hit Smike once more.

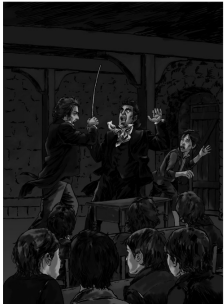
Nicholas was very angry now.

‘I will not sit down!’ he shouted. ‘And I will not let you hit this boy again!’

When Mr Squeers heard these words he looked very shocked. Then he lifted the cane once more and hit Nicholas hard in the face.

Nicholas jumped on top of Mr Squeers and took the cane from him. Then he began to hit the schoolmaster. He hit him harder and harder.

42



Mrs Squeers ran forward and tried to pull her husband away from Nicholas. At the same time, Fanny began to hit him. But Nicholas was very angry and nothing could stop him.

At last Nicholas stopped hitting Mr Squeers and pushed him to the ground. The schoolmaster lay still.

Nicholas looked round the room for Smike. But the boy had disappeared.

Nicholas ran upstairs and packed a few of his clothes in a case. Then he walked out of Dotheboys Hall. He never went back.

‘I’ll walk to London,’ Nicholas thought. ‘It’s a long way but I don’t have enough money for the coach. I’ve only got a few shillings. But I must get away from this horrible place!’

Then he saw a man coming towards him. The man was riding a horse.

‘I know that man,’ Nicholas said to himself. ‘He visits Dotheboys Hall sometimes. It’s Mr John Bowdler.’

When he came nearer, John Bowdler called out, ‘Hello, Nicholas! What has happened to your face?’

‘It’s only a cut!’ Nicholas replied.

‘What happened?’ John asked.

‘It’s Mr Squeers, John. He is such a cruel man. Today he was hitting Smike again. I stopped him and hit him with his own cane! Then I left him lying on his schoolroom floor. That’s why I am leaving Dotheboys Hall.’


‘Well done, Nicholas! At last someone has stopped him. Let me shake your hand!’ John said.

43

Then he lay down on a bed of hay and fell asleep straight away because he was so tired.

In the morning, Nicholas sat up and rubbed his eyes. Then he rubbed them again – it couldn’t be true! Sitting near him in the hay was a long, thin figure. It was Smike!

‘Please let me stay with you!’ said the boy. ‘I will go anywhere as long as I am with you. You are my only friend.’



44

The two men shook hands.

‘But where are you going now?’ John asked.

‘I’m going back to London, to my family. I’m going to walk there,’ Nicholas said.

‘You can’t walk to London! It’s too far! How much money have you got?’ John asked him.

‘Not much – but I will be all right,’ Nicholas replied. ‘I’ll give you the money for the coach if you like,’ John said.

But Nicholas would only take a pound. It was not enough for the coach but it was enough to buy food. Then the two men said goodbye and Nicholas continued his journey.

Soon it was dark and it began to snow. That night, Nicholas stayed at a small cottage. He walked all the next day and when it was dark, he looked for a place to spend the night. Finally he came to a barn and went inside.

45

‘I am your friend but I don’t know how I can help you,’ replied Nicholas sadly. ‘I am nearly as poor as you are. But how did you find me?’

‘I followed you. I followed you for two days,’ Smike said.

‘Why didn’t you speak to me before?’ Nicholas asked.

‘I thought that you would send me back to Dotheboys Hall,’ Smike replied.

‘You poor boy. I would never do that,’ said Nicholas softly.

‘Please let me stay with you! I will be your servant – I will do anything you ask,’ Smike said.

Nicholas thought about it for a few minutes. Then he said, ‘Very well, we will face the world together. Come on – we still have a long way to go!’

After several days, Nicholas and Smike finally arrived in London. Nicholas remembered the letter from Newman Noggs, so they went to Silver Street. They found the Crown Inn and Nicholas asked for Newman Noggs’ address.

Soon, he and Smike arrived at his house. Newman Noggs was surprised to see them but he asked them to come in. They were wet and cold, so they were happy to sit down in front of his warm fire.

Newman Noggs told Nicholas all the family news. Then he said, ‘You must be careful, Nicholas. Your Uncle Ralph has had a letter from a young woman called Fanny Squeers. She says that you tried to kill her father and then stole one of the boys!’

46

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47

### Active vocabulary

<i>arrive</i>	rhymes with <i>alive</i>
<i>cottage</i>	note the ‘tt’ in the middle
<i>disappear</i>	opposite of <i>appear</i>
<i>follow</i>	find the word <i>low</i> ‘hiding’ inside
<i>lock</i>	rhymes with <i>rock, mock, stock</i>
<i>rub</i>	rhymes with <i>hub, cub, club</i>
<i>silence</i>	a noun ending in ‘ence’; the adjective is <i>silent</i>
<i>tie</i>	you can ‘tie your shoe’, ‘tie your tie’, ‘tie a rope/ribbon round something or someone’
<i>worse</i>	‘or’ sounds like ‘er’; the opposite of <i>better</i>

### Passive vocabulary

*barn forward hardly hay servant shake hands*

## Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher’s Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activities on page 10 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.

- Read the title of Chapter 5. Ask *What do you think the chapter is going to be about?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 39. Ask *What is Mr Squeers doing? Where do you think he may be going?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 40. Ask *What is on Smike's legs? What do you think Smike did? How does Mr Squeers feel? How does Nicholas feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 43. Ask *Who is holding the cane? What is he doing? How does Mr Squeers feel? How does Smike feel? Who is watching?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 45. Ask *What is the man on the horse doing?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 46. Ask *Where is Nicholas? What do you think Smike is saying to him?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

### During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

#### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 11 of their Workbook.

- 1 *How did Nicholas help the boys at Dotheboys Hall?*

- 2 *What did Mr Squeers do to Smike when Nicholas became friendly with the boy?*
- 3 *What did Smike do?*
- 4 *How did Mr Squeers look for Smike?*
- 5 *What did Mr Squeers do to make his horse go faster?*
- 6 *What had Mr Squeers done to Smike so that he would not run away again?*
- 7 *Where did Mr Squeers put Smike until after lunch?*
- 8 *What did Smike say to Mr Squeers before he hit Smike?*
- 9 *Why did Nicholas think it was worse than anything he had seen before?*
- 10 *Who jumped to his feet to stop Mr Squeers?*
- 11 *What did Mr Squeers do with his cane when Nicholas told him that he must stop hitting Smike?*
- 12 *After Mr Squeers hit Nicholas in the face what did Nicholas do to him?*
- 13 *Where was Smike when Nicholas turned around and looked for him?*
- 14 *What did Nicholas do next?*
- 15 *Why was Nicholas going to walk to London?*
- 16 *What did John Browdie do when he heard Nicholas's story?*
- 17 *What could Nicholas do with the pound he received from John?*
- 18 *What did Nicholas see the next day in the barn?*
- 19 *Why had Smike not spoken to Nicholas before?*
- 20 *Why did Nicholas and Smike go to Silver Street?*
- 21 *Why were they happy to sit in front of a warm fire?*
- 22 *What did the letter from Fanny Squeers say?*

- There is a lot of shouting in this chapter. Ask the children to find and read aloud sentences that end with an exclamation mark. Encourage them to speak loudly and, where appropriate, angrily.
- Point out that every time a different person speaks, it starts on a new line.
- Write on the board: *Then, one day; On the second day; That afternoon.* Explain that time markers like these help the reader understand when events happen. Ask the children to find and read aloud other time markers in the chapter. Ask *How long did it take Mr Squeers to find and bring Smike back? How long did it take Nicholas and Smike to walk back to London?*
- Remind the children that the regular past tense ending 'ed' can sound like 't', 'd' or 'id'. Ask the children to find and read aloud sentences with the past tense of these verbs: *follow, lock, jump, wait, stare, shout, try, pack, happen.* Correct any pronunciation errors.
- Ask the children to re-read the last section on page 47 and find pronouns in the text. Ask the children who or what each pronoun refers to.
- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *Why do you think Mr Squeers hit Smike even more when he saw Nicholas was friendly with him?*
- 2 *Were you surprised Smike ran away? Why (not)?*
- 3 *Why do you think Mr Squeers wanted to find Smike?*
- 4 *Why did Mr Squeers want to punish Smike in front of all the other boys?*
- 5 *Why did Mr Squeers hit the desk in front of Nicholas with the cane?*
- 6 *Why did Mrs Squeers hit Smike?*
- 7 *How do you think the other boys felt when Mr Squeers hit Smike harder and harder?*
- 8 *What did Nicholas mean when he said, '– or I will stop you!'*
- 9 *Why was Mr Squeers very shocked when Nicholas said, 'I will not let you hit this boy again!'*
- 10 *What do you think Mrs Squeers felt when her husband hit Nicholas in the face with the cane?*
- 11 *Do you think Nicholas was right to hit Mr Squeers harder and harder in front of the boys and his family?*
- 12 *How do you think the boys felt when Nicholas hit Mr Squeers? How did his family feel?*
- 13 *What do you think the boys at Dotheboys Hall said to each other that night after Nicholas left?*
- 14 *Why do you think Mr John Browdie wanted to shake Nicholas' hand?*
- 15 *Why would Nicholas not accept money from Mr John Browdie for a coach back to London?*
- 16 *How do you think Nicholas felt when he sat up and rubbed his eyes and rubbed them again?*

- 17 Do you think Nicholas wants Smike to be his servant? Why (not)?
- 18 What do you think Newman Noggs told Nicholas about his family?
- 19 Why do you think Fanny wrote a letter to Ralph Nickleby?
- 20 How do you think Ralph felt when he read Fanny's letter?
- 21 Why did Newman Noggs tell Nicholas he must be careful?

- Discuss the use of physical punishment in schools. Explain that it is no longer done in England, but that it was common a hundred years ago. Do the children think it is ever right for a teacher to hit a child with a cane? What would they do if a teacher hit them?
- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*

### Stage 2 comprehension extra

*Author's style* Point out how the chapter is written in three sections with a gap between them. Explain that this is the way the author shows the passing of time. The gap denotes that some time has passed since the previous section.

- Ask the children to smile their most horrible smile (like Mr Squeers did)! Discuss how we can often tell what a person is feeling by their facial expressions. Ask the class to show facial expressions for: angry, very angry, tired, shocked, frightened, surprise.
- Ask the children to work in pairs and to read the conversation between Nicholas and Smike in the barn. One child should read Smike's words and the other child should read Nicholas's words. Tell them to try to use the correct intonation. After they have practised for five minutes, ask several pairs to read their parts in front of the class. The rest of the class can vote for the best Nicholas and the best Smike.



# Chapter 6 The Nicklebys in London

Pages 48 to 55

CHAPTER 6  
The Nicklebys in London

The next morning, Nicholas left Smike in Newman Noggs' house and went to see his mother and his sister. When he arrived at their new house in Thames Street, he heard loud, angry voices. He stood at the door and listened.

"But Nicholas tried to kill Mr Squeers and then he ran away with a boy!"


That was Ralph Nickleby's voice. Then Nicholas heard his sister, Kate.

"It can't be true, Uncle Ralph! Nicholas would never hurt anyone!" she cried.

"He's a good boy," Mrs Nickleby said. "It cannot be the whole truth. There must be more to this story!"

"If he hasn't done anything wrong, where is he now? Why is Nicholas hiding?" asked Ralph.

Nicholas didn't want to hear any more. He pushed the door open and walked into the house quickly.



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Nicholas soon learned that Newman Noggs did not have much money. He knew he could not stay at his house any longer. He and Smike decided to set off on their travels again.

"I'll soon find a job, Smike," Nicholas said as they walked. "Don't worry, I won't let anyone hurt you again. You have had a terrible life. Can you remember anything about your childhood?"

"I remember the day I arrived at Dotheboys Hall," said Smike. "It was raining. I was so small and so cold and wet. After that day, whenever it rained, I began to cry. The other boys laughed at me, but I couldn't stop."

"Who took you to Dotheboys Hall? Can you remember?" Nicholas asked.


"It was a man and I was afraid of him. But at Dotheboys Hall, I was even more afraid," Smike said.

"Didn't you have a mother to take care of you?" asked Nicholas.

"No, I can't remember my mother," Smike replied sadly. Nicholas felt very sorry for him.

"What about your life before you went to Dotheboys Hall?" he asked. "Where did you live?"

"I can't remember the house. I only remember a room. I was always alone in the room. It was on the top floor and there was a door in the ceiling. It was a door to the attic. I used to pull the bedclothes over my head because I was afraid of that door. What was behind it? Was there anyone in the attic? I still dream about it," Smike said. And his voice shook as he spoke.



50

One day, a letter arrived from Kate with news. Nicholas's mother and sister had decided to move out of their house in Thames Street and had moved back to the apartment above Miss Is Creevy's. They did not want Uncle Ralph's help any more. But Kate was not happy in her job with Madame Mantalini and she needed her brother's help. Kate said she could leave the dressmaker's shop if Nicholas would be able to stay with them and find a good job in London.

So Nicholas and Smike left the theatre and returned to London. Smike was happy to work as the Nicklebys' servant and Nicholas went out to look for work every day.

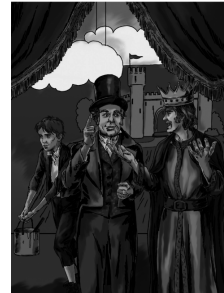
One morning, Nicholas was looking at some job advertisements in a window when an old man came up and stood next to him. The old man was short with a kind, round face and curly white hair. Soon, they began to talk. The man was called Mr Cheeryble. Nicholas told him about his search for work.

"I can see that you are a gentleman," said Mr Cheeryble. "Why are you looking for a job in shop windows? Only poor people do that! What has gone wrong?"

Nicholas told Mr Cheeryble everything. He told him about his father's death and his Uncle Ralph. He told him about his time at Dotheboys Hall, Smike and his need to look after his mother and his sister.

When he finished, Mr Cheeryble said, "Come with me! I am sure that I can help you."

Mr Cheeryble took Nicholas to a building in a quiet square. On the door, there was a sign saying 'Cheeryble Brothers'. When they went inside, Nicholas saw a great number of boxes and packing cases.



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"The Cheeryble brothers must be merchants," Nicholas thought.

His new friend took him to an office where another man was sitting in front of a pile of papers. The man was wearing silver spectacles.

"Is my brother in his room, Tim?" asked Mr Cheeryble.

"Yes, Mr Cheeryble," Tim replied. "Mr Trimmers is with him. A man was killed at the docks this morning. They are going to send his family some money."

"Mr Trimmers is a good man, Nicholas," said Mr Cheeryble. "He tells us about people in need and we help them if we can."

Mr Trimmers came into the room. "Good morning, Mr Trimmers," Mr Cheeryble said. "How many children did that poor man have?"


"Six, sir. Your brother has given me twenty pounds for them," Trimmers replied.

"Then I will give you another twenty! That's terrible! Six children without a father!" Mr Cheeryble looked very sad.

"This old man is very kind!" thought Nicholas.

Mr Cheeryble took Nicholas through a door into his brother's small room. There he had a great surprise. Another old man, exactly like the first, was sitting at the desk. He had the same round face, the same curly white hair and even the same clothes. The Cheeryble brothers were twins!

"This is my brother, Mr Ned Cheeryble," said the first twin. "And I am Mr Charles Cheeryble. Ned, we must help this young man if we can."



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## Active vocabulary

<i>exactly</i>	'ly' changes the adjective <i>exact</i> to an adverb
<i>merchant</i>	take away the first three letters and you get a new word
<i>news</i>	the 's' sounds like 'z'
<i>owner</i>	the 'er' ending is commonly added to verbs to make it the person who does the action: an <i>owner owns</i> something
<i>save</i>	other words ending in 'ave' are <i>cave</i> , <i>brave</i> , <i>wave</i>
<i>sure</i>	the 's' sounds like 'sh'
<i>surprise</i>	point out the two 's's (second one sounds like 'z') and the two 'r's
<i>true</i>	the 'ue' sounds like the 'o' in <i>do</i> ; <i>true</i> is an adjective and the noun is <i>truth</i>
<i>weak</i>	<i>weak</i> and <i>week</i> are homophones
<i>whole</i>	<i>whole</i> and <i>hole</i> are homophones

## Passive vocabulary

*attacked attic bedclothes ceiling childhood cottage docks firm perform rent search spectacles stage to be in need twins violent*

## Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activities on page 12 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.
- Read the title of Chapter 6. Discuss what the chapter might be about.

- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 48. Ask *What do you think Nicholas is saying to his uncle? How does Nicholas feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 51. Ask *Where do you think Nicholas and Smike are going? What is Smike thinking about? What is Smike carrying?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 52. Ask *Where do you think Nicholas and Smike are? What is Smike carrying? What is behind the two men? How do the two men feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 55. Ask *What do you notice about the two older men? How does Nicholas feel when he sees them together? Where do you think they are?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

## During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 13 of their Workbook.

- 1 *What did Nicholas hear when he arrived at his mother's new house on Thames Street?*
- 2 *What did Kate say when Uncle Ralph told them Nicholas tried to kill Mr Squeers?*
- 3 *What did Nicholas do when he didn't want to hear any more?*

- 4 *Was Nicholas sorry that he attacked Mr Squeers?*
- 5 *Where did Nicholas say Smike was? Was he well?*
- 6 *Why did Ralph say he never wanted to see Nicholas again?*
- 7 *Why did Nicholas and Smike leave Newman Noggs' house?*
- 8 *What did Smike remember about the day he arrived at Dotheboys Hall?*
- 9 *Did Smike remember anything about his mother?*
- 10 *What did Smike remember about the room he lived in before he went to Dotheboys Hall?*
- 11 *Who was the owner of the theatre?*
- 12 *How much money did Mr Crummles offer Nicholas and Smike for working in his theatre?*
- 13 *What did Nicholas do in the theatre?*
- 14 *How did Nicholas and Smike feel about their life in the travelling theatre?*
- 15 *What did Kate tell Nicholas in her letter?*
- 16 *What would Nicholas have to do so that Kate could leave the dressmaker's shop?*
- 17 *Why was Mr Cheeryble surprised to see Nicholas, a gentleman, looking in shop windows for a job?*
- 18 *Why did Mr Cheeryble take Nicholas to his office?*
- 19 *Why was Mr Trimmers talking to Mr Cheeryble's brother?*
- 20 *How much money did the Cheeryble brothers give to the family of the dead man?*
- 21 *Why did the second Mr Cheeryble look exactly the same as the first Mr Cheeryble?*
- 22 *What did the Cheeryble brothers do for Nicholas?*

23 How did Nicholas feel after he and Smike, Mrs Nickleby and Kate moved into the cottage?

- Homophones are two words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. Ask the children to look at pages 48 and 49 and find homophones for these words (write them on the board): *herd* (heard), *hole* (whole), *here* (hear), *too* (two), *where* (wear), *week* (weak).
- Ask the children to find adjectives in the chapter and say what noun each adjective describes (for example, a *violent* man – *violent* describes *man*).
- Write the word *ceiling* on the board. Discuss the meaning. Say the word (sounds like 'see' + 'ling') and tap out the two syllables. Remind the children of the rule: 'i' before 'e' except after 'c'. Other words with 'cei' are *receive*, *receipt*, *deceit*.
- Ask the children why Smike still dreams about the room he had before he went to Dotheboys Hall. Ask them if they are ever afraid in their bedroom at night. Discuss fears sensitively. Talk about why Smike cried whenever it rained when he was at the school.
- The Cheeryble brothers were charitable men. Explain that a 'cheery' person makes other people feel happy. Discuss how they helped the family of the man killed at the docks and how they helped Nicholas and his family. Tell the children that in Victorian England there were a lot of good people like the Cheerybles. Ask the children to find and read aloud sentences that show that the Cheeryble brothers were kind.

- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 Why didn't Kate and Mrs Nickleby believe that Nicholas had tried to kill Mr Squeers?
- 2 Why do you think Kate stood between Nicholas and his uncle?
- 3 Do you feel that Nicholas had attacked Mr Squeers for a very good reason? Why (not)?
- 4 Why would Ralph have no more to do with Nicholas?
- 5 Why did Smike not remember much of his childhood before going to Dotheboys Hall?
- 6 Why do you think Nicholas and Smike enjoyed their life at the theatre? Would you enjoy working in a travelling theatre? Why (not)?
- 7 Why do you think that Kate and Mrs Nickleby did not want help from Ralph anymore?
- 8 How do you think Smike and Nicholas felt about leaving the theatre?
- 9 Why was it good luck that Nicholas met Mr Cheeryble?
- 10 What do you think Nicholas told his mother and Kate about his new job?

- 11 *How do you think Mrs Nickleby, Kate and Smike felt when they heard they had a new home in Bow?*
- 12 *Why do you think the first two weeks in Bow 'were the happiest of Nicholas's life'?*
- 13 *What do you think Smike thought about how his luck had changed?*

- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*

### Stage 2 comprehension extra

*Plot* With the class, review the main sequence of events in the chapter on the board. Encourage the children to avoid small details and concentrate on just the key events.

- Write the word *bedclothes* on the board and show how it is made of two separate words, *bed* and *clothes*. Write \_\_\_\_\_*room* on the board and ask the children to suggest a word to complete it, for example (*bed, class*). Do the same with *school* \_\_\_\_\_ (*room, master*), \_\_\_\_\_*stairs* (*up, down*), \_\_\_\_\_*noon* (*after*), *any* \_\_\_\_\_ (*where, one, body*), *every* \_\_\_\_\_ (*one*), *child* \_\_\_\_\_ (*hood*), *gentle* \_\_\_\_\_ (*man, men*), \_\_\_\_\_*side* (*in, out*), *news* \_\_\_\_\_ (*paper*).
- Have a competition to see who can think of the most words rhyming with *poor* (for example, *door, floor, chore, more, bore, snore*). The individual with the most correct words wins!
- Ask the children to find these words in the text: *travelling theatre, perform, show, stage, actor, play*. Discuss the meaning of each and then ask the children to use them in sentences.
- Ask the children to discuss these statements: '*Kindness, like a boomerang, always returns*' and '*Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see*'.

# Chapter 7

## A young lady, a kidnapping and a rescue

### Pages 56 to 64

CHAPTER 7  
A young lady, a kidnapping and a rescue

Nicholas enjoyed working for the Cheeryble brothers and he was very happy living in the little cottage in Bow.

One day, the Cheeryble brothers came to visit the Nickleby family. And they brought their nephews with them. His name was Frank.

"You Uncle Ralph came to see us a few days ago," Charles Cheeryble said. "He came to tell us how wicked you are and how badly you behaved at Dotheboys Hall. But we did not believe him and we sent him away!"


Nicholas looked down at the floor.

"You are very kind to me," he said slowly. "How can I thank you?"

"Let's speak no more about it," Charles said. "But there is something you can do for me."

"I will do anything for you!" Nicholas cried. "Please tell me what you want me to do."

"I want you to visit a young lady – a beautiful young lady called Madeline Bray," Charles said. "I was a friend of her mother. But her mother is dead now and Madeline lives with her father. He is an angry man and they are very poor. Madeline paints pictures to earn money. I often buy some of her pictures but I don't want her father to know."



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Mr Bray opened the envelope and counted the money. "Ah – five pounds. Is that right?" he asked.

"Yes, Father," Madeline replied.

"Then ring the bell, girl! Call the servant. Send her out to buy me some grapes and a messapage!" her father said.

Mr Bray turned to Nicholas.

"Are you waiting for a receipt?" he asked.

"No, I don't need a receipt, sir," replied Nicholas.

"No! But your five pounds is a payment, not a present," he said to Nicholas. Then Mr Bray turned to Madeline and told her to write a receipt for the money at once.

"Where is that servant? I want my grapes!" he shouted, sitting back in his chair.

"When shall I call again?" Nicholas asked Madeline.

"Oh, in about four weeks," said Madeline. "I will ..."

"Four weeks? These five pounds will not last four weeks!" shouted Mr Bray. "Come next week, young man!"

Nicholas bowed and left the room. As he walked down the stairs, he heard someone behind him. It was Madeline.


"I'm sorry about my father," she said. "He can be very rude. It's because he is ill. Please don't tell the Cheerybles!"

"Of course not," Nicholas said. "And you must tell me if there is anything else I can do for you – I will do whatever you ask!"

Madeline looked surprised.

"Do you mean that?" she asked.

"Yes, I do," Nicholas replied with a smile. Nicholas liked Madeline Bray very much.



57

In a panic, Smike looked down. He saw young Wackford Squeers taking his arms! Then he saw the boy's father.

"Well done, son!" said Mr Squeers. He looked at Smike and shouted, "Call for a coach! Let's get this wicked boy back to Dotheboys Hall!"

The coach soon arrived and Mr Squeers pushed Smike inside. Poor Smike sat in the corner and put his hands over his eyes. He was very frightened. Squeers and his son were laughing at him.

"Please let me go home!" cried Smike.

"You are going home!" Mr Squeers shouted. "Your home is Dotheboys Hall! Where did you get that suit? Where are the clothes I gave you?"

And he began to hit Smike with his umbrella. Smike rolled into a hall and started to cry.


At last, the coach slowed down and stopped outside a house.

"Here we are, at my friend Mr Stanley's house," said Mr Squeers. "We will stay here tonight. Get out of the coach, you silly boy!"

He pushed Smike into the house and up the stairs. Then he threw the boy into a small, dark room.

"I'll speak to you tomorrow!" he shouted. Smike heard him lock the door.

Smike was very tired so he lay down on the hard bed. He groaned. Now his life would be full of tears and pain again.



58

With a big smile on his face, Mr Squeers explained how he and his son had caught Smike.

"If you don't believe me, you can come and see him!" he said. "Come to Mr Stanley's house this evening."

That evening, John Browdie and his wife went to dinner at Mr Stanley's house. "Are you all right, John?" Tilly asked. She put down her fork and looked nervously at her husband. "You don't look well."

"I have got a headache, my dear. And I feel much too hot," John replied.

"Go and lie down for a while," Tilly said. "Maybe your headache will get better."

"You can go to my room, John," said Mr Squeers. He was in a good mood because he was looking forward to hitting poor Smike.


So Tilly helped John to Mr Squeers' room. John lay down on the bed and closed his eyes.

"Try to sleep, my dear," said Tilly. "You will feel better soon."

Tilly went downstairs. Then John Browdie stood up and smiled to himself. "I must be a good actor," he thought. "Everyone really believes I have got a headache!"

He took off his shoes and walked silently out of the room. He soon found the room at the top of the house. There was a key in the lock, so John turned it and quietly opened the door.

Smike looked up with frightened eyes. John put a finger to his mouth. "Silent!" he whispered. "Don't be afraid! I'm Mr Browdie – you have seen me at Dotheboys Hall!"



59

"Go quickly!" whispered John. "And good luck!"

"Thank you!" Smike said happily and he ran down the road.

John stood outside the sitting room. He listened to what everyone was saying. They were talking and laughing – no one had heard him and Smike.

Then John walked back up the stairs and into Mr Squeers' room. He climbed on to the bed and lay down again. He smiled to himself in the dark.

60

### Active vocabulary

<i>believe</i>	sounds like <i>be + leave</i> ; point out the 'i' before 'e' except after 'c' rule
<i>enjoy</i>	joy is 'hiding' inside <i>enjoy</i>
<i>explain</i>	use <i>plain</i> language to <i>explain</i>
<i>free</i>	rhymes with <i>me</i> and <i>tea</i>
<i>groan</i>	rhymes with <i>moan</i>
<i>guess</i>	the 'u' is silent, and so it is not pronounced
<i>headache</i>	a compound word: <i>head + ache</i> ; <i>ache</i> rhymes with <i>bake</i>
<i>message</i>	there are two words 'hiding' inside: <i>mess</i> and <i>age</i>
<i>panic</i>	a two-syllable word: <i>pan + ic</i>
<i>wish</i>	rhymes with <i>dish</i>

### Passive vocabulary

*bowed envelope kidnapping lamp post nephew panic receipt rescue strike tool*

## Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activities on page 14 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.
- Read the title of Chapter 7. Discuss what the chapter might be about. Make sure they understand the meanings of *kidnapping* and *rescue*.
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 57. Ask *What are each of these three people holding in their hands? Why do you think Nicholas and the woman are looking at the man in the chair? How does he feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 59. Ask *What are Mr Squeers and his son doing to Smike? How does Smike feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 61. Ask *Who do you think Mr Squeers is talking to? What do you think he is saying? How does John Browdie feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 63. Ask *Where do you think Smike is? How does he feel? What is John Browdie doing?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

## During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 15 of their Workbook.

- 1 *What was the name of the Cheeryble brothers' nephew?*
- 2 *What had Ralph Nickleby told the Cheeryble brothers about Nicholas?*
- 3 *Why did Charles Cheeryble want Nicholas to visit Madeline Bray?*
- 4 *Why did Nicholas put an envelope on the table?*
- 5 *What did Mr Bray tell his daughter to do after he counted the money?*
- 6 *Why did Mr Bray tell Madeline to write a receipt?*
- 7 *When did Madeline want Nicholas to call again? Why did her father want Nicholas to come sooner?*
- 8 *Why did Nicholas say to Madeline he would do whatever she asked?*
- 9 *What was Smike doing when the clock struck half-past eight?*
- 10 *What happened to Smike after he got pushed against the lamp post?*
- 11 *Who took Smike? How?*
- 12 *Why did Smike put his hands over his eyes?*
- 13 *Where did the coach stop? Why?*
- 14 *Why did Smike groan after he lay down on the hard bed?*

- 15 *Who did Mr Squeers meet the next day and what did he tell him?*
- 16 *Why did Mr Squeers invite John and Tilly Browdie to dinner at Mr Snawley's house?*
- 17 *What did John Browdie say was wrong with him when his wife told him he looked ill?*
- 18 *Why did John smile after his wife helped him to Mr Squeers' room?*
- 19 *How did John help Smike escape from the room at the top of the house?*
- 20 *What did John Browdie say to Smike when he left the house?*
- 21 *Why hadn't anyone heard John and Smike?*

- Find a word on page 56 that means the same as *liked* (enjoyed), *brother's son* (nephew), *woman* (lady), *not alive* (dead), *paintings* (pictures), *work for money* (earn).
- Discuss why these words are in italic: *is* (page 56), *She* (page 57), *are* (page 60). Ask the children to read the sentences aloud which contain these words, emphasising the italicised word.
- Ask the children to find and read aloud any three-syllable words and to tap them out as they say them.
- Ask the children to find the following actions in the text and to perform them: *bow and leave the room, push someone roughly, groan, rub your hands together, put a big smile on your face, look nervously at someone, smile to yourself, put a finger to your mouth and whisper 'Sshh!'* Discuss which characters did these actions and why.
- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *Why didn't the Cheeryble brothers believe Ralph's story about Nicholas?*
- 2 *Why do you think Charles Cheeryble did not want Mr Bray to know that he was buying his daughter's paintings?*
- 3 *Why do you think Madeline did not want to open the envelope in front of her father?*
- 4 *Do you think that the Brays had enough money for things like grapes and newspapers?*
- 5 *Do you think that Mr Bray's illness was the true reason for his bad moods?*
- 6 *Why do you think Madeline did not want the Cheerybles to know that her father was rude?*
- 7 *Why do you think Nicholas liked Madeline Bray?*
- 8 *How do you think Smike felt when he saw Wackford Squeers and his father?*
- 9 *Do you think Mr Snawley knew that Mr Squeers put Smike in his house? Why (not)?*
- 10 *Why do you think John Browdie looked worried when Mr Squeers talked about meeting an old friend?*
- 11 *Why do you think John Browdie helped Smike? Why didn't he tell his wife about his plan?*
- 12 *Do you think John Browdie's plan was a good one? Why (not)?*

### Stage 2 comprehension extra

*Characterisation* There are lots of characters in this story. Elicit from the children the names of all of the characters in the story so far. Write the list on the board, under chapter headings. Ask the children to say something about each character. Ask *Which characters are kind? Which ones are unkind? Which ones are wicked?* Ask the children to copy the list of characters and tell them to add to the list as they continue reading the story.

- Have a competition! Ask the children to look at page 58 and see how many prepositions they can find. The first to find the most correct words (there are 13 prepositions) is the winner.
- Write the word *kidnapping* on the board. Discuss how Mr Squeers and his son kidnapped Smike. Talk about how Smike felt. Ask *Why do you think the Squeers wanted Smike back?* Explain that, fortunately, the kidnapping of children does not happen often, but it does happen occasionally. Ask the children if they know about any kidnappings of children. Talk about the tremendous relief of the families when their children are rescued and returned home. Ask *What do you think Mr Squeers will do when he discovers that Smike has left the house?*
- Talk about bravery. Ask *Why didn't John Browdie want Mr Squeers to know that he helped Smike? Was John Browdie brave or not?* Ask the children if they have ever been in a situation where either they or someone they know was very brave.
- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*



# Chapter 8

## Smike and Madeline in danger

Pages 65 to 72

CHAPTER 8  
Smike and Madeline in danger

When Mr Squeers learned that Smike had run away again, he was very angry. 'I'll find him!' he shouted, jumping up and down. 'I'll get him back! I won't leave London without him. But I need some help – I'll speak to Ralph Nickleby!' Mr Stawley was happy for Mr Squeers to stay at his house for a few more days. They both went to visit Ralph Nickleby and the three men made a clever plan.

Mrs and Mrs Browdie went to visit the Nicklebys in the cottage in Bow. Everyone was happy because Smike was home again and there was much laughter as they ate their dinner.


At the end of the evening, when the Brownlies were putting on their coats, there was a loud knock on the door.

'It's eleven o'clock!' said Nicholas. 'Who has come to visit us at eleven o'clock?'

He opened the door – and Ralph Nickleby walked in. Nicholas stood up to face him. Kate held Nicholas by his arm and Smike hid behind them. John Browdie went to stand between Ralph and Nicholas.

'Listen to what I have to say,' said Ralph.

'Be careful,' said John. 'Don't make any trouble! You must be John Browdie from Yorkshire,' Ralph said.



Then he saw Smike and pointed to him. 'And this must be Smike. I've heard a lot about him!' Then Nicholas cried, 'Don't talk to this man, John! He is wicked and I will not have him in my house!' 'Wait, Nicholas,' said John. He looked through the open door and saw Mr Squeers and Mr Stawley outside. 'We have two more visitors. Come in, come in. Don't stand outside!' Then Mr Squeers and Mr Stawley came in and stood next to Ralph.

Ralph smiled wickedly. 'We have come to give a boy back to his father! He pointed to Mr Stawley. 'This is Smike's father! He is a friend of mine and he wants his son to go back to Dotheboys Hall.'

No one spoke. Then Mr Stawley put his arm round Smike's thin shoulders and said, 'My son! At last, I have you back.'

Nicholas looked at the three visitors. He didn't know what to say. Then Smike moved away from Mr Stawley and ran to Nicholas.

'Please don't let them take me! I want to stay with you!' he cried.

'Look at him!' cried Nicholas. 'If you are this boy's father, and I'm not sure that you are, you should be very angry with yourself! You can't send him back to that terrible school!'

Mr Squeers began to speak. 'If you mean Dotheboys Hall ...'

But he was stopped by Ralph.

'Let me tell you the facts,' said Ralph. 'Mr Stawley and his wife had a son called Smike. They were not happy together, so they lived apart. Some time later, Mrs Stawley told her husband that the boy was dead. Mrs Stawley became very ill and just before she died, she wrote to Mr Stawley. She said that the boy was really alive and was living at Dotheboys Hall. Look! I have the letter here.'

Ralph gave the letter to Nicholas and John. They read it slowly. Nicholas looked furious.

'It can't be true!' whispered Kate.

'I think it is true,' said Nicholas sadly.

Then Smike cried, 'I will not go! I will not leave you! This is my home and this is my family.'

Mr Squeers took Smike's arms and tried to pull him away. But Nicholas pushed the schoolmaster out of the door and shouted, 'Uncle Ralph and Mr Stawley, you can leave my house at once!'

'But I want my son!' said Mr Stawley.


'Ask Smike to choose,' replied Nicholas. 'If he wants to go with you, he is free to leave. If he wants to stay here with us, we will be pleased to have him.'

Mr Stawley looked at Smike.

'Come home with me, you silly boy!' he said.

'No!' cried Smike. He held Nicholas's arm tightly.

'I will not!'



At last Mr Stawley realized that Smike was not going to leave with him. He turned and left the room. Uncle Ralph shook his fist at Smike and followed Mr Stawley with Mr Squeers. Nicholas closed the door behind them. The Nicklebys and their friends were alone again.

A few days later, Ralph Nickleby was walking through London when it began to rain. He stood under a tree and waited for the rain to stop.

Then he heard a voice.

'Mr Nickleby! Do you remember me?'

Ralph turned quickly and saw a bent old man with a stick.

'I remember you, Mr Brooker. You worked for me in my office some time ago,' Ralph said.

'Look at me now! I'm hungry and sick!' the old man said.

'What do you want from me?' shouted Ralph.

'Please give me a little money so I can buy some bread,' the old man said. 'I have been looking for you for two days.'

'Then you have wasted your time, Mr Brooker. If you want money, go and earn it as I do!' shouted Ralph.

'But I can't find any work!' the old man explained. 'The problem is that I'm old and sick, and I have been in prison for eight years. No one will give me a job.'

'I can't help you. Now please go away,' Ralph replied angrily.

Mr Brooker looked at Ralph.


'You are not a kind man, Mr Nickleby,' he said. 'You were cruel when I worked for you and you are even crueler now. But I know a secret about you! If I tell you, what will you give me?' Mr Brooker asked.

'I'm not interested in your silly, false stories. Now go away!' Ralph shouted.

But the old man did not want to leave. 'The secret is about you and another Nickleby!' he said.

'If you mean Nicholas, I don't want to hear it. You can't trick me!' Ralph shouted furiously.

Mr Brooker then watched Ralph turn and walk away. The old man shook with cold.



When he arrived back in his office, Ralph had a visitor. His visitor, Mr Gride, was an old money lender. He had a sharp nose and a wicked face.

'What can I do for you, Mr Gride?' said Ralph. 'Be quick – I'm very busy!' So Mr Gride sat forward in his chair. 'I want to get married, Mr Nickleby!' he said.

'Married?' asked Ralph. 'Have you found a rich old woman, then?'

'No!' replied Mr Gride. He rubbed his hands. 'The lady is not old, she's young – and she's extremely beautiful, too! This is surprising news,' replied Ralph. 'Who is this lucky girl?'

Mr Gride stood up and closed the door. 'I don't want your assistant Newman Noggs to hear my plans,' he said. Then he sat down again.

'Tell me who you are marrying,' Ralph said.


'Her name is Madeline,' said the old man proudly.

'Madeline Bray. You know her father, I think. We have both done business with old Mr Bray.'

Ralph looked at Mr Gride with interest. 'So Bray has got a beautiful daughter, has he? That man owes me nine hundred pounds,' he said.

'He owes me seventeen hundred pounds!' replied Mr Gride. 'And this is my plan. I will forget his debt if her father will agree to our marriage. Madeline will be very pleased that her father has no more debts. She will be happy to marry me. He is a difficult old man but she loves him.'

'So I need someone to talk to her father for me and I thought of you. Will you help me?' asked Mr Gride.



Ralph thought for a moment. Then he said, 'Why should I help you? What will I get from it?'

'You will get money, Mr Nickleby! I will pay you half of what Bray owes you,' Mr Gride said.

'If I agree to speak to Madeline's father, I want all of the money he owes me!' said Ralph. 'And I want five hundred pounds more, too! You will pay me on your wedding day.' Then Ralph looked at Mr Gride and waited for his reply.

'You're asking for a lot of money,' the money lender said. 'Will you take a little less?'

'No. I want the full amount,' Ralph replied. 'And I want you to write our agreement down and sign it.'

So Mr Gride signed the agreement and the two men set off for Mr Bray's house.

Ralph and Mr Gride did not know it but Newman Noggs had not been working at his desk. He had been hiding in a cupboard in Ralph's room so he had heard everything the two men had said.

### Active vocabulary

<b>agree</b>	a two-syllable word: a + gree; point out the 'ee' and explain that when two people agree, they think the same way about something
<b>alive</b>	opposite is <i>dead</i>
<b>facts</b>	the 't' is silent and so it is not pronounced
<b>false</b>	opposite of <i>true</i>
<b>fist</b>	remember: your <i>fist</i> is near your <i>wrist</i>
<b>owe</b>	this word sounds like the letter 'o' as in I O U (I owe you)
<b>plan</b>	take away the 'l' and you have a new word
<b>secret</b>	the stress is on the first syllable of this two-syllable word
<b>sharp</b>	show your <i>sharp</i> teeth when you say this word!
<b>trick</b>	rhymes with <i>sick</i>

### Passive vocabulary

*apart be pleased bent debts extremely furious knock prison wedding*

## Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.

- Ask the children to do the activities on page 16 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.
- Read the title of Chapter 8. Discuss what the chapter might be about.
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 66. Ask *Where do you think Smike is now? What is he doing? Who is in the house with Nicholas, Kate and Smike?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 68. Ask *What is happening? Do you think Smike is afraid?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 70. Ask *Where is Ralph? Is it a nice day? What do you think the other man wants?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 72. Ask *What is the old money lender doing with his hands? Where do you think he and Ralph are? What do you think they might be talking about?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

### During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

#### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 17 of their Workbook.

- 1 *Who did Mr Squeers decide to speak to about Smike?*
- 2 *Who visited the Nicklebys and ate dinner with them in Bow?*
- 3 *Who knocked on the door at eleven o'clock at night? Who was with him?*
- 4 *Who did Ralph say was Smike's father?*
- 5 *What did Smike do after Mr Snawley put his arm round Smike?*
- 6 *Did Nicholas believe that Mr Snawley was Smike's father?*
- 7 *Why did Mrs Snawley write a letter to Mr Snawley?*
- 8 *Did Kate think it was true?*
- 9 *Why did Mr Snawley and Uncle Ralph leave without Smike? How did Ralph feel?*
- 10 *Who was Mr Brooker, and what did he want from Ralph?*
- 11 *Why would nobody give Mr Brooker a job?*
- 12 *What did Mr Brooker tell Ralph and did Ralph believe him?*
- 13 *Who was Mr Gride and why did he visit Ralph?*
- 14 *Why did Mr Gride close the door?*
- 15 *Who is he marrying, and why?*
- 16 *What will Mr Gride do if Ralph helps him?*
- 17 *What was the final signed agreement between Mr Gride and Ralph?*
- 18 *Where was Newman Noggs, and what did he hear?*

- Ask the children to find words 'hiding' inside these words: *visitors, together, schoolmaster, bread, crueller, Newman, seventeen, lender, cupboard.*

- Write the word *knock* on the board. Say it and ask the children to repeat the word after you. Knock on the door and say it each time you knock. Ask the children to do the same on their desks. Ask *Which letter is silent? Do you know any other words that begin with 'kn'?* Write them on the board as the children say them and correct any errors.
- Discuss why Mr Snawley says that he is Smike's father. Ask *Do you believe Ralph and Mr Snawley? Why (not)? Why would Mr Snawley and Ralph want to help Mr Squeers? How do you think Smike feels about Mr Snawley's letter?*
- Mr Brooker is another new character in the story. Ask *What do we know about Mr Brooker? How does he feel about Ralph Nickleby? Do you think he really knows a secret about Ralph? What might his secret be about?*
- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *Why do you think that Mr Squeers wanted Ralph Nickleby to help him find Smike?*
- 2 *Do you think that the plan Mr Squeers, Ralph Nickleby and Mr Snawley made was actually a clever one? Why (not)?*
- 3 *How could Nicholas find out if Mr Snawley was really Smike's father?*
- 4 *What made Nicholas say, 'I think it is true'?*

- 5 *Do you think John Browdie believes Mr Snawley? Why (not)?*
- 6 *What has happened in this chapter that shows Ralph's unkindness towards others?*
- 7 *Why do you think Ralph is not worried about Mr Brooker's secret?*
- 8 *Do you think Mr Bray will agree to let Mr Gride marry his daughter? Why (not)?*
- 9 *Do you think Madeline will want to marry Mr Gride so that her father's debts are paid?*
- 10 *What do you think Newman Noggs will do now that he knows the agreement between Mr Gride and Ralph?*

### Stage 2 comprehension extra

*Plot* The story is getting more complicated! Explain that Dickens' stories often have a lot of characters and several smaller plots happening at the same time. Readers sometimes forget about some of the minor characters – but they will return to the story later! Remind the children of some minor characters (for example, Frank Cheeryble on page 56 and Mr Brooker on page 69). Ask *Was this an exciting chapter? Did it make you want to read the next chapter? What happened in this chapter that surprised you?*

- Write these words from the chapter on the board (do not underline the silent letters yet): *facts, listen, tightly, eight, debt, owe, half, sign, cupboard*. Ask the children to read them aloud and say which letters in each word are silent.

- Write the following verbs on the board and ask the class to find the noun form of each in the text: *laugh* (laughter), *visit* (visitor), *lend* (lender), *marry* (marriage), *agree* (agreement). Talk about the noun endings and ask the children to think of other nouns that have these endings.
- Point out the abundance of exclamation marks in this chapter. Ask *Why do you think there are lots of exclamation marks in this chapter? How do the speakers feel?*
- Talk about bullying. Discuss examples of people being unkind to people who are younger, poor, unwell, etc.
- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*

# Chapter 9

## A wedding is stopped, and a man goes to prison

Pages 73 to 81

CHAPTER 9  
A wedding is stopped, and a man goes to prison


When Ralph and Mr Gride arrived at the Brays' house, they found old Mr Bray alone in his sitting room. 'Mr Bray?' said Ralph. 'We have a plan that will make all three of us happy men.'

'What plan is that?' Mr Bray asked.

'You owe me a lot of money and you owe my friend, Mr Gride, a lot of money, too. But we will forget all about it if you will do one thing for us. Let your daughter Madeline marry Mr Gride!' Ralph explained.

Mr Bray looked worried.

'My dear daughter is a beautiful, kind girl,' he said. 'She should marry a fine young husband, and you, Gride, are a wicked old money lender. But I have no choice. I have no money. I will never be able to pay you.'



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'Mr Gride has lots of money,' said Ralph. 'He will forget the money you owe him. If you let him marry Madeline, you will never have to worry about money again.'

'I like your idea,' said the old man. 'But my daughter must agree to it.'

'Mr Gride can give her a better life,' Ralph continued. 'You must make her understand that.'

'Silly! I can hear Madeline coming!' whispered Mr Bray. 'Come here next week and I will tell you my answer.'

Ralph and Mr Gride left the house by the back door.

Several weeks went by. At the cottage in Bow, the Nicklebys were very happy. Smike always had a smile on his face.

The Cheeryble brothers often visited them. They brought presents for Mrs Nickleby and Kate. Sometimes their nephew, Frank Cheeryble, came too. He and Kate liked to sit together by the fire and talk quietly.

One day, Newman Nogg came to see Nicholas.

'Your uncle has a plan,' he said. 'He wants his friend, Mr Gride, to marry a beautiful young lady. Mr Gride is an old money lender and has agreed to pay your uncle for his help.'

'Who is this beautiful young lady, Newman?' asked Nicholas.


'Her name is Madeline Bray,' Newman replied.

'Madeline Bray? But she is the girl that I love! She must never marry that old money lender!' Nicholas cried.

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'Then we must be quick, Nicholas. The wedding is tomorrow!' Newman said.

'Tomorrow?' Nicholas cried. 'I will go and see her in the morning. I will tell her not to agree to this marriage. I am the one who will marry Madeline Bray.'



Early the next morning, Nicholas went to the Brays' house in a coach. Kate went with him. When they arrived, Ralph Nickleby and Mr Gride opened the door.

'What are you doing here?' asked Nicholas.

'We have come to take Madeline to her wedding,' Ralph replied.

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'And we have come to save her,' said Nicholas.

'My sister and I will take her to our cottage if she agrees to come.'

Then Nicholas pushed past his uncle.

'Stay where you are!' cried Ralph.


Suddenly, a terrible scream came from upstairs. It was followed by a loud crash.

'Get out of my way!' cried Nicholas. Then he ran up the stairs two at a time.

In the bedroom, Mr Bray lay on the floor. Madeline lay beside him. An old woman stood by the door.

'What has happened?' Nicholas asked her.

'Poor Mr Bray is dead!' she replied. 'And I think Mrs Madeline has fainted.'



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'Are you the owner of this house?' Nicholas asked.

'Yes, sir,' the old woman replied.

'I am Madeline's friend,' Nicholas explained. 'My sister and I will take her back to our cottage and look after her.'

Nicholas picked Madeline up and carried her down the stairs. He laid her gently in the coach.

Then he turned to Ralph and Mr Gride. The old money lender stood quite still. He was shocked.

'Mr Bray is dead so your plan has failed!' Nicholas told them. 'I am taking Madeline away.'

Ralph tried to stop Nicholas and Kate taking Madeline with them but he was not strong enough.

Soon, Madeline was safe in the Nicklebys' cottage. Mrs Nickleby and Kate looked after her until she was better.

Madeline did not marry Mr Gride. The money lender was very upset. But he had another surprise and he went to tell Ralph about it.

'I have learned that Madeline is not poor at all! She is a rich young woman but she doesn't know it!' he said.

'When her grandfather died, he left her twelve thousand pounds in his will. I found the will but I had a woman working for me called Old Peg. Peg stole it and still has it.'

Ralph listened to Mr Gride's story, but he did not feel sorry for him. Mr Gride was not the only person who was unlucky. Ralph had received some bad news, too. He kept some of his money in a London bank but the bank had lost it. He had lost ten thousand pounds!

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Ralph thought about his bad luck. Then he thought about Nicholas and Madeline Bray.

'I will get my revenge on him!' Ralph said angrily to himself. 'I have a plan.'

He sent for Mr Squeers who was in London again.

When he arrived, Ralph asked the schoolmaster, 'How are you, Mr Squeers?'

'I am very well – but I was upset to discover that Smike was Squeers's son,' Mr Squeers said.

'Don't be upset. It's not true!' said Ralph. 'We tried to trick Nicholas and Smike. I'm so upset with Nicholas,' Ralph continued. 'He's a terrible nephew! Last week, he stopped a wedding and took the bride back to his cottage! I now know that the young lady is very rich – her grandfather left her twelve thousand pounds in his will.'

'But then a woman called Old Peg stole the will,' continued Ralph. 'Mr Squeers, I want you to find Old Peg and get the will back for me. If you do this, I will give you a hundred pounds.' Then Ralph told Mr Squeers the story of Madeline Bray.

Mr Squeers listened carefully. He thought of the hundred pounds and he quickly agreed to get the will.

Mr Squeers soon found out where Old Peg lived. He went to her house and knocked on the door.

Old Peg opened the door. 'Who are you and what do you want?' she asked.

'My name is Mr Squeers and I think you have a paper that you took from Mr Gride. The paper is worth a lot of money,' he said.


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'Yes, I did take a paper from Mr Gride,' said Old Peg. 'I have it here but I can't read. I don't know what it says. How much money is it worth?'

'Give it to me and I will read it to you,' said Mr Squeers.

Old Peg went to find the will. When she returned, Mr Squeers took it out of her hands. Then he pushed the old lady out of the way and ran off.

On the way back to Ralph's house, two people jumped out and knocked Mr Squeers to the ground. It was Newman Nogg and Frank Cheeryble, the Cheeryble brothers' nephews. Newman had heard about Ralph's plan to get the will and the two men had followed Mr Squeers to Old Peg's house. Newman and Frank called the police and soon the schoolmaster was put in prison for stealing.




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Back in Yorkshire, Mrs Squeers picked up the long wooden cane, her bowl of medicine and the school spoon and walked into the schoolroom. Her children, Fanny and Wackford, followed her. They knew that Mr Squeers was in prison but they wanted life at Dotheboys Hall to continue as usual.

Somehow, the boys knew about Mr Squeers, too. They were no longer frightened. They knew the schoolmaster was not coming back for a long time. They decided that it was time for change at Dotheboys Hall.

When Mrs Squeers and her children came into the schoolroom, one of the boys ran to the door and locked it. The other boys stood on their desks. They were shouting and laughing.



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The oldest boy took Mrs Squeers' cap and put it on his head. Then he took the spoon and put it into the bowl.

'Think this!' he cried, and made Mrs Squeers drink a spoonful of the medicine.

Another boy pushed young Wackford's head into the bowl of medicine and the boys all screamed with laughter.

John Bowdler and his wife had also heard that Mr Squeers was in prison and had returned to Yorkshire. When John arrived at Dotheboys Hall, he heard a very loud noise. It was coming from the schoolroom.

'The boys have heard the news as well!' he said to himself with a smile. 'And they are very happy!'

The schoolroom door was locked. John pushed it with his shoulder. It opened easily and he ran into the classroom.

Suddenly, there was silence. John looked around the room.

'What are you doing?' he asked the boys.

'We're going to run away!' cried the oldest boy.

'Mr Squeers is in prison. He can't hurt us any more.'

'Then do it,' replied John. 'No one in the world will stop you. But don't be cruel like Mr Squeers. Be kind. Don't hurt Mrs Squeers, Fanny and Wackford.'

The boys did as he asked and left Mrs Squeers and her children alone. Then John Bowdler got back on his horse and watched the boys as they ran out of the schoolroom and down the road. They were happy and free at last!

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### Active vocabulary

**beautiful** unusual because it contains so many vowels; means *full of beauty*

**choice** 'oi' sounds like 'oy' in *boy*

**crash** take away the 'r' and you have a word for money

**fail** rhymes with *sail, pail, whale*

**faint** rhymes with *paint*

**lost** rhymes with *cost*

**scream** point out that you may *scream* if you have a bad *dream*; teach the children this fun ditty: *I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream!*

**steal** 'ea' sounds like 'ee'; *steal* and *steel* are homophones

**usual** opposite is *unusual*; point out the two 'u's

**worth** 'or' sounds like 'er'

### Passive vocabulary

*bride revenge upset will*

## Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activities on page 18 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.
- Read the title of Chapter 9. Discuss what the chapter might be about. Ask *Whose wedding do you think is stopped? Who do you think stopped it? Who do you think goes to prison?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 73. Ask *Who is visiting Mr Bray? What do you think Mr Gride and Ralph are saying? How does Mr Bray feel?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 75. Ask *What do you think Newman Noggs is saying to Nicholas? Where do you think they are?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 76. Ask *What do you think is happening? What day do you think it is?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 79. Ask *Who do you think the men in tall hats are? What are they doing?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 80. Ask *Where are the boys? What are they doing? What is the boy on the left wearing? What is he doing to Mrs Squeers? Why? How does John Browdie and his wife feel?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

## During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 19 of their Workbook.

- 1 *What did Ralph tell Mr Bray?*
- 2 *Why did Mr Bray say he had no choice?*
- 3 *Why did Ralph tell Mr Bray he would never have to worry again?*
- 4 *When did Mr Bray tell the men to come back? Why did he whisper?*
- 5 *Who often visited the Nicklebys and Smike?*
- 6 *Who did Kate like to sit by the fire with?*
- 7 *Why was Nicholas shocked when Newman Noggs told him about Madeline and Mr Gride?*
- 8 *Why did Newman say they must be quick to stop the marriage?*
- 9 *Who did Nicholas want to marry?*
- 10 *Who opened the door when Nicholas and Kate arrived at the Bray's house? Why?*
- 11 *Where did Nicholas say they would take Madeline if she agreed to come with him and Kate?*
- 12 *What happened in the bedroom upstairs?*
- 13 *Why did Ralph and Mr Gride's plan fail?*
- 14 *What had Mr Gride found out? Why was Madeline not poor after all?*
- 15 *What do you know about the woman who has the will?*
- 16 *How much money did Ralph lose? How?*

- 17 *What did Ralph want Mr Squeers to do?*
- 18 *What did Ralph tell Old Peg when she opened the door?*
- 19 *Why didn't Old Peg know what the paper says or how much it was worth?*
- 20 *Who jumped on Mr Squeers and pushed him to the ground?*
- 21 *Why was the schoolmaster put in prison?*
- 22 *Why were the boys at Dotheboys Hall no longer frightened?*
- 23 *What were the boys doing when John Browdie arrived at Dotheboys Hall?*
- 24 *What did John tell the boys? Why?*

- Write the word *understand* on the board. Ask the class to use the letters in this word to make new words (*stand, under, and, sun, trade, nurse, etc.*).
- Write the word *crash* on the board. Elicit words that rhyme with *crash* (*bash, cash, dash, flash, gash, slash, mash, etc.*).
- Ask the class to find words on pages 73 and 74 that mean the opposite of the following words: *son* (daughter), *ugly* (beautiful), *very good* (wicked), *borrower* (lender), *worse* (better), *shouted* (whispered), *noisily* (quietly), *hate* (love).
- Discuss the meaning of these words from the chapter: *marry, wedding, marriage, will, husband, bride*. Talk about Madeline and Mr Gride. Ask *Do you think Madeline wanted to be Mr Gride's bride? Why do you think Mr Bray dropped dead? Who do you think she would like for a husband?* Ask the children if they have ever been to a wedding. Let them briefly describe some weddings they have been to.

- Talk about homonyms (words with the same spelling but different meanings). Explain that a *will* is a document that lets people know who will get your money when you die. Point out that 'you *leave* money to someone' in your will. So we can say: *Dad will leave his money to me in his will*. Elicit other homonyms from the class (*can/can, row/row, close/close, etc.*).
- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively and with appropriate intonation.

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *Why do you think Madeline agreed to marry Mr Gride? How do you think Mr Bray felt about it?*
- 2 *What do you think of Mr Gride? Why?*
- 3 *Why didn't Mr Bray want Madeline to know that the two men were there? Why do you think he told them to come back in a week?*
- 4 *What do you think Kate and Frank Cheeryble talked about when they often sat with each other?*
- 5 *Why did Newman Noggs tell Nicholas about Madeline's wedding?*
- 6 *Why do you think Madeline fainted? How do you think she felt when she woke up in the Nickleby's cottage?*
- 7 *Why had Mr Gride's plan fail? How do you think he felt about it?*
- 8 *Why didn't Madeline know about the money that was left to her?*

- 9 Why do you think Ralph wanted to get his revenge on his nephew?
- 10 How do you think Newman Noggs and Frank Cheeryble knew about Mr Squeers' plan to get the will?
- 11 What do you think the boys at Dotheboys Hall said to each other when they heard that Mr Squeers was in prison?
- 12 Why do you think Mrs Squeers and her children wanted the school to continue as usual?
- 13 How did the boys feel when Mrs Squeers walked into the classroom with her medicine and spoon?
- 14 What do you think Fanny thought when she saw the boys being unkind to her mother and brother?
- 15 Why did John tell the boys to be kind to Mrs Squeers and her children?
- 16 What do you think the boys did that day after they left the school?

### Stage 2 comprehension extra

**Author's use of language** The author uses some good descriptive words and phrases in the chapter. For example, read the description of the boy's reaction to the new situation at the school on pages 80 and 81. Words such as *shouting and laughing, screamed with laughter, free at last* make the reader able to see the boy's actions and hear their joy.

- Write the word *spoonful* on the board. Ask the children what they think it means. Elicit other words they know with the 'ful' suffix. Ask them to spell the words as you write them on the board.

- Ask the children to find and read aloud sentences with words in the chapter for family members (*daughter, brothers, nephew, uncle, sister, grandfather, wife*). Ask the children about their families, for example *Do you have a grandfather/uncles/brothers?*
- Do some maths! (The children may need to look back at pages 71 and 72.) Ask *How much money did Mr Bray owe Ralph? How much did he owe Mr Gride? How much is that in total? How much did Ralph want Mr Gride to give him for talking to Mr Bray about the marriage? How much would that leave each man? How much did Ralph lose when the bank lost his money? How much did Madeline's grandfather leave her?* Ask *If you were left twelve thousand pounds, what would you do with it?* Explain that twelve thousand pounds in the 1850s was a huge amount of money.
- Discuss the wicked people in this chapter. Ask the children what Charles Dickens, the author, thought about money lenders, old men marrying young women, cruel headmasters, good and bad luck. Then ask *Who do you think are the most wicked characters? Why?*
- Tell the children that there is an expression in English, *S/he got a taste of their own medicine*, which means the person got what they deserved. Discuss how this relates, both literally and figuratively, to Mrs Squeers on page 81.
- If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Ask *What do you think will happen next in the story?*




# Chapter 10 Back to Devon

Pages 82 to 89

CHAPTER 10  
Back to Devon

At the cottage in Bow, Smike was ill. He was very thin and pale and he couldn't walk far. Nicholas sent for the doctor.

The doctor examined Smike and then he said, 'London is not good for this boy. It is cold, wet and smoky here and that is making him ill. Take him to the country to get some fresh air if you can.'



82

Nicholas was worried about his work in the office. He went to see Charles Cheeryble.

'I'm afraid Smike is very ill, Charles,' he said. 'The doctor says that the dirty London air is not good for him. He told me to take him to the country. I can't do that because I work for you here.'

'The most important thing is to help that poor boy, Nicholas,' Charles replied. 'Take Smike to the country tomorrow – don't worry about your work here. We'll be fine without you!'

So Nicholas decided to take Smike to Devon in the south-west of England. It was quite warm there and the air was fresh and clear. Nicholas had spent his childhood in Devon so he knew it well. He found somewhere to stay near the farm where he had lived as a child. Smike loved to hear his stories about when he was young.

One day, Nicholas showed Smike a tree and told him a story.

'When Kate was little, she was playing in the fields one day and she got lost. We looked everywhere for her and at last my father found her asleep under this tree.'


'He was so happy to see her. He said that when he died, he wanted to be buried under this tree. Look – there is his grave.'

Smike looked at the grave. Then he looked at Nicholas and said, 'I want you to make me a promise, Nicholas. When I die, will you bury me under that tree, too?'

Nicholas smiled sadly and made the promise.

In London, Ralph had a visit from Mr Brooker. The old man still knew a secret about Ralph and another Nickleby. Last time they had met, Ralph did not let Mr Brooker tell him his secret. This time, Mr Brooker wanted to make sure Ralph listened to him.

'Do you remember when I worked for you?' Mr Brooker asked Ralph. 'Well, I know that at that time, you were secretly married. You and your wife had a son and when she left, your son went to live with her. His room was at the top of the house – there was a door in the ceiling to the attic.'



83

Smike's illness got worse. A few weeks later, he couldn't get out of bed. Sometimes Nicholas carried him into the garden and laid him under the trees. Nicholas always sat with him and talked quietly to him.

One evening, he took the sick boy out to watch the sun set. They both lay quietly by the tree. Suddenly, Smike cried out and tried to sit up.

'What's the matter?' asked Nicholas.

'He's there! Look, behind that tree!' cried Smike.


Smike started to shake.

'Who is it, Smike? Who can you see?' Nicholas asked.

'It's that man!' shouted Smike. 'The man who took me to Dotheboys Hall! I don't know who he is but I hate him!'

'There's no one there, Smike. It's just a dream. Lie down and rest,' Nicholas said quietly.

After that, Smike became sicker and sicker and Nicholas knew that there was no hope for his friend. One quiet autumn day, poor Smike died. Nicholas kept his promise and buried Smike under his favourite tree.



84

'You made me work very hard,' Mr Brooker continued. 'You paid me very little money. I was very angry. Mr Nickleby, so I told you a lie, I told you that the boy had died.'

'Is my son still alive?' cried Ralph.

'Let me tell you the whole story. I took him to Dotheboys Hall, to Mr Squares. I was angry with you but I could not hurt you – so I wanted to help your son, but your nephew, Nicholas, helped him to run away. Your son went to live with Nicholas. But then the boy became very ill. Last week, he died. I saw him in Devon, a few days before he died. He was with your nephew. They were watching the sun set together. The boy's name was Smike.'

'Smike was my son? It can't be true!' Ralph cried.

Ralph stood quiet still. He couldn't believe this news.

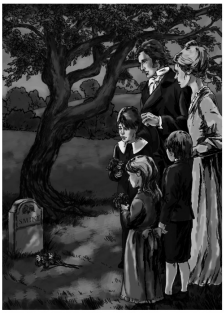
'It is true. And now he is dead,' Mr Brooker said.

Ralph sat down. This news was a terrible shock to him. Suddenly he felt very old and sad. He still had some money, but he had no friends and no family. All his plans had gone wrong and he had lost his only child.

Mr Brooker quietly walked away and left Ralph alone.

Ralph sat there for a long time, thinking about his life. He didn't eat or sleep for several days. And then, one dark, rainy night, he walked out into the darkness and was never seen again.

When Nicholas Nickleby returned from Devon, he and Madeline Bray were married. Kate and Frank Cheeryble were married, too. It was a very happy day for everyone.



85

Nicholas continued his job with the Cheeryble brothers. Madeline decided to put the money from the will into the Cheeryble's business. Nicholas then became a partner in the business and it became known as 'Cheeryble and Nickleby'.

After a few years, the Cheeryble Brothers retired and Nicholas ran the business. He made it a huge success and he was able to buy his father's old farm in Devon. Nicholas and Madeline moved to the farm and had several children. Mrs Nickleby, Kate and Frank often visited and they all lived together very happily.

Newman Noggs also moved to Devon. Newman had always been kind to Nicholas and had helped him many times. He lived in a little cottage next to Nicholas's farm. He liked playing with the children and they all loved the old man.

They all visited Smike's grave very often. The children laid flowers on it in his memory. They never forgot their poor cousin whose life had been so short and so unhappy.

86

87

88

89

## Active vocabulary

<i>air</i>	rhymes with <i>hair, chair, pair</i>
<i>country</i>	'try' sounds like 'tree'
<i>examine</i>	'mine' sounds like 'min'; remember the phrase: to <i>examine</i> someone, the doctor looks <i>inside</i> the patient
<i>fresh</i>	two consonant clusters – 'fr' and 'sh' – joined by one vowel
<i>lie</i>	rhymes with <i>my</i> and <i>die</i>
<i>memory</i>	a three-syllable word: <i>mem + or + y</i>
<i>partner</i>	the word <i>art</i> is 'hiding' inside <i>partner</i>
<i>promise</i>	'ise' sounds like 'iss' as in <i>miss</i>
<i>several</i>	means <i>some</i> or <i>a few</i>
<i>sick</i>	rhymes with <i>trick</i>
<i>success</i>	the first 'c' is pronounced 'k' and the second 'c' is pronounced 's'

## Passive vocabulary

*retired*

## Before reading

- Pre-teach the active vocabulary (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 13 and the Glossary on page 52). Use the notes in the table to discuss any interesting features of the words.
- Ask the children to do the activity on page 20 of their Workbook to practise the new vocabulary.
- Ask the class to recall what happened in the previous chapter.
- Read the title of Chapter 10. Ask *Who do you think will go back to Devon? Where is Devon?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 82. Ask *Who do you think is lying in bed? How does he feel? What is Nicholas doing? Who is the other man? What is he doing?*

- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 85. Ask *Who do you think is under the tree? How do you think Smike feels now? What do you see behind them?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 84. Ask *Where is Mr Brooker? Why do you think he is in Ralph's office? What could he be telling Ralph?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 87. Ask *Who is with Nicholas? How do they feel? What do you think they are talking about?*
- Tell the children to look at the picture on page 89. Ask *Whose name is on the grave? Why? Who do you think the man and woman and children are? What are the children holding? Why?*
- Optional suggestion: you may wish to give the children an appropriate amount of time, for example five minutes, to look quickly through the chapter to find (and perhaps underline or copy) the active vocabulary they have been introduced to.

## During reading

- Read the chapter to and with the class. Follow the same procedure as you did for Chapter 1 (see page 4) to help the children read and understand the text. Use the audio download, if you wish.

### Stage 1 comprehension (literal)

Ask the questions orally, or set them as a written activity. You can also ask the children to do the activity on page 21 of their Workbook.

- 1 *Why did Nicholas send for the doctor?*
- 2 *Why was London not good for Smike? Where should he go?*
- 3 *Why was Nicholas worried about taking Smike to the country?*

- 4 *Where did Nicholas take Smike? Why?*
- 5 *Why did Nicholas's father want to be buried under the tree?*
- 6 *What did Nicholas promise Smike?*
- 7 *What did Nicholas do when Smike's illness got worse?*
- 8 *Who did Smike see behind the tree? How did he feel about him?*
- 9 *What was the secret Mr Brooker knew?*
- 10 *When did Smike die?*
- 11 *Why did Mr Brooker go to Ralph's office?*
- 12 *Who was secretly married?*
- 13 *What happened to Ralph's wife and son?*
- 14 *Where did Ralph's son have a room? What was in the ceiling?*
- 15 *Why had Mr Brooker told Ralph years before that his son had died?*
- 16 *Why had Brooker wanted to hurt Ralph's son?*
- 17 *Who helped Ralph's son to run away from Dotheboys Hall?*
- 18 *Who did Mr Brooker see with Nicholas in Devon?*
- 19 *What was the boy's name?*
- 20 *Why did Ralph stand quite still?*
- 21 *What happened to Ralph after several days?*
- 22 *Who did Nicholas marry? Who did Kate marry?*
- 23 *Why did the Cheeryble firm soon become known as 'Cheeryble and Nickleby'?*
- 24 *Why was Nicholas soon able to buy his father's old farm?*
- 25 *How many children did Nicholas and Madeline have?*
- 26 *Who moved to Devon and lived next to Nicholas's farm?*

27 *What did Nicholas's children do with their flowers for Smike?*

28 *What relation was Smike to Nicholas?*

- Write on the board: *we will, could not, did not, can not, it is, I am, do not*. Elicit from the children the contracted forms and write them next to each full form. Ask the children to find and read aloud sentences in the chapter which use the contractions. Point out that they are more commonly used in spoken English.
- Ask the children to find and read words on page 83 that rhyme with these words: *fill* (ill), *thirty* (dirty), *form* (warm), *save* (grave). Suggest other rhyming words for the class to find in the rest of the text.
- Write on the board: *became sicker and sicker, felt very old and sad, were married, became a partner, retired, ran the business, buy his father's farm, had several children, moved to Devon, loved the old man*. Make sure the children understand the meanings. Tell the class to look through the chapter and find who did these actions. Point out that some have more than one answer.
- Talk about air pollution. Ask *Where was the air smoky? Where was the air fresh and clear? Do you think Nicholas's children liked living in London better than living in Devon? Why (not)?* Explain that in the 1850s, the air in London was bad because there was a lot of smoke from burning coal. The smoke and fog created smog, which was very bad to breathe. Many people in England at that time suffered from breathing problems.
- Ask *What are people talking about when they use these words: dead, die, bury, grave, lay flowers, memory?* Talk about burial customs. Ask *Why do you think Smike wanted to be buried under the tree? Did he know that his uncle, Nicholas's father, was buried there? Do people lay flowers on graves today? Why (not)?*

- Finally, ask individuals to re-read short sections of the text aloud. Encourage them to read expressively. And with appropriate intonation. (You might like to ask children to play the role of particular characters and read their parts.)

## After reading

### Stage 2 comprehension (extension)

Ask these questions orally, or set them as a written activity for the more able. Answers will vary. Encourage the children to give reasons for their suggestions, and accept any answer they can justify.

- 1 *What do you think Smike's illness was?*
- 2 *Why do you think Smike loved to hear Nicholas's stories about when he was young?*
- 3 *How do you think Nicholas felt when Smike said he wanted to be buried under the tree?*
- 4 *What kinds of things do you think Nicholas did to make Smike feel happy before he died?*
- 5 *Who did you think was behind the tree when you read page 84. Or did you think it was Smike's imagination? Why?*
- 6 *Do you think Mr Brooker was wrong not to tell Ralph the truth about his son until after Smike died? Why (not)?*
- 7 *What do you think Ralph thought about when he did not eat or sleep for several days?*
- 8 *Where do you think Ralph went when he disappeared? Why?*
- 9 *What do you think Nicholas and Madeline told their children about Smike?*
- 10 *Why do you think it was important to Nicholas that Smike was never forgotten?*

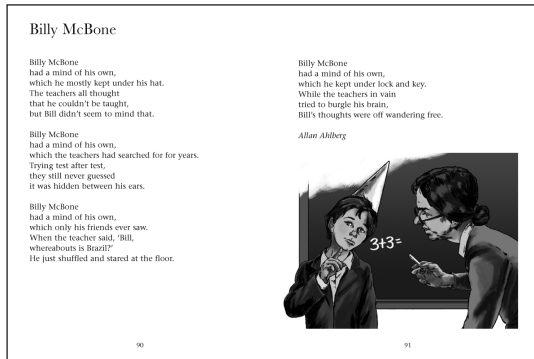
### Stage 2 comprehension extra

*Characterisation* Although it is the final chapter, much happens – typical of Dickens! The Cheerybles allow Nicholas to leave his job to take Smike to the country. Nicholas tries to make Smike's last days happy ones. Brooker finally gets his revenge when he visits Ralph and tells him his secret about another Nickleby – Ralph's own son, Smike. Ralph is very shocked by the news and disappears. Nicholas and Madeline marry and have several children. Kate marries Frank and visits her brother's family often. Nicholas becomes a successful businessman, which his father never could do. But he buys his father's farm and moves back to Devon. Newman Noggs moves to Devon to be near Nicholas and his family. Although Smike's life was short, he lived for some time in a family that took care of him and treated him well. In the end, kindness is rewarded and wickedness is punished.

- Names are a little confusing in this story because sons often were named after their fathers. Elicit which characters in the story were named after their fathers. Ask the children if any of them are named after their fathers or mothers, or any other relatives.
  - Show the class, or draw on the board, a map of England. Point out the location of Yorkshire. Ask the children to look on the internet and find out more about Yorkshire. Ask them if they think they would like to visit Yorkshire. Do the same with Devon.
  - If appropriate, try some Extension Activities (see Teacher's Notes Introduction page 19).
- Write the words *quiet* and *quietly* on the board. Ask the children to find and read aloud sentences with these words in the chapter. Tell them to add the 'ly' ending to these words: *secret*, *sudden*, *happy*. Remind the children that the 'y' changes to 'i' before adding 'ly'.
  - Smike asks Nicholas to *make him a promise*. Ask the children if they have ever asked someone to make them a promise. Ask them if the person *kept the promise* or *broke the promise*.
  - Ask the children to find and read aloud three-syllable words in the chapter. They should tap out the syllables as they say them.

# Billy McBone\*

## Pages 90 and 91



### Before reading

- Explain that much of the story is about boys at a school. This poem picks up the theme of schoolboys.
- Read the title. Tell the children to look at the picture that accompanies the poem. Ask the class why the boy is wearing a funny (dunce) hat. Ask *What is he doing? What is the teacher thinking?*

### During reading

- Read the entire poem to the class.
- Read it again, stopping to explain any unfamiliar vocabulary.

#### Vocabulary notes

<i>burgle</i>	steal
<i>mind</i>	your way of thinking
<i>to not mind something</i>	to not care much about it
<i>searched</i>	look very hard for
<i>shuffled</i>	move your feet back and forth across the floor
<i>wandering</i>	going from one place to another without any direction
<i>whereabouts</i>	where do you think?

- Ask the class to read the poem together.
- Ask groups or individuals to read a verse of the poem each.

### After reading

- Ask questions to check the children's understanding.
- Ask children to give (and explain) their opinions of the poem.
- Ask about features of the poem – the title, the name of the poet, the number of verses, words that rhyme, the pattern of the rhyming words (first and second lines, third and sixth, fourth and fifth).
- This could lead to a discussion about the children's own feelings about school.

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# A Victorian school

## Pages 92–95

**A Victorian school**

In the story of Nicholas Nickleby, Dotheboys Hall was a terrible place. Luckily it was not a real school. However, in England, in the days of Queen Victoria, schools were very different from the schools of today.

Children from rich families were looked after by nannies when they were very young. Then they were taught at home.




There were some schools for poor children but many children did not go to school at all and never learned to read and write.

92

**Classrooms**

Classrooms were cold and empty. They had high windows, so the children could not see out. Classrooms were very full and noisy. Children of all ages were taught in the same room. There were no walls, and curtains were used to separate the different age groups. The buildings were not looked after very well. Desks and chairs were often broken.



**Teachers**

The schoolmaster was usually a man but most of the teachers were women. They were badly paid. Older children often helped to teach the younger ones.

**Lessons**

The teacher stood at the front of the class and all the children did the same thing at the same time. The most important lessons were reading, writing and arithmetic (mathematics). The children learned by chanting and copying.


93

**Reading**

Pictures with labels were put on the wall. Children learned to read the labels and then they read simple books. The books contained stories that taught the children to behave well.

**Writing**


The younger children wrote on slates (thin pieces of stone) with chalk. Older children used copybooks and wrote with pens. They dipped their pens in ink that was kept in small pots called inkwells.



94

**Arithmetic**

Children used an abacus to learn how to count, add and take away numbers. An abacus used beads of different colours to show units, tens and hundreds.




**Punishment**

Teachers were very strict and often hit children with sticks, called canes, to make them behave. If a child did not learn quickly, the teacher made him or her stand in a corner and wear a silly hat.

**Play**

In the school playground, the children chased each other or played games like hide-and-seek when they hid from their friends. They also played simple games with toys like this spinning top.



95

## After reading

- Have a competition to see who can remember the most facts. Make up a short test based on the facts in each section and see who scores the highest. Divide the class into four teams and see which team wins.

## Before reading

- Discuss what facts the children have learned about one Victorian school from the story. Explain that Dotheboys Hall was an exceptionally bad school, but there were schools where children from poor families were treated badly.
- Ask the children how their parents or grandparents' schools were different from their own school. Ask them if they know how children were taught years ago.


## During reading

- Read the information text. Explain any unfamiliar vocabulary as you do so.
- Draw attention to the accompanying pictures to clarify the meaning of the text.
- Ask individuals to read sections of the text.

## About the author

### Page 96

About the author – Charles Dickens



Charles Dickens wrote many long novels, all with characters who were difficult to forget. The novels contained descriptions of life in Victorian England.

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth, in southern England, in 1812. He came from a poor family. He was sent to school at the age of nine, but when his father went to prison, he left school and went to work to earn money for the family. He worked in a factory in London. He hated the factory and was very lonely. After three years, he was able to go back to school.

Dickens was an intelligent boy and he learned all he could. He loved reading and writing. When he left school, he started to work as a journalist. He wrote some short pieces called *Sketches by Boz* and these became very popular. Mr Hogarth was the editor of the sketches and Charles fell in love with his daughter, Catherine. They got married and they had ten children.

Dickens' first novel was called *The Pickwick Papers* and he went on to write many more. He also wrote books about the lives of famous people and books about travel. He wrote plays, too. In 1851, he performed in front of Queen Victoria. He also did a lot of work to help poor people.

Dickens died in 1870. He is buried in Westminster Abbey in London.

96

### Before reading

- Look back at the title page of the book and re-read the name of the author.
- Turn to page 96 and read the title.
- Explain that this is some biographical information about Charles Dickens.
- Look together at his picture and ask the children for their comments on his appearance.

### During reading

- Read the information about Charles Dickens.
- Explain any unfamiliar vocabulary as you do so.
- At the end, re-read the text. Ask different children to read it, too.

### After reading

- Have a short quiz about the author.

## After reading the book

These questions are intended for oral use in class, but you may ask children for written responses if you feel it is appropriate. There are written after-reading activities (a book review and character profiles) on pages 22 to 24 of the Workbook.

### Response to the story

- Ask *Did you like the story? Why? Why not? Did you think it was interesting, or boring? Was it exciting, or too predictable? Which part of the story did you like best? What did you think of the ending?*
- Talk about the way each chapter ended in a thrilling way. Look back at some of the chapter endings together. Ask *Did this make you want to read on?*
- Ask *Did you like the author's style? Do you think she wrote well? Did she use exciting words?*

### Characters

- Ask the children about the main story characters. *Did you like Nicholas Nickleby? Did you like Smike? Which character did you not like? Ask how the characters behaved: What did you think of John Browdie in Chapter 7? Did you think John Browdie was brave? What did you think of Nicholas's uncle Ralph? (See the activity on page 24 of the Workbook.)*

### Plot

- Encourage the class to re-tell the basic story in their own words. (See the activity on page 22 of the Workbook.)

### Settings

- Ask *Where did the story take place? Go through the book with the class and ask them to identify the setting of each chapter.*

### Moral issues and themes

- Use any of these themes from the story as a basis for a class discussion:
  - *Family*: Family is the starting point of the story. The first Nicholas Nickleby and his brother Ralph are two very different characters. Young Nicholas, his mother and sister are treated badly by Ralph because they are poor. Mrs Nickleby loves her children and the family helps each other throughout the story. Poor Smike, who never knew his family, is taken in by Nicholas, not ever knowing that Nicholas was his cousin. Have the children contrast the Nicklebys and the Squeers families. Talk about how children learn their attitudes from their parents.
  - *Coping with difficulties*: Discuss how the Nickleby family's life changed after Mrs Nickleby's husband dies. Talk about the sacrifices she had to make. Talk about how young Nicholas and his sister Kate had to work in terrible jobs, for little money, but that they did it without complaining.



- *Kindness*: Talk about the people in the story who showed kindness towards others. Nicholas's kindness towards Smike contrasted sharply with Ralph's treatment of the boy, who he only later discovered was his own son. The Cheeryble brothers were an excellent example of those people in Victorian society who spent their time and money helping the poor and suffering.
- *Courage*: Nicholas showed great courage when he stood up to Mr Squeers and hit him with his own cane. Encourage the children to think of other examples of courage in the story.
- *Greed*: There were a number of greedy people in the story. Discuss which characters in the story were greedy.
- *Revenge*: Several characters take their revenge on others, for example Brooker took his revenge on Ralph. Discuss why taking revenge on someone is not the best way to deal with an injustice done to you.
- *Cruelty*: Discuss the cruelty shown by some characters towards others. Discuss who they chose to be cruel to, for example Mr and Mrs Squeers were cruel to young boys, because they were defenceless. Ralph Nickleby, who was in a position of power, was cruel to Mr Brooker. Brainstorm how, in the end, those who were cruel were punished.

### Vocabulary

- Pick one or more words from the active vocabulary list for each chapter. Ask the children if they can remember the meanings of all the words.

## Follow-up ideas

**Drama** Encourage the children to act out one or two chapters, or sections, of the story. Give individuals a role to play, then ask them to mime their character's actions as you read the story or play the audio download.

**Art** Tell the children to imagine they are set designers for a theatre company. Tell them to make a set, either drawing/painting on paper or using clay. Put them into groups and have each group choose a different setting, for example Ralph Nickleby's office in London, the classroom in Dotheboys Hall, the farm in Devon, etc. Ask them to choose one scene from the story that takes place at the setting they have designed and draw and cut out characters, paying attention to the clothing and the expressions on the characters' faces.

**Spelling** Mr Squeers taught spelling to his boys in a very cruel way. But learning to spell can be fun! Have what Americans call 'a spelling bee'. Give the children a list of words from the story that they must take home and learn to spell. You might want to choose words from the Active and Passive Vocabulary lists. Discuss how they should go about learning the spelling. Talk about dividing the words into syllables and sound combinations. Have their parents test them at home after they think they know all the words. The next day tell the children to stand in a row in the front of the classroom. It is important that they stand quietly. Ask each child to spell one of the words from the list aloud. If they spell it correctly, they remain standing. If they spell it incorrectly, they sit down. The last one standing is the winner. You may need to impose a time limit of no

more than half a minute for each child's answer.

**Money** Talk about how people in the story earned or received money. Explain that in Victorian times, people who could not pay their debts went to a debtor's prison. In fact, Charles Dickens' own father was put in the Marshalsea Prison because he could not pay his debts. Mr Brooker, who worked for Ralph, could not pay his debts, and went to prison for eight years. Brainstorm how money can make life easier for people but how it can also ruin people's lives. Ask them to brainstorm what they think they would do if they were left a huge amount of money in someone's will.

**City or Country** The story takes place in London, Yorkshire and Devon. Nicholas marries a wealthy woman in London and becomes a partner in the Cheeryble brothers business there, and is very successful. But in the end, he moves his family back to the country in Devon and they live on a farm. Brainstorm the advantages and disadvantages of living in a city and in the country.

**Bring Back Smike** In the end, Smike dies, which is very sad! Ask the children to brainstorm a different ending for Smike's life – a happier ending. Put the children into small groups and let them discuss a different ending. After about ten minutes, ask each group to report to the rest of the class their happier ending. Take a class vote on which group has the best ending.

**Clothing** Discuss the difference between the clothes people wore in the 1850s and clothes people wear today. Talk about how

children wore clothes that were smaller versions of what their parents wore. Women wore dresses, not trousers, and men wore suits and ties. Poor people wore very old clothes and usually did not have enough warm clothes. Follow up the discussion by asking the children to bring in to school any old clothes their family does not want any longer, with their parents permission, and have the children pack them into a box and take them to a charity shop or give to those in need.

**Victorian London** Ask the class to do some research and find out more about London in the Victorian period. The children can focus on such topics as how poor lived, what schools were like for the poor or the rich, or who went to debtors' prisons.

**Letter writing** Explain that in Victorian times there were no telephones, so people had to write letters to each other. Point out the letter on page 26 from Newman Noggs to Nicholas. Ask the children to re-read Newman's letter. Ask the children to write a letter from Nicholas to Newman, thanking him for his letter. Brainstorm how the children might respond to this letter. For example, Nicholas might have wanted to know what his father had done to help Newman or he might have asked why Newman thinks Nicholas's life will be difficult.

## Glossary of vocabulary

The glossary below includes explanations for all the active and passive vocabulary introduced in *Nicholas Nickleby*. Active vocabulary items are shown in *italic print*.

- advertisement** an announcement in a newspaper inviting people to apply for a job that is available
- agree** to have the same opinion as someone else
- air** the mixture of gases surrounding the Earth that we breathe
- alive** not dead
- alone** without anyone with you
- apart** if two people or things are apart, there is a space between them
- arrive** to reach a place, after having been somewhere else
- assistant** someone whose job is to help another person in their work, for example by doing the easier parts of it
- attack** to use violence against someone
- attic** a room in a house under a roof
- barn** a large building on a farm where animals, crops or machines are kept
- bars** a solid block of a something such as gold or chocolate
- beautiful** a beautiful person is extremely attractive
- bedclothes** sheets and covers, especially when they are being used on a bed
- believe** to think something is true
- bent** a bent person has a curved shape
- borrow** to receive and use something that belongs to someone else, and promise to give it back to them later
- bowed** bend your head forwards so you are looking down
- business** the work someone does
- cane** a long, thin piece of wood used for punishing children in schools in the past
- cart** a vehicle with four wheels and no roof that is pulled by a horse and is used for carrying things
- ceiling** the surface that is above you in a room
- childhood** the time of your life when you are a child
- choice** a range of things that you can choose from
- coach** a long comfortable vehicle for carrying a large number of passengers, especially on long journeys
- coat** the fur or hair on an animal's skin
- continue** to keep doing something without stopping
- corner** where two edges, sides or roads meet
- cottage** a small house, usually in a village or the countryside
- coughed** to force air up through your throat with a sudden noise, especially when you have a cold
- country** areas away from cities and towns, consisting of fields, farms, villages, etc
- courtyard** a square area that is surrounded by buildings or walls
- cover** to put a rug, blanket, etc over someone or something, in order to hide it
- crash** an accident that happens when a vehicle hits something
- cross** angry
- cruel** causing pain to someone
- debts** an amount of money that you owe
- disappear** to become impossible to see or find
- docks** an enclosed area in a harbour for ships to load and unload
- early** before the time that something is expected or arranged to happen
- education** the activity of teaching people in schools, and all the policies and arrangements concerning this
- enjoy** to get pleasure from something
- envelope** a paper case that you put a letter in
- exactly** no more and no less than a particular amount or time
- examine** to look at something carefully
- expensive** something that is expensive costs a lot of money
- extremely** very: used for emphasizing an adjective or adverb
- facts** true information
- faint** to suddenly become unconscious for a short time (verb); feel weak (adjective)
- false** not true
- fees** money that you pay to a professional person or institution for their work
- firm** a business or company
- fit** your hand when your fingers are closed tightly
- fold** to bend a piece of paper or cloth and press one part of it over another part
- follow** to walk, drive, etc behind someone, when you are going in the same direction as them
- forward** in the direction in front of you
- free** not a prisoner or a slave
- fresh** if something smells or tastes fresh, it smells or tastes pleasant and clean
- furious** extremely angry
- furniture** things like chairs, tables and cupboards
- generous** giving people more of your time or money than is usual or expected
- gentle** a gentle person is kind and calm
- gentlemen** a polite reference to a man whose name you don't know
- give up** to stop doing something because you are too ill or too tired
- groan** to make a long low sound because you are unhappy or in pain

- guess** to say or decide what you think is true, without being certain about it
- hard** using a lot of effort
- hardly** used for saying that something is almost not true or almost does not happen at all
- hay** long grass that has been cut and dried
- headache** a pain in your head
- idea** a thought that you have about how to do something or how to deal with something
- injured** hurt in an accident or attack
- intelligent** good at thinking clearly and quickly, at understanding difficult ideas and subjects
- job** work that you do regularly to earn money.
- kidnapping** the act of illegally taking someone away and making them a prisoner
- knock** to hit a door with your hand so that someone inside knows you are there
- lamp post** a tall post at the side of a road with a light on top
- late** if you are late, you arrive somewhere after the correct or usual time
- lie** to be in a position in which your body is flat on a surface such as the ground or on a bed; to deliberately say something that is not true
- life** the period of time from someone's birth until their death
- limped** walked with difficulty because of an injured leg or foot
- lock** to fasten something such as a door, usually with a key, so that other people cannot open it
- lodgings** a room or a set of rooms in someone's house that you pay to live in
- lost** not knowing where you are or how to get to where you want to go
- merchant** someone who buys and sells things in a market
- message** a piece of information you give or send to someone
- miserable** very unhappy
- mistake** something that is not correct
- mistress** a woman who is in charge of a house and servants
- (in) need** to need something, especially money
- nephew** a son of your brother or sister, or of your husband's or wife's brother or sister
- nervous** feeling excited and worried, or slightly afraid
- news** information about something that has happened recently
- oil lamp** a lamp that burns oil
- owe** if you owe someone money, you have to give it to them because you have borrowed it or not paid for something
- owner** someone who owns something
- pain** an unpleasant feeling that hurts
- pale** not bright; pale skin is lighter than usual because of illness or shock
- panic** a sudden feeling of fear or worry
- partner** one of two or more people who own a company and share its profits and losses
- passengers** people who travel in a vehicle but are not the driver
- pence** plural of 'penny'
- perform** to do something in front of an audience in order to entertain them, for example by acting in a play or singing
- piece** an individual object of a particular type
- plan** a series of actions that you think about carefully to help you to achieve something
- pleased** happy and satisfied
- pocket money** a small amount of money that parents regularly give to their children
- porridge** hot food made from oats and water or milk
- pounds** a unit of money used in the UK
- prison** a place where people are kept as punishment for committing a crime
- promise** to tell someone you will definitely do something
- pump** a piece of equipment for pulling water up from the ground
- receipt** a document that you get from someone showing that you have given them money
- rent** an amount of money that you pay regularly for using a house or room
- report** to give information about to someone about something
- require** to need someone or something
- rescue** to save someone from a dangerous situation
- risks** the possibility that something unpleasant or dangerous might happen
- river** a large area of water that flows towards the sea
- rub** to press and move your hands over something, such as your eyes
- safe** not likely to be harmed
- save** to make it possible for someone or something to avoid danger, harm, injury, etc
- schoolmaster** a man who teaches in a school, and is sometimes the owner of the school
- scream** to make a loud high cry because you are hurt, frightened or excited
- search** to look for
- servant** someone whose job it is to cook and clean someone else's house
- several** a number of people or things that is more than two or three, but not many
- shake** if you shake, your body makes lots of small quick movements that you cannot control, usually because you are cold
- shake hands** to hold someone's hand and move it up and down several times as a way of greeting them or of showing that you agree to something
- sharp** a sharp object has an edge that can cut or an end that is pointed
- shillings** small unit of money that was used in the UK until 1971
- shine** if the sun shines, it produces a bright light and the weather is usually warm

- shocked** being very surprised, usually by something unexpected or bad
- sick** if you feel sick, you do not feel well
- spectacles** glasses that you wear to see
- stable** a building where horses or farm animals are kept
- stage** the part of a theatre or large room which is raised, and on which actors perform
- strike** to hit someone or something with your hand, a tool or a weapon
- success** the achievement of something that you planned to do or attempted to do
- sure** certain that something is real, true or correct
- surprise** news or information that seems unusual or unexpected
- surprised** feeling of surprise because something unexpected has happened
- tie** to fasten something in a particular place using something such as rope
- tool** a piece of equipment, usually one that you hold in your hand, that is designed to do a particular type of work
- trick** to make someone believe something that is not true
- true** not false, real
- trunk** a large strong box with a lid used for storing things or for carrying them when you travel
- twins** two children born at the same time to the same mother
- ugly** someone who is ugly has a face that is unpleasant to look at
- usual** normal or typical of what happens
- violent** involving the use of physical force, with the deliberate intention of causing injury
- voice** the sounds that someone makes when they speak
- warm** fairly hot
- weak** a person who is weak does not have much physical strength or energy
- wedding** a ceremony in which two people get married
- whispered** spoke quietly
- whole** all of something
- wipe** to clean or dry something with a cloth
- wish** to want something, although getting it may be impossible
- worse** more unpleasant or bad than something else or than before
- worth** if you say how much something is worth, you state its value in money



# The Wonderful World of Words

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Book Title \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter \_\_\_\_\_

Word	Meaning



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