



FREE

Penguin Readers

Teacher's Guide

to Using Bestsellers

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Contents

Introduction	2
Penguin's top 20 Bestselling Graded Readers	2
Level 2	2
Level 3	2
Level 4	3
Level 5	3
Why are these books so popular?	4
Making use of the Bestsellers list	4
The library system	5
Do your students read books for pleasure?	5
Ground rules	5
Encouraging reading achievements	5
Reading is a social activity	6
Class Readers	6
Choosing a class Reader from the Bestsellers list	6
Some points about managing the reading	7
Understanding the book	7
Language practice	11
Responding to and evaluating the book	12
Scheme of work for a class Reader	17
Photocopiable Student's Worksheets	
1 Are you a bookworm?	
2 Reading record	
3 Reading target	
4 Bestsellers survey	
5 What would you do if...?	
6 Arranging in the right order	
7 What does the future hold?	
8 Matching	
9 Was it a good thing or a bad thing?	
10 Interview a character	
11 One person's view of another	
12 My book from A–Z	



1 Introduction

Penguin Readers offer teachers and students an extremely valuable resource for learning English and, just as for other types of books, there is now a list of the *Top 20 Bestselling Readers*. These are the books which are consistently popular among students and teachers around the world.

In this Guide you will find the reasons why large numbers of teachers are making use of the bestselling Penguin Readers to teach English and why their students are becoming bookworms – in English!

This Guide also gives teachers lots of concrete and practical suggestions on how to maximise the use of bestselling Graded Readers so that students get the full benefit of extensive reading.

2 Penguin's top 20 Bestselling Graded Readers

Penguin's 'top twenty' list for the year 2000, based on global sales, was as follows:

2.1 Level 2

Treasure Island is a classic British story by Robert Louis Stevenson (1883). *Treasure Island* is a gripping adventure involving pirates, greed and treachery. Jim Hawkins, the young hero, finds himself on a boat with a collection of rogues sailing to search for buried treasure whose location is given on a secret map. The story has a historical setting, but the excitement and romance ensure its appeal for modern readers. There have been several films made, including one in 1990 starring Charlton Heston.

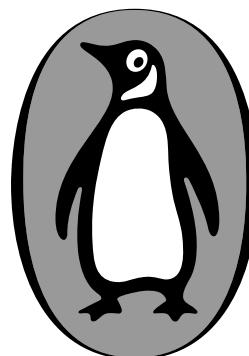
White Fang is a classic animal story by US writer Jack London (1906). *White Fang*, half wolf-half dog, is found by Indians in the wild north west of Canada at the time of the gold rush of the 1890s. The story tells how a fierce, wild animal is gradually tamed and civilized as he passes from one owner to another, and we see how cruelty breeds violence while respect and gentleness are rewarded by love. There have been two film versions of the story, the latest by Disney in 1990.

Audrey Hepburn is a biography specially written for learners of English. Overcoming the hardship and poverty of her youth in Europe, Audrey became a famous Hollywood film star whose career lasted nearly forty years. Despite her outward success, however, she was often unhappy, and her personal life was troubled. In later life she worked for the United Nations to help deprived children all over the world. This is an interesting account of the life of a much-loved actress.

The Railway Children is a classic story by British writer E. Nesbitt (1906). When their father is mysteriously taken away, three children and their mother are forced to leave their comfortable home. The children find interest and excitement in their new life through the trains which pass by their house every day. Then, after a while the reason for their father's disappearance comes to light. He has been wrongly accused of a crime, and the children are overjoyed when he is released. The elements of mystery combined with the children's adventures on the railway line make this an enduringly

popular children's story. There is a well-known film starring Jenny Agutter, made in 1971, and also a more recent TV adaptation.

Mr Bean is a simply written 'novelization' (i.e. a book based on a film) of the comedy film, which was released in 1997 starring British actor, Rowan Atkinson. In the film, the rather strange Mr Bean, familiar to TV viewers, is sent as an 'art expert' to a gallery in Los Angeles. While there, Mr Bean accidentally ruins a famous masterpiece. But somehow he manages to rescue the situation, earn the gratitude of his host, and even impress the art world with his perceptive remarks on the masterpiece. All Mr Bean fans will love this book, and those unfamiliar with him will find the book highly entertaining.



2.2 Level 3

Princess Diana is a biography of the British princess, specially written for learners of English. As a beautiful young girl, Lady Diana Spencer married Prince Charles, the heir to the British throne, in a fairy-tale wedding. But all was not as it seemed. Privately, the marriage went wrong early on and Diana developed an eating disorder. In public, she became a colourful member of the British royal family and the public adored her. She won people's hearts, too, through her charity work for the underprivileged and outcasts of society. Her tragic death at the age of thirty-six in a car accident shocked the world. Many people felt as bereaved as if she had been in their own family. This biography provides a detailed and fascinating account of an important figure in British public life.

Matilda is the highly entertaining and popular children's story by British writer, Roald Dahl (1989). In a recent survey of children's reading in the UK *Matilda* was the second most popular book (after *The BFG*, another book by Roald Dahl). *Matilda* is an exceptionally clever and unusual little girl, but her awful parents aren't at all interested in her, believing that girls don't need educating. When she finally gets to school, she finds the terrifying Miss Trunchbull, who terrorises all the children. Then *Matilda* discovers that she can make things move just with her eyes. With this special power, she is able to take control of her life and take action against the bad adults who mistreat the children in their care. An excellent film was made of the book in 1996.

Forrest Gump is an original story by Winston Groom. Groom's version showed a satirical view of life in the USA in which anyone, even an idiot, could become



successful and live the 'American Dream'. But the hugely successful film, which starred Tom Hanks and came out in 1994, was not really satirical. Forrest Gump is a warm-hearted but simple man. In the film he tells us his life story: how he became a university student and a footballer, a war hero who meets the President, a chess player, a wrestler, a businessman and an astronaut. It is a touching and, at the same time, comic story which makes us re-evaluate intelligence and success.

Amistad is another film novelization. The film was released in 1997. It is based on a true story of a group of Africans who were kidnapped and shipped across the Atlantic in 1839. Sold as slaves in Cuba, the group manages to kill the men in charge of the ship which is taking them to their new 'owners'. But the ship is stopped by the Americans and the Africans are arrested and tried for murder. They do not speak English so cannot tell their story, and their plight becomes enmeshed with the politics of the time. A young lawyer sets out to discover the truth. Through his fight against prejudice and injustice, the Africans are freed and able to return home. At the time, the episode attracted much public interest: the US was then divided in two over slavery, an issue which eventually led to a bloody civil war.

Rain Man is another film novelization. The 1988 film, starring Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise, received three Oscars (best picture, best director, best actor). When Charlie Babbitt's father dies, Charlie is furious to find that his father has left his fortune to an unknown person. Then Charlie discovers that the money has gone to a brother, Raymond, that he never knew he had. But Raymond is autistic. Determined to get his rightful inheritance, Charlie takes his brother from the special home where he lives. In the process Charlie remembers long forgotten facts about his childhood, and that Raymond was the real 'Rain Man', who he had made into his imaginary friend. Charlie learns to love his disabled brother more than money, making this an entertaining but moral tale.

Braveheart is an original story by American writer Randall Wallace, about a Scottish rebel leader in the thirteenth century. After his beloved wife, Murron, is brutally murdered by the English, William Wallace kills an English nobleman in revenge and becomes an outlaw and a rebel. Meanwhile, the English king, Edward I, wants control over Scotland. Wallace, fighting for his country's independence, leads his fellow Scots to victory over the English in several battles and becomes a national hero. But in the end, Wallace cannot maintain unity among the other Scottish nobles and a trick results in his capture and execution. The 1995 film starring Mel Gibson won an Oscar for Best Picture.

2.3 Level 4

The Diary of a Young Girl is the famous diary written by a young Jewish girl, Anne Frank. The *Diary* covers the two years the Frank family spent in hiding from the Nazis in part of an office building in Holland from 1942–1944. In the *Diary*, 13-year-old Anne gives a vivid account of the hardship and fear experienced by the family. At the same time – and this is what makes the book so compelling – she also cheerfully documents

the ordinary and everyday, and the worries and concerns of an engaging, likeable and typical teenager growing into maturity. Poignantly, the *Diary* comes to an abrupt end, as the family were discovered and arrested. Only the father survived the concentration camps. The *Diary* was made into a play in 1955, and a film based on the play came out in 1959.

The Client is a thriller by US writer, John Grisham, published in 1993. One day, eleven-year-old Mark, a boy who watches too much TV, sees a violent attack such as he has previously seen only on the screen. As a result, he is now in possession of dangerous information. An eccentric lawyer tries to help him as he is caught between the interests of the law and the Mafia. Working against time, together they are able to work out how to protect Mark and his family from the people who would like to do them harm. This is a fast-moving, exciting book which readers will find hard to put down. A film starring Tommy Lee Jones and Susan Sarandon was made in 1994.

2.4 Level 5

Four Weddings and a Funeral is a simplified novelization of the hugely popular romantic comedy film which was released in 1993, starring Hugh Grant and Andie McDowell. The screenplay was written by Richard Curtis, one of the best current British writers of comedy and the film began a series of successes for British film-making. One of a group of friends, Charles, is a young man in search of love. The trouble is he is too shy and reticent to get the girl he really loves – Carrie. When she marries someone else, he tries to make the best of things by nearly getting married himself. Luckily for him, Carrie reappears and all ends well. The story captures a particular type of Englishness which is instantly recognizable, while at the same time taking a very humorous look at love and relationships.

The Pelican Brief is another block-busting thriller by John Grisham, published in 1992. It is a story of big business, politics and corruption in high places in the US. Two Supreme Court judges are murdered at the same time. Are their deaths a coincidence or is there a connection? A bright law student, Darby Shaw, decides to investigate and comes up with a seemingly far-fetched theory, which she writes up as a brief. It turns out that the 'Pelican Brief' actually reveals secrets some people with connections to the President himself would like to remain hidden. These people are prepared to kill and Darby has to go on the run to save her life. As with all Grisham stories, this is a gripping and exciting read. An excellent film came out in 1993 starring Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington.

Wuthering Heights is the classic British nineteenth century romantic novel by Emily Bronte written in 1847. It is a tragic tale of love and revenge which takes place in the wild, remote Yorkshire Moors in England. At the same time the book contains insights into dysfunctional family life which are relevant today. Heathcliff, a strange foundling child brought to live with the Earnshaw family, grows into a passionate youth who falls in love with Catherine Earnshaw. But Catherine marries Edgar Linton. Badly treated by the rest of the family, Heathcliff plans his revenge. First, he artfully acquires the property of the Earnshaws. Then Catherine dies after



giving birth to a daughter, and after a while, Heathcliff begins to find that revenge is not so sweet. Though he also gains the Linton's property, he is tortured by memories of his beloved Catherine and is overcome by guilt and madness. There have been many films, the latest being in 1992 with Juliette Binoche and Ralph Fiennes.

The Prisoner of Zenda is a classic nineteenth century adventure story by Anthony Hope written in 1894. This book was Hope's most successful and established him as one of the most popular writers of his time. It is set in an imaginary country, Ruritania, and the hero, Rudolf Rassendyll, is everything a hero should be: skilful, quick-witted, handsome and courageous. On visiting Ruritania, he discovers that he looks just like its new king. Circumstances result in him having to play the part of the king while the real king is held captive in the castle at Zenda. It's a risky game that Rudolf is playing – not least because he falls in love with the beautiful Princess Flavia. In true heroic tradition, however, he rescues the king and returns home broken-hearted, but with his honour as a gentleman intact. The story has been made into a film several times, most recently in 1979 with Peter Sellers.

The Firm is John Grisham's first successful thriller, published in 1991. It is set in the murky world of the Mafia and the law. Mitchell McDeere is a talented young lawyer who gets himself a top job in Memphis, USA. But his new law firm has some odd customs and several past employees have died in strange circumstances. When the FBI approach Mitchell and tell him about his bosses' real business – money laundering for the Mafia – he must decide whether to help the FBI and risk his life, or to keep quiet and eventually be arrested for criminal activities. He chooses the former. There then follows an exciting chain of events as Mitchell gets the evidence which the FBI need, and manages to escape the clutches of the Mafia. The film, with Tom Cruise, Gene Hackman and Holly Hunter, came out in 1993.

The Body is a short novel by Stephen King published in 1982. King is mainly known for his horror stories, many of which have been made into very popular films (such as *The Shining*). But this is a tale of growing up in modern America. Four boys aged about thirteen set off secretly to find the body of another young boy who, they have heard, has been found some way from where they live. Seeing a real dead body seems to them to be an important and daring thing to do. The story explores the relationship between the four, and is presented by the narrator as an attempt to account for how he managed in later life to leave behind the poverty and ignorance of his upbringing, while his friends were not so lucky. This is a skilful account of four working class boys on the edge of adulthood. A film of the story called *Stand by me* was made in 1986 with River Phoenix.

2.5 Why are these books so popular?

There are a number of different reasons why these books are so popular:

Films

There are films of all of the bestsellers except two (*Princess Diana* and *Audrey Hepburn*), and most of the films have been released in the recent past. Of the people in the two books without films, Princess Diana

was world famous and interest in her hardly needs an explanation, while Audrey Hepburn was one of the film world's major female stars and is well known to filmgoers. Some of the books will have come to people's attention through the film first, for example, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Amistad*, *Forrest Gump*, *Rain Man*, *Braveheart*, *Mr Bean*. All of these films have been immensely popular worldwide so it is not surprising that people like to read the book of the film.

Classics

Some bestsellers are simplified versions of extremely well-known classic works of fiction. These include *White Fang*, *Treasure Island*, *Wuthering Heights*, *The Railway Children*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*. *Anne Frank*, though not fiction of course, is one of the best-known and most widely read books in the world.

Bestselling writers

There are five books on the bestsellers list by three of the world's bestselling contemporary writers in English: Roald Dahl, John Grisham and Stephen King. Dahl is one of the most popular children's writers ever: his books are consistently at the top of current children's lists of favourites. Grisham's and King's books are easy to read and very exciting.

Fact or fiction?

It is sometimes suggested that some people (often male readers) prefer to read factual material rather than fiction. It is noticeable, however, that these bestsellers are mainly fiction. The three books which are not fiction are biographical.

Simplifications or specially devised stories?

Sometimes the value of simplifying original works is questioned. However, in the bestsellers list, the only books which are not simplifications of originals are the biographical *Princess Diana* and *Audrey Hepburn*.

What can we conclude from all this? Mainly, it seems likely that people may choose to read something they have already heard of or know something about. The film or the book itself may be well known, or perhaps the writer or individual concerned is well known. In particular, films would seem to have a very significant motivating effect on reading. Moreover, it seems clear that reading a simplified version of an original is an enjoyable experience for many learners. These points are very important when it comes to choosing books which will be suitable for students and which they will want to read.

3 Making use of the Bestsellers list

There are two main ways in which graded Readers are used:

- *In a library system:* a selection of books at the right level for the class is assembled to make a *class library*. Or the full range of levels in a school may be catered for in the school library or study centre. Using the library system, students withdraw a book appropriate for their level on a regular basis or whenever they wish. Students can read their books in class in a 'quiet reading session', or at home for homework. The teacher will probably see each



student individually to discuss the book which is being read. The book may or may not have an accompanying activity sheet. Teachers may ask students to write 'reading diaries' so that a record of the reading is kept (see Section 4.4 overleaf).

The advantages of the library system are that, because it operates on a self-access basis, students can control what they read, when and where they read, and how much they read. The library system offers the opportunity for 'pleasure reading' in the foreign language and is a means for 'useful relaxation'.

- *As class Readers:* the teacher, or the teacher together with the students, chooses a book at the right level for the class, and everyone has a copy to read. Students can do the reading at home or in class, either individually or as shared or group reading. Exercises and activities for class work are based on the class Reader (see Section 5 below).

The advantages of a class Reader are that the whole class reads the same text and so teachers can keep a check on how much reading is being done. The class Reader can naturally form part of a reading syllabus, and acts as a stimulus for class activities. It can be a focus for vocabulary extension work, grammar or pronunciation practice.

It is important that both these ways of using graded Readers should be seen as *complementary*, not mutually exclusive. Using a class Reader can act as a motivation for students to go to the library and find more books to read on their own. The work done in class on a Reader can help students feel confident about approaching a book of their own choosing.

The Bestsellers list is clearly a useful source of reference for choosing books to be used in both these systems.

4 The library system

Guidance on setting up libraries and introducing students to extensive reading is given in the *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Graded Readers*. Some additional considerations are given below, relating particularly to building and maintaining motivation for reading extensively in a library system.

4.1 Do your students read books for pleasure?

Unfortunately, reading books for pleasure (in the first language) is not something that everybody does, though other types of reading (newspapers, magazines, Internet, etc) may take place. Even in places where school children do read a lot, especially in the early years of learning to read, once they reach adolescence, there are other activities which start to take up their attention, so that by the time they are adults they may have lost the reading habit. So it is not enough simply to place a library of books at the students' disposal. They may need to be strongly encouraged to read the books as well.

Use *Student's Worksheet 1* to find out what your students' attitudes to reading are outside school. Is reading for pleasure something they do or not? Use *Student's Worksheet 1* as a way of discussing reading

habits. Once you know whether your students read for pleasure in their own language, what their attitudes to reading are, and what sorts of things they read, you can build motivation for reading in the foreign language by providing similar material. *Student's Worksheet 1* will also enable you to see what genres of books students will like from this Bestsellers list (see Section 5.1 below). An important factor in maintaining motivation must be having books in your library that your students will want to read and will be able to read.

4.2 Ground rules

Giving clear 'ground rules' for reading in the library system will help to make sure that students really do read. For example:

- Set reading targets. Tell students that they *must* read one book per week, or X number of books per term or semester, and that when they have read ten books at one level they can try the next level. Paul Nation has calculated that to maximise the vocabulary learning benefits of graded Readers, students at the intermediate level should read about one book per week². (Note that, if we take one book per week as a baseline, it is likely to be at least six months before students' efforts will start to see some reward.)
- Make sure students know that if they don't like their book, they don't need to finish it, but should change it as soon as possible.
- Ensure that students keep a reading diary, which you should check from time to time. *Student's Worksheet 2* can be used for this purpose.
- Set the tasks in the back of the Reader as part of the extensive reading assignment. Alternatively, use the tasks and exercises in the *Penguin Readers Factsheets*, which accompany the books.
- Hold regular *reading tutorials* with each student to discuss his or her reading programme and check their reading diary. In the tutorial, ask for students' opinions about the books they have read, give encouragement to keep reading, help students to choose appropriate books, make suggestions for other titles or types of books, ask students about their reading strategies and suggest alternative strategies, listen to students reading a little of the text aloud (suitable at lower levels), etc.

4.3 Encouraging reading achievements

- Use a 'rewards' system. If you work in a school, this can be tied in with the school system. For example, if a student reads ten books he/she will get a 'house point', or a 'well done' stamp. Where assessments are made, give students a higher grade if they read a certain number of books, a lower grade for fewer books, etc.
- In addition to the diary referred to above, get students to keep lists of the books they have read. Set targets for each individual. Again the Bestsellers list will be useful here. Tell students that their target is to read all the books on the list. They can use *Student's Worksheet 3* to record the books they have read. When the target is full, give an appropriate reward. This will encourage students to feel pleased with their reading achievements.

²Nation, P. 'The Language Learning Benefits of Extensive Reading'. *The Language Teacher Online*. <http://langue.hyper.chubu.ac.jp/jalt/pub/tlt/97/may/benefits.html> (as at 5.11.01)



4.4 Reading is a social activity

Although the act of reading is done by each individual on his or her own, in fact reading is firmly rooted within a community. Reading is an activity (like any other) which we have in common with our peers. We read books recommended by our friends or family, for example. We may read a book because someone we admire has read it. Perhaps a book has become fashionable or it has received a lot of publicity, or it has recently come out as a film or TV series. Many people choose the books they read by looking at the bestsellers lists in newspapers. All of this is evidence of the 'reading community' in a particular society. In the same way, the Penguin Bestsellers list is evidence of a community of readers learning English.

Thus, encouraging a 'reading community' amongst your learners is an important aspect of building and maintaining motivation for pleasure reading. Some suggestions for ways of doing this are:

- Holding competitions. Try a 'reading race' – the first person to complete their target, or read, say, twenty books will win a prize. Or the person who has read the most books in a given period wins a prize.
- Hold 'book afternoons' or out of school 'clubs' in which each student brings their favourite book and explains why they liked it. The afternoons could be 'themed', for example, the books could be limited to books of films, or to thrillers, or the classics, or books by one writer. Students could bring an object or a picture which symbolizes something they particularly liked in their favourite book – other students then try to guess which book the object relates to. Younger students may like to dress up as their favourite character. Set up a role-play activity in pairs in which Student A is a film scriptwriter who has written the story. The writer wants to sell the story to Student B, who is a film producer. The film producer will only buy the film script if it sounds like a good story, so Student A must tell it well.
- Use **Student's Worksheet 4** to find the class or group's 'top ten' books from the Bestsellers list, as follows:

- 1 This Worksheet can be done towards the end of the year or term.
- 2 Tell students to write down as many of the Bestsellers as they have read and give them a rating. If students cannot write twenty titles, tell them to write as many as they can.
- 3 Find the class's ten most frequently mentioned books.
- 4 In order to arrange these books in a final list, decide with students whether the number of mentions is the most important criterion, or whether rating is more important.
- 5 Then write the list on a large sheet of paper for display in the library or classroom.

- Show the previous class's top ten books to the next class to help them choose their books.
- Set tasks such as book reviews or summaries for homework and 'publish' the best pieces, for example, in the school magazine, newsletter or on the school

Website; or display the summaries and reviews in the library.

- To help make sure that the graded Readers section in the library or study centre looks attractive, make enlarged photocopies of quotations from the book reviews and put them on the wall. Advertise new acquisitions with photos or pictures. Get posters from films and put on them on the wall, attaching the comment 'Seen the film? Now read the book!' Put up on the wall the list of the school/class top ten or twenty favourites. Put up the Penguin list of bestselling titles.

5 Class Readers

As we have already said, the library system and class Readers should ideally act in a complementary way, each one ensuring that students read extensively and offering different kinds of support for the learning and reading processes.

So that students derive the maximum benefit of their experience with the book, the *aim* of class work on a class Reader should be to:

- 1 organize and monitor the *reading* of the book
- 2 help students to *understand* the book
- 3 enable students to *learn* and *practise* relevant aspects of language
- 4 enable students to *respond* to and *evaluate* the book

The *Penguin Teacher's Guide to Using Graded Readers* gives guidance and advice on introducing a Reader and using it with students. Some additional considerations are given in Sections 5.1 and 5.2 below.

There are, in addition, a large number of useful and enjoyable activities based on a Reader which can be done in the classroom. Look at the other Teacher's Guides in the series produced by Penguin and at the Factsheets.

In the meantime, Sections 5.3–5.5 of this Guide describe many such activities, grouped for easy reference according to exercise type and the aims of class work on a Reader given above. Examples are given of how some of the activities might be used with the books on the Bestsellers list.

Finally in Section 6 there is a scheme of work for a class Reader over six lessons.

5.1 Choosing a class Reader from the Bestsellers list

The Bestsellers list offers teachers an easy way to select a book which students will enjoy. You can obviously make a decision on the choice of book yourself but it is a good idea to use students' ideas to help make the decision. For example:

- Use information from **Student's Worksheet 1** and **Student's Worksheet 5** to find out what genres and topics students like best to help you narrow down your choices or actually make your decision. Below is a guide to how the Bestsellers fit the genres/topics given on **Student's Worksheet 1**:



- a LOVE AND ROMANCE – *The Horse Whisperer*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Wuthering Heights*
- b UNUSUAL PEOPLE – *Forrest Gump*, *Rain Man*, *The Horse Whisperer*, *Mr Bean*
- c ADVENTURE – *Treasure Island*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, *The Railway Children*
- d CRIME/THRILLERS – *Amistad*, *The Client*, *The Pelican Brief*, *The Firm*
- e ANIMALS – *White Fang*, *The Horse Whisperer*
- f CHILDREN/GROWING UP – *The Horse Whisperer*, *The Railway Children*, *Matilda*, *The Client*, *The Body*, *The Diary of a Young Girl*
- g BIOGRAPHY – *Audrey Hepburn*, *Princess Diana*
- h EVENTS IN HISTORY – *Amistad*, *Braveheart*, *Diary of a Young Girl*
- i FUNNY BOOKS – *Matilda*, *Mr Bean*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Forrest Gump*, *Rain Man*
- j SAD BOOKS – *Wuthering Heights*, *The Diary of a Young Girl*, *The Horse Whisperer*
- k WAR – *Braveheart*, *The Diary of a Young Girl*

- Give students the list of Bestsellers appropriate to their level. Find out if they have heard of any of the titles, or if they have seen any of the films. Perhaps these factors will influence their preferences.
- If you have narrowed the choices down to two or three possibilities, you can give students a very brief summary of each book (two or three lines) to find out which they think will like the most. (See Section 2 above.)

5.2 Some points about managing the reading

- Most of the reading can be done by students *out of class time*. Use class time for working on activities designed to increase students' understanding and enjoyment of the book.
- Plan your work on the book carefully (see Section 6 for an example of how to do this). Divide the book into several manageable 'chunks', say 3–5 chapters, or 15–20 pages, and set these for regular homework reading every week, bearing in mind how much time students will need to read the book³. If you are unsure how to divide the book, in the back of each Penguin Reader the text is divided into sections for exercises. The accompanying Factsheets also divide the text into sections.
- If you wish to devote a (small) part of each lesson for students to do some reading, you could read aloud a part of each section to your students and ask them to finish the reading at home. Alternatively use the tape (many Penguin Readers are available with cassettes) while students follow the text in the book. People of all ages enjoy being read to, whether in their native language or in the foreign language. Hearing the words will both help students with their pronunciation (and with the reading process since knowing how words sound is an important factor in reading), and also whet their appetites for more and so increase motivation.

- To check that students are really doing the reading at home, ask them to complete story summaries for each section that they read. This can be in a notebook with columns made over a double page as below:

Chapter or section	What happened (mention events, places, times)	Comments (give your opinions of characters, events, etc)	New words or key words

For each section they can keep lists of words which are new or important, together with their meanings if required. A line should be drawn across the pages before starting a new section. Check the notebooks on a regular basis.

5.3 Understanding the book

5.3.1 Preparing for reading

It is a good idea to help students to prepare for reading through activities which involve predicting what will happen in the story or the next chapter or section. These activities will provide a focus for the reading. Also, when predicting the next chapter or section, the activities will involve comprehension of what has already been read. Suitable types of activities are as follows:

Working with jumbled items

- Before reading the book or a section of the book, give students the chapter titles, or a selection of the chapter titles, in jumbled order. Ask students to put the chapters in the order in which they think they will come and to say what they think will happen in the story. **Student's Worksheet 6** can be used for this. Here is an example using *White Fang*.

- 1 Make sure that students have read the book cover information and the introduction to the book.
- 2 Dictate the titles so that students can write them on their worksheet, as below:
 - a Love Begins ☐
 - b White Fang ☐
 - c The Killer of Dogs ☐
 - d Family Life ☐
 - e The Gray Cub ☐
 - f The Southland ☐

³According to Day and Bamford, as a rough guide, assuming the level of the book is about right for the students, they should manage to read at a rate of about 150 words per minute. Thus an intermediate level book of around 64 pages with about 250 words per page should take approximately 2 hours to read (Day, PR & J Bamford 1998 *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 85). Note, however, that reading speeds are likely to vary considerable between readers.



- g The God's Home ☐
- h The Great Fight ☐
- i A Trip up the Mackenzie ☐

- 1 Discuss the meaning of the titles with the class.
- 2 Then ask them to decide in which order the chapters will come and to write the number of the chapter in the box.
- 3 If you wish you can provide some help by, for example, saying which is the first or last chapter, or which is the 'most important' chapter (i.e. the climax of the story). (In the case of *White Fang* it is *The Great Fight*.)
- 3 When students are ready, put them in pairs to compare their answers and then write a short outline of what they think the story will be.
- 4 Ask the pairs to read out their story outlines.

- Choose some key sentences from the next section of the book. Ask students to try to decide in what order the sentences come and what happens in the story. You can also use **Student's Worksheet 6** for this purpose.
- Make a selection of key words and write them on an overhead or a large piece of paper. Allow students one minute to look at the words and then take the words away. Ask students to write down as many as they can remember. In pairs, they compare their answers and try to order the words. They can discuss what type of story it is and/or what will happen in the story. You could select words which give an idea of the genre, or which concentrate on the plot, setting, or characters.

Pictures

Pictures are a useful way to help students prepare for the topic of the book and, for example, to teach key vocabulary.

- Photocopy some of the pictures in the book and ask students to put them in order according to what they think will happen.
- It may be possible to ask students to match chapter titles and pictures and then put both in order.
- Taking *Audrey Hepburn* as an example, make copies of the pictures on pages 1, 13 and 22. (Or ask students to look at the pictures in the book). Ask students to work in pairs and discuss questions such as: *How old is Audrey in each picture? What is she doing in each picture? In which picture does she look the most beautiful? Why? In which picture does she look happiest? Why?*
- A picture from the beginning of the book can introduce a key character, like this example with *Mr Bean*. Make copies of the picture on page 2 (without the caption), or ask students to look at the picture in the book. Ask students to work in pairs and discuss these questions: *What is the man doing? Where is he? What's he wearing? What's his job?* Then discuss the answers with the whole class and discuss whether the students think he is good at his job.

Making predictions

Before starting each chapter or section ask students to say what they think will happen. This could be about events and narrative, or you could focus on certain characters and what will happen to them.

- At the back of each *Penguin Reader* there are questions which ask students to make predictions about what they will read.
- You can use **Student's Worksheet 7** to make predictions. The example below is based on *The Client* chapters 14–17.

- 1 Tell students to write the names of some characters in the left hand column.
- 2 In pairs or small groups, they can discuss some possible outcomes for the characters and write these along the top of the grid.
- 3 If a particular outcome is not relevant for a character, the box can be left blank, as below. Or if students don't know what answer to give, the box can be left blank.
- 4 Then, for each of the possible outcomes that could apply to each of the characters, students decide how likely it is, and draw the appropriate symbols in the boxes:
✓ = not likely, ✓✓ = perhaps,
✓✓✓ = probably, ✓✓✓✓ = definitely
- 5 Students can compare their answers with another pair, or you can have a class discussion.

	Get arrested?	Escape?	Find the senator's body?	Die?	Live happily?
Mark		✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓✓✓✓
Reggie	✓✓		✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓
Ricky				✓✓	
Muldanno	✓✓✓		✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Slik Moeller	✓✓✓		✓✓		

Pre-questions

You may wish to set questions for which students should look for the answers as they read. These questions should not be too numerous: one or two questions are usually enough. The questions should direct students' attention to key issues or events in the text and should help to provide a focus for the reading.

Listening or viewing task

Students can prepare for reading through a listening or a viewing task. There are many ways to do this, a large number of which are given in the *Penguin Teacher's Guide to using Film and TV* and the *Penguin Teacher's Guide to Developing Listening Skills*. Some examples are:

- Play a few short sequences from audio or video tape from the beginning, middle and towards the end of



the tape. Discuss what type of story it is, and what events students might expect.

- If you are introducing a new chapter in the book, use a still picture, or play a short video sequence and then pause it, to help recall the story. Ask students to say what is happening in the picture, and what has just happened. Then ask them to say, or act out, what they think will happen next. What is X going to say next? What is X going to do next?
- Use a clip from a video to enable students to get a clear picture in their minds of the story setting before they read, and also to learn any key vocabulary they will need for the story.
- Choose a small part of the video which relates to the section which students are about to read. Turn the screen away from the class. Pause the film, or play a short sequence without sound. One student comes to the front to look at the screen. The class should ask the student questions to establish what is in the picture.
- Students can be asked to listen to the audio tape and put various different kinds of things in order, for example a series of events, places visited, pieces of dialogue, speakers.
- Ask students to listen to the audio tape and match two sets of items. For example, give students a list of people and some pieces of dialogue. Students should match the speaker with what they say. Or match people with jobs, character traits, places, or almost anything!
- Play the audio tape while students draw a picture showing what they hear. In pairs, without showing their pictures, students describe their pictures to each other. Then they look and compare their pictures. Finally they read the book.

5.3.2 Developing comprehension

As a general principle, it is best in the reading class to choose exercises (including questions) and activities which will guide the reader towards a better, deeper understanding of the text. So it is important to be clear about the purposes of the activities and exercises and what kind of mental processes may be required in order to be able to answer.

Activities and exercises may help the learner to *infer* something that is not directly stated in the text. Certain activities may require the learner to use his or her *knowledge* and *memory* – either of the story so far, or of stories in general, or knowledge of the world – to reach a better understanding of the story. Exercises may require an ability to arrive at an *overview* or *summary* of the whole text.

Given below is a typology of activities and exercises which are commonly used with Readers.

Open questions

Open questions, (questions which begin with 'Who, when where, why, how', etc) are general purpose questions. They may be used for facts (for example, in the first chapter of *The Railway Children*, *What happened after the two men left? How old was Peter when his father went away?*). They may be used to ask students to infer (*What is Peter's opinion of girls?*), or

to give opinions. However, exactly what level of comprehension may be required will depend very much on each question and the text on which it is based. Avoid questions which can be answered by using exact phrases or sentences from the text, or (obviously!) those which can be answered without requiring any understanding of the text. A feature of many open questions is that several answers may be possible. For this reason, these types of questions are useful where you want students to discuss ideas with each other.

True/false

True/false questions are more easily marked than open questions and they can have the function of requiring understanding of basic content, but are useful at the level of inference. There are a number of variants of the basic true/false type of question. For example:

- correct the false statements
- true/probably true/false
- fact/possibility
- multiple choice
- correct the wrong information

Completion

Completion exercises can be another way of asking questions about content. For example, students can be asked to fill gaps in a short summary text, where the gaps are for the names of characters, vocabulary items, or actual words from the text. Or students may need to analyse, interpret or infer in order to finish sentences with reasons, purposes or results.

Ordering

As mentioned earlier, students can be asked to put various different kinds of things in order, for example a series of events, places visited, pieces of dialogue, speakers, events, key sentences. Ordering can be done from memory or not. The process will help students to clarify aspects of the story. Ask them to use numbers to show what happened first, second, etc. ***Student's Worksheet 6*** is a general purpose worksheet which can be used for any kind of ordering task both before and after reading.

Matching

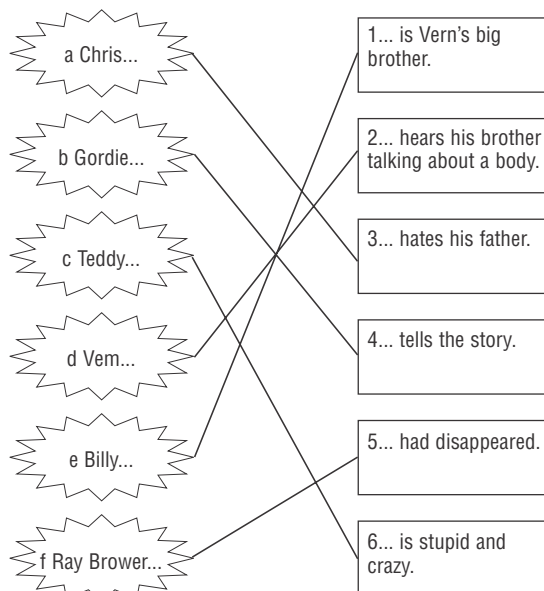
Matching involves understanding of content and can also be done from memory or not. Give students two lists of different items and ask them to draw lines matching something in the first list with something in the second. Here are some examples of the kinds of things that can be matched.

- names and facts
- sentence halves
- characters and character traits/jobs/places
- characters and dialogue
- characters' questions and answers
- words and definitions

Student's Worksheet 8 is a general purpose matching worksheet. An example using *The Body* is given overleaf.



- 1 Choose some items to be matched. The example uses people and facts about them.
- 2 Dictate the names while students write them in the stars.
- 3 Make sure the facts are jumbled. Dictate the facts to the students, who should write them in the boxes.
- 4 Individually, students try to match the names and facts, if possible, without looking in the book.
- 5 They compare their answers and then check in the book to see if they are right.
- 6 An alternative is to ask students to make their own lists for matching, write them on a worksheet and give the worksheet to a partner to answer.
- 7 Another alternative is to give students one list of items only and ask them to find the matching items from the book or to write them in from memory. In the example below, you could give the list of facts and ask students to find the names.



Dialogue

Using the dialogue in a story is a good way to check or encourage detailed comprehension of the text. Choose some sentences of dialogue and ask students to say, for example: *Who said this? What are they talking about? When and why did they say this? Who were they speaking to? What happened just before/after?* Students may be asked to try to answer from memory or by looking at the text. They can also be asked what specific words (such as *it, that, him, her*, etc) in the dialogue refer to.

Using visuals

- At the lower levels, Penguin Readers contain many *pictures* which are a very useful resource. As well as using the pictures for predictive purposes, they can be used as comprehension checking devices, either individually (*What is happening in this picture? What*

happened before? After?) or by putting several pictures in order.

- There are many kinds of *diagrams* which are useful ways of checking and encouraging sound understanding of content, fixing characters and important facts in the mind, developing an overview of a story, or analysing plot, character and theme. Some of the various types of diagrams which students can be asked to complete are:

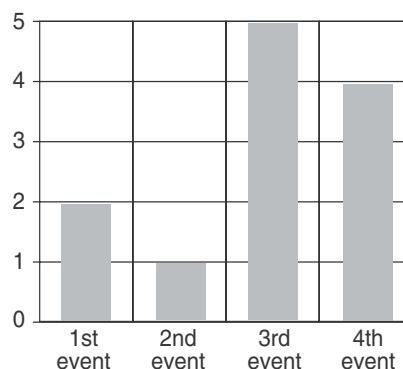
grids and tables: useful for analysing character and plot (see for example **Student's Worksheet 7** in this Guide);

maps: completing a map requires detailed comprehension; activities can be devised which involve information gaps for pairwork;

timelines: these can show key events in the plot chapter by chapter or section; one timeline can also be used for each character to show an individual's part in the story; themes that run through the book can be tracked on a chapter by chapter or section basis;

graphs and charts: the various things that happen to certain characters or in the story can be shown on a graph or a histogram-type chart. For example, events can be shown to be good or bad, as in **Student's Worksheet 9**. Here is an example using *The Pelican Brief*.

- 1st event: Callahan gives Darby's brief to Gavin Verheek
 2nd event: Callahan's car explodes
 3rd event: A man shoots Khameel by the riverboat
 4th event: Darby meets Gray Grantham in New York



Name of character: Darby Shaw

(1 = very bad, 2 = quite bad, 3 = not good or bad, 4 = quite good, 5 = very good.)

Ask students to choose a character, and then choose some things that happen to their character. Alternatively you may wish to specify the character and events for the students.

- Ask students to decide how good or bad each event is for their character and to show this on the chart. (More columns can be added if necessary)



- When they have completed the chart, students should be ready to explain the reasons for their opinions to another person or to the class, like this (in the example above):

Event 1 – is quite bad for Darby because it puts her in danger from the killers of the judges and is the beginning of the series of bad things that happen to her.

Event 2 – is very bad for Darby. Callahan, who is her lover, dies and she realizes that she is now in serious danger herself.

Event 3 – is very good for Darby because Khamel was pretending to be Verheek and he was going to kill her.

Event 4 – is quite good for Darby. Gray Grantham can help her, and also they like each other.

family trees: organograms and similar diagrams can be used to show the relationships between the various people in a book. (Organograms are hierarchical diagrams used in business to show the management structure of an organization).

mind maps: can be useful for providing an overview of important facts, people, events, etc.

Listening and viewing

Listening and viewing activities can also help to develop and expand students' understanding of their book. See the *Penguin Teacher's Guide to using Film and TV* and the *Penguin Teacher's Guide to Developing Listening Skills* for lots of ideas.

5.4 Language practice

It is *not* recommended that Readers should be used to teach grammatical structures, since their principal purpose is to provide a good, enjoyable story. But it may be useful in class to look at some aspects of the language in order to help the comprehension process. Vocabulary acquisition is an important by-product of reading, so activities which provide vocabulary practice are useful. It may also be beneficial to use the Reader together with the accompanying tape to practise some aspects of pronunciation.

5.4.1 Grammar

These exercises give practice in understanding and using features of text grammar.

- Choose a short section of appropriate text and ask students to say what reference words such as *he, she, it, this, that, these, those*, etc refer to.
- At lower levels, sentences tend to be simple, one-verb sentences. Find appropriate sections of text and ask students to add joining words such as *and, so, but, because, when*, etc to a simple sentence in order to join it to the following sentence. In this way, the meaning of two adjacent sentences can be made explicit, and students can build complex or compound sentences.

- Ask students to add sentence linkers such as *on the other hand, however, then, after that, next*, etc to sentences which do not have these kinds of words. Again, this will help to make the meaning of the text clearer.
- Exercises which require students to finish sentences or match two sentence halves will also give practice in close understanding of the story and in using sentence building devices. Here are some examples, based on *Audrey Hepburn*:

Make sentences from these half sentences.

- The *Nun's Story* was a different kind of film but ...
- Mel directed *Green Mansions* but ...
- Audrey lost her second baby when ...
 - ... it was Audrey's worst film.
 - ... Audrey acted very well in it.
 - ... she fell from a horse in the middle of *The Unforgiven*.

Finish these sentences.

- Alfred Hitchcock was angry with Audrey because ...
- Audrey didn't act in *West Side Story* because ...
- Audrey was nervous about the part of Holly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* because ...

- Gapped text: reproduce a short section or write a summary of a section with gaps. The gaps can be chosen to give practice in the area of grammar or vocabulary which you want students to practise.
- Asking students to retell a part of the story provides a natural context for controlled language practice. Retelling is often done in the present tense, so students must change the text from the past to the present.

5.4.2 Vocabulary

- Puzzles, such as easy crosswords, acrostics and wordsearch puzzles, are useful ways to give practice in new vocabulary or the vocabulary of particular topics. Here is an example of an acrostic from *Wuthering Heights* (students write a word or noun phrase for each letter in the title):

W – wild, windy, wet
 U – unusual decorative stonework
 T – trees
 H – hills
 E – evil-looking guns
 R – rough weather
 I – ice
 N – north wind
 G – grass growing between the stones

- Make a gapped summary of a chapter in which the gaps can be filled by finding appropriate vocabulary from the chapter itself. Here is an example from Chapter 16 of *The Client*:



Complete the following with words from Chapter 16. Use one word for each line:

Barry Muldanno was fear. He wanted to move Although Johnny told Barry he was , he gave Barry to help him. Reggie and Mark hid Clifford's house until While they were crawling , they saw a in the garage. It was Muldanno and his men the body. Reggie towards the house next door and broke the window. Muldanno and his men When everything was , Reggie and Mark went to in the They found the in a

- Ask students to search through the text to find words and phrases which are used for particular topics, for example a type of behaviour, a type of place, etc.
- Use a video clip from the film of the book to help students understand and learn important vocabulary. For example, make a list of words or phrases from the book describing character traits, physical features or other important facts. Show short clips or stills of the main characters and ask students to match the sets of words with each visual image of the character.
- Use a vocabulary box: collect words from students that they have met for the first time while reading the book (e.g. take the words from their reading diaries referred to in 5.2). Write the words on small pieces of card and put them in the box. From time to time ask students to take a word from the box and make a sentence with it in. Put definitions on the walls round the room. Ask students to take a word from the box and go and stand by its definition.

5.4.3 Pronunciation

The tape which accompanies the book is useful for pronunciation purposes. Several ideas for practising pronunciation are given in the *Penguin Teacher's Guide to Developing Listening Skills*. Here are a few:

- Use the tape to help students with the pronunciation of new words. Ask them to listen to the tape and say when they think they hear the words. Ask them to repeat the words after the tape.
- Choose a short section of the text and ask students to underline all the places where there should be a schwa sound /ə/. Listen to the tape. Are they right? Then practise the pronunciation by reading aloud with the tape.
- Select a short section from the book, perhaps with some dialogue, and reproduce the text on a sheet of paper for students. Arrange the text in sentences. Ask students to put at the end of each sentence an arrow to show whether the voice moves up or down. Then listen to the tape. Were they right? Alternatively play the tape first and ask students to mark the intonation that they hear.
- Ask students to choose their favourite passage from the book and prepare it so that they can read it aloud. When they are ready, they should work in small groups and read each other their passages and explain why they chose that particular passage.

5.5 Responding to and evaluating the book

In addition to helping students to understand the book, it is important that they should be given the opportunity to discuss and articulate their personal responses and to make judgements about the merits or otherwise of the book. Of course, we are not talking here about detailed literary criticism, but encouraging students to react emotionally and intellectually to what they have read. This will involve enabling students to see how a book may be relevant to their own lives, or how they may identify with a character or with a problem experienced by a character; or giving students the opportunity to give their opinions on a moral question raised by the book.

Once students have read a part of the book, it is possible to use some of the ideas below for the exploration of character, plot, scenes, setting and themes in class activities and discussions.

5.5.1 Retelling

Asking students to remember and summarise or retell the story in a different form is a useful way of 'fixing' the story in their memories. For example:

- Students can be asked to rewrite an episode from the story as a newspaper article.
- Students can write 'diaries' for certain characters.
- Silent video clips can be used as prompts or reminders for oral or written retelling.
- Summaries can be written for publication in a magazine or on the wall of the library.
- The pictures in the book can be given different titles or captions.
- Students can be asked to write 'agony aunt' letters as if from one of the characters in the book, describing his/her problem.
- Students can be asked to think of different titles for the chapters.

5.5.2 Interpretation and imagination

Students can be asked to write or say 'what isn't there'. In other words, to use their imagination to see beyond the text or to see things in a different way. For example, students can be asked to:

- Choose a character from the book and write some questions they would like to ask this character. **Student's Worksheet 10** can be used for this, as follows:

- 1 Each student selects a character and thinks of five questions they would like to ask this character if they met him/her. They write the character's name and the questions on the worksheet. For example, using the book *Princess Diana*, students could write questions for Diana, Prince Charles, Camilla Parker Bowles, one of Diana's friends, her wedding dress designers, etc.
- 2 Questions can require only comprehension or memory of the story, for example (to Diana) 'What did you decide to call your first child?'
- 3 Or the questions could require imaginative answers, such as (to Diana) 'What was the happiest time of your life?' Or the answers could require a degree of inference from the text, for example (again to Diana) 'Did you and Charles agree about how to bring up your children?'
- 4 When each student has written five questions for their character, put students in pairs. They



exchange worksheets and each student writes answers to the questions as if they are the character, i.e. the answers are written in the first person.

- 5 The worksheets are given back and the question writers look at the answers. Are the answers good ones? Would the characters really answer in that way?
- 6 The worksheet can then be used as the basis for a role play (see below 5.6.3).

- Put themselves in one character's position and give opinions about other characters, as for example in **Student's Worksheet 11**.
- Tell the story or give opinions of the events from the point of view of a different character in the story; or from an imaginary person completely outside the story such as, for example, a psychiatrist, a lawyer, a social worker, a doctor.
- Give advice to the characters. Use the 'agony aunt letters' discussed above. Or ask students to finish sentences beginning 'If I were (a certain character), I'd ...'
- Imagine and then talk about or write a different ending for the story.
- Describe someone they know in real life who reminds them of a character in the book.
- Speculate on how the story might have gone differently. Make sentences such as 'If X hadn't happened, then Y would/would have happened'; 'What if ...?'
- Look at a part of the text and add in some missing details. Here is an example from *Four Weddings and a Funeral*:

Think of some more details to add to the story in the places shown:

(From *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, page 25)

The reception is being held in an elegant London Hotel (*What is its name? Where is it?*). The guests seem to be from rich, upper-class families. All the men are wearing formal wedding coats (*What are the coats like? What colour are they? – look at the front cover of the book.*) and the women are in expensive dresses (*What are the dresses made of? What else are the women wearing?*). Lydia is in an excellent mood; she is laughing and kissing the guests as soon as they arrive (*What does she say to them?*). Charles, Gareth and Matthew have already found the drinks (*What kinds of drinks are there?*). They are used to weddings and know exactly what to do (*What are they going to do with the drinks?*).

Now write the text out again putting in your ideas.

- Imagine they are going to visit the place in the book. They decide on five things they would need to take with them and why.
- Find pictures which remind them of something in the story – perhaps a place, a theme, a character. Take in a selection of magazine pictures or ask students to find their own and bring one to the class. Each student explains his/her choice to the others.

5.5.3 Drama and role play

In order to make the text really come alive for students,

it is a good idea, as Charlyn Wessels puts it⁴, to make the text 'stand up and walk about'. Some examples of drama techniques that can be used are:

- *Role-plays* in pairs or threes based on an incident in the story.
- *TV interviews* with characters (Use **Student's Worksheet 10**, as mentioned above in 5.5.2).
- *Tableaux*: a small group of students arrange themselves as if they are a still picture of a scene in the book. They do not speak. The other students guess which incident the tableau shows.
- *Dramatised readings*: one student acts as the narrator and reads the main text. Other students take different parts and say the words spoken by the characters. Other students could mime the actions while the words are being spoken.
- *Audio tapes* can be used to which students mime the actions.
- *Video tapes* can be used for students to speak the dialogue.

5.5.4 Evaluation and opinions

After they have read the book, or a substantial part of it, give students the opportunity to evaluate and discuss their opinions of the book.

- Students can discuss the characters. What kinds of people are they? What words can be used to describe their personalities? What do certain events show about them? Students should try to support their opinions of a character by referring to particular incidents.
 - Organize discussions or debates on themes arising out of the book. Some possible topics for debates based on some of the Bestsellers are:
 - 1 *The Client* – 'Do children watch too much TV?'
 - 2 *Amistad* – 'Is there slavery in modern times?'
 - 3 *Braveheart* – 'My country's freedom is more important than my own or my family's life: I would always fight for my country'. 'If there were no borders between countries there would be no more wars.'
 - 4 *Rain Man* – 'Love is more valuable than money.'
 - 5 *Forrest Gump* – 'To be successful, you need luck more than brains.'
 - 6 *Anne Frank* – 'Five people I would least/most like to be imprisoned with for a year are ...' 'The Holocaust was the worst event ever to take place in human history: we must never forget it.'
 - 7 *Matilda* – 'If I chose to have a special power, I would like to be able to ... Three things I would do if I had this power are ...'
 - 8 *Treasure Island* – 'You have found some buried treasure in your garden. What are you going to do?'
 - 9 *The Prisoner of Zenda* – 'If I could choose to look like another person, the person would be... If I looked like this person I would' 'The idea of the 'honourable gentleman' is now completely out of date.'
 - 10 *The Firm* – 'It is always better to tell the authorities about bad or illegal practices than to stay quiet.'
- Ask students to discuss the book itself: are the characters realistic or true to life? Is the plot a good one? Is it realistic or contrived? Is the ending satisfactory?

⁴C. Wessels. 1987. **Drama**. Resource Books for Teachers Series. Oxford University Press. Page 93.



- Devise questionnaires and surveys to find out the class's opinions of the book. Take a class vote on the book: how many stars would they give it?
- **Student's Worksheet 12** can function as a way of providing an overview of the book and also as a way of evaluating the book and its theme, plot, character and setting, as follows:

Student's Worksheet 12 – My Book from A–Z

- In order to do this worksheet, students will need to find appropriate words which they can use in sentences about the book. The sentences can be about almost anything connected with the book, for example:
 - opinions of the book, or aspects of it
 - opinions of the characters, plot, certain scenes or the setting
 - the themes in the book
 - events in the book
 - places or people in the book
- The worksheet depends on some work having been done before, especially on items a–c.
- With the class, build useful sets of words for items a–c above. Some examples of appropriate words are given in the lists in the *wordbox* below.
- Tell students to scan the book for words they could use for items d–e.
- You could ask students to try to use some of the book's specific vocabulary which is given at the back (i.e. the words which are outside the wordlist for the level).
- Each student should work on the Book Alphabets individually or in pairs.
- If they have problems with the difficult letters (ie X, Z) they can look in a thesaurus or dictionary to find possible words. Some ways of dealing with these letters are shown in the *White Fang* example on the opposite page.
- Display the Book Alphabets so that students can see them, for example in the library or on the classroom wall.

Wordbox

Words for opinions about the book	Theme words		Words for describing character	
absurd amusing bad beautiful boring brilliant clever depressing dramatic dull enjoyable entertaining excellent exciting frightening funny good hilarious imaginative interesting moving odd pleasant revealing sad satisfying scary shocking strange tragic	absence abuse addiction age ambition anger animals argument art birth children cold colour comedy country crime cruelty dance danger darkness death destruction disability evil family fear freedom friendship future good greed happiness hate heat heroes horror humour illness intelligence isolation jealousy justice	jokes kindness light love marriage misery money music mystery nature obedience obsession outsiders pain parents passion peace persuasion possession poverty power prejudice punishment race relationships religion repetition revenge sea shame slavery stupidity supernatural tragedy travel trust understanding violence war work world youth	adventurous affectionate aggressive arrogant brave calm cautious charming cheerful clever cold contented cruel cunning curious dishonest dull emotional evil excitable faithful fierce foolish friendly funny fussy generous gentle greedy honest humble impetuous independent innocent just jealous kind	lazy lively mad malicious mean miserable naive nervous obstinate passionate patient proud quick quiet quarrelsome rash reckless restless sensible serious shy sly stern strong stubborn stupid timid violent vivacious weak weird wild wilful wise young zany zealous



Here is an example of a Book Alphabet based on *White Fang*:

A This book is about animals and their relationships with people.	N The book shows us how, in the natural world, the strongest are the winners.
B Beauty Smith is crueller than Gray Beaver.	O White Fang must learn obedience .
C In the book we see how cruel some people are.	P The Porcupine River leads to the Yukon River.
D Death is an important part of the natural world.	Q White Fang is a good fighter because he is quick .
E I enjoyed this book very much.	R White Fang does not want to return to the north.
F White Fang becomes the best dog fighter .	S The Indians used sleds to carry their things.
G In Fort Yukon there are many people who are looking for gold .	T I don't think this is a true story.
H White Fang finds happiness in the Southland.	U White Fang usually won all his fights.
I The Indians find White Fang in the woods.	V White Fang changes from being a violent animal to a more gentle one.
J At Fort Yukon all the dogs jump on each other and fight.	W In the beginning White Fang is a wild animal.
K White Fang is a killer of dogs.	X I thought this was an X-cellent book!
L We see that when people are kind, an animal like White Fang will love them.	Y White Fang goes with Gray Beaver up the Yukon River.
M Life for the people of the Mackenzie River is hard.	Z At the end of the story, White Fang is sleeping while his puppies play round him – ZZZZZ!

5.5.5 Games and fillers

There are many games that can be played to help practise various aspects of the book, for example:

- Use the 'twenty questions' principle. One student thinks of a person place or thing. The others have to try to find out what it is by asking questions that can only be answered with a yes or no.
- A variation is for the names of people, places or things to be written on labels and stuck on students' backs. Students have to move around the room asking yes/no questions to try to find out who or what they are.

- Each student brings in a picture or object connected with something or someone in the book. The other students must try to find out who or what the object is connected with.
- Write some sentences of dialogue on slips of paper, one sentence per slip. Put the slips of paper in a pile. Students take it in turns to take a piece of paper and read out the words. The first person who can say who said the words wins a point.
- From the book, find a number of pairs of statements and replies. Write each one on a slip of paper. Give each student a slip of paper and ask them to learn by heart what is on the paper so that they can say it easily. Take the slips of paper away. They must find their partner by going around the room and saying their sentence.
- On some pieces of card write the names of everyday objects and items which can be given as presents. Make another set of cards with names of the characters from the book. Give both sets of cards to groups of 3–4 students. Each student takes it in turns to pick an object card and a character card. They imagine they are going to give the object to the character. They must explain to the group why they are going to give this object. If the group thinks the explanation is acceptable, then the player wins a point.

Other games and board games are described in the *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Graded Readers* and the *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to FCE*.

5.5.6 Projects

Projects or longer pieces of work carried out in connection with the book can increase enjoyment.

Research

- Students find out as much as they can about things connected with the book, for example organizations, historical events, places, and themes. They can collect maps and photographs, find film posters and articles about the films, film reviews, etc – anything which will provide background information for the book. Nowadays, this is easily done through the Internet, but there are many other sources of information to be found at home and in libraries, such as encyclopaedias, etc. Most of the books on the *Bestsellers list* are particularly easy to research on the Internet because they have been made into films. Make a display of all the relevant information. Ask students to summarise what they have found out, orally or in writing.
- Students carry out research on the author. *Penguin Readers Factsheets* give some information but more can often be found on the Internet as well as in libraries. Ask students to present what they have found out, and say if they think the author's life is reflected in the book and how.

Script-writing

- Ask students to imagine they are going to make a film or a play from the book. Ask them to choose one chapter or incident – two or three pages – and mark the text (deleting or highlighting different parts) to



show where they will cut the text, and which scenes, characters and dialogue they would include. Ask them to re-write the text as a play or film script, adding details of the actors' actions. Students can also make a poster for the film showing the part of the story they have worked on.

- Choose a short scene from a video film of the book. Students work in small groups. Watching the clip without sound, each group devises their own dialogue. They will probably need to write this down, and have several rehearsals. When they are ready, they add their own soundtrack to the clip in a live performance to the class.

Surveys

- Where students are able to see the film as well as read the book, possible topics for a survey are: opinions of the film; opinions of the book; which was preferred, the book or the film; the most popular actor; favourite scenes.
- Other survey topics might include: issues raised by the book; what other people in the class might do if they found themselves in situations which occur in the book.
- Surveys can be conducted among different groups of people, for example: the class, year group, school, teachers, parents, siblings, other family members, etc.
- The survey questionnaire could be written in English or the mother tongue depending on the intended respondents and the students' own level of English.
- The findings should be written up and/or presented in statistical or graphic form. Or the students could make short oral presentations in class. Are there any clear patterns in the findings? For example, do boys have the same or different opinions from girls? Do opinions vary according to age?



6 Scheme of work for a Class Reader

Preparation	1 For students who are new to the idea, explain the purpose of extensive reading. 2 Find out what attitudes to reading are among your students and what kinds of things they like to read. (<i>Student's Worksheet 1</i>) 3 Decide which book you will choose. (See Section 5.1.) 4 Decide how the book can be broken up into sections (e.g. 5) for reading and class work. (See Section 5.2.)	
	Class work	Homework
Lesson 1	1 Give the book to the students. Explain how you will organize the reading and study of it. 2 Introduce the book and choose an activity to prepare for reading (see Section 5.3.1). 3 Play the tape of a short section of the first part of the book while students complete a worksheet on the listening (see <i>Penguin Readers Teachers Guide to Listening Skills</i>).	● Set the first reading section for homework. ● Students complete a summary entry (see Section 5.2) or do some exercises at home from the back of the book or the Factsheet.
Lesson 2	1 Check the students' section summaries and/or Factsheet or book questions. 2 Do an activity based on what the students have read – from Section 5.3.2 – and/or a communicative activity from the Factsheet. 3 Do an activity to prepare for the next section (see Section 5.3.1). 4 Read aloud to the students or listen to a tape of a short part of the next section.	● Set the next section of reading for homework. ● Students complete the summary entry or do some exercises at home from the back of the book or the Factsheet. ● You may also consider asking students to do some research on the background to the story.
Lesson 3	1 Check the students' section summaries and/or Factsheet or book questions. 2 Do a different type of activity based on what the students have read (see Section 5.3.2) or a communicative activity from the Factsheet. 3 Do some language practice (see Section 5.4). 4 Make predictions about the next section (see Section 5.3.1). 5 Read a little of the next part silently or with the tape.	● Set the next section of reading for homework. ● Students complete the summary entry or do some exercises at home from the back of the book or the Factsheet.
Lesson 4	1 Check the students' section summaries and/or Factsheet or book questions. 2 Students could report on their research findings. 3 Do a comprehension task which makes use of visuals. 4 Choose an activity from sections 5.5.1–5.5.3 which focuses on character (e.g. <i>Student's Worksheets 10, 11</i>) or events (<i>Student's Worksheet 9</i>). 5 Read a little of the next part silently or with the tape.	● Set the next section of reading for homework. ● Students complete the summary entry or do some exercises at home from the back of the book or the Factsheet. ● Optionally, research can continue.
Lesson 5	1 Check the students' section summaries and/or Factsheet or book questions. 2 Students may report on their research findings. 3 Do some more language-based work (see Section 5.4). 4 Have a class discussion on a theme from the book; or a comprehension task (Section 5.3.2); or a role play (Section 5.5.3). 5. Use <i>Student's Worksheet 7</i> to predict the end of the story.	● Set the final section of reading for homework. ● Students complete the summary entry or do some exercises at home from the back of the book or the Factsheet.
Lesson 6	1 Check the students' section summaries and/or Factsheet or book questions. 2 Choose an activity from 5.5.2 or a communicative task from the Factsheet. 3 Carry out an evaluation of the whole book (Section 5.5.4). 4 Finish with a game (Section 5.5.5).	● Set a writing task from the back of the book. ● Or choose a survey or script-writing project from Section 5.5.6.



Are you a bookworm?

What kind of reader are you? Do you read books for pleasure? If you're a real bookworm, you won't be able to stop reading Penguin's Bestsellers!

1 When you read, you are usually: (✓ tick all that apply)

- a sitting at a table or desk.
- b in bed before going to sleep.
- c in a comfortable chair at home in the evening or at weekends.
- d eating or travelling.

2 Which of these best describes the books that you read?

- a Your reading material includes anything and everything.
- b You read lots of fiction books but not much else.
- c You prefer to read information books or biographies.
- d You mainly read books and materials for work or study.
- e You don't read books much. Your reading material is mostly newspapers, magazines, comics, Internet articles, etc.

• If you chose a or b, go to question 3. If you chose c or d, go to question 4. If you chose e, go to question 6.

3 Which types of books do you like? (✓ tick as many as you want)

Books about:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| a love and romance | g biography |
| b unusual people | h events in history |
| c adventure | i funny books |
| d crime/thrillers | j sad books |
| e animals | k war |
| f children/growing up | l none of these |

4 How do you choose the books you read? (✓ tick all that apply)

- a You look at the front and back cover and/or read a few pages.
- b A friend tells you a book is good.
- c You saw the film.
- d The book is well known.
- e You choose books by an author you've read before.
- f You have read a review of the book.
- g You only read the books which your teacher says you must.

5 Do you ever recommend books to other people?

- a never b sometimes c often

6 How often do you read something for pleasure?

- a most days
- b a few times a week
- c a few times a month
- d a few times a year
- e never

7 How much do you like reading?

- a I only like reading in my own language.
- b I like reading in English and my own language.
- c I don't like reading in my own language or in English.

How to score:

Question 1 – Count each tick: a 1, b–d 2; Question 2 – a & b 3, c 2, d & e 1; Question 3 – Count each tick: a–k 1, l 0; Question 4 – Count each tick: a–f 1, g 0; Question 5 – a 0, b 1, c 2; Question 6 – a 4, b 3, c 2, d 1, e 0; Question 7 – a 2, b 4, c 0.

What does your score mean?

0–15 Book bee

You don't read a lot of books for pleasure, though you may read magazines, newspapers, Internet articles, etc for interest or fun. Or perhaps you have to study or work very hard? Why not try a book from the Penguin Bestsellers list? You might enjoy it and it might be the start of a new hobby! It'll certainly help your English.

16–23 Book bug

You read a fair amount for pleasure. But perhaps you prefer factual books to fiction? Or perhaps you only like one or two types of story books? You ought to try to read more and to increase the different types of things you read. You can do both of these things by choosing books from the Penguin Bestsellers list.

24+ Bookworm

You have certainly caught the reading habit. You are enthusiastic about books and you talk about what you've read. You especially enjoy different types of fiction, though you read other things too. If you haven't already done so, look at the list of Penguin Bestsellers. They're just the thing for you!



Reading record

Complete one of these records for each book that you read.

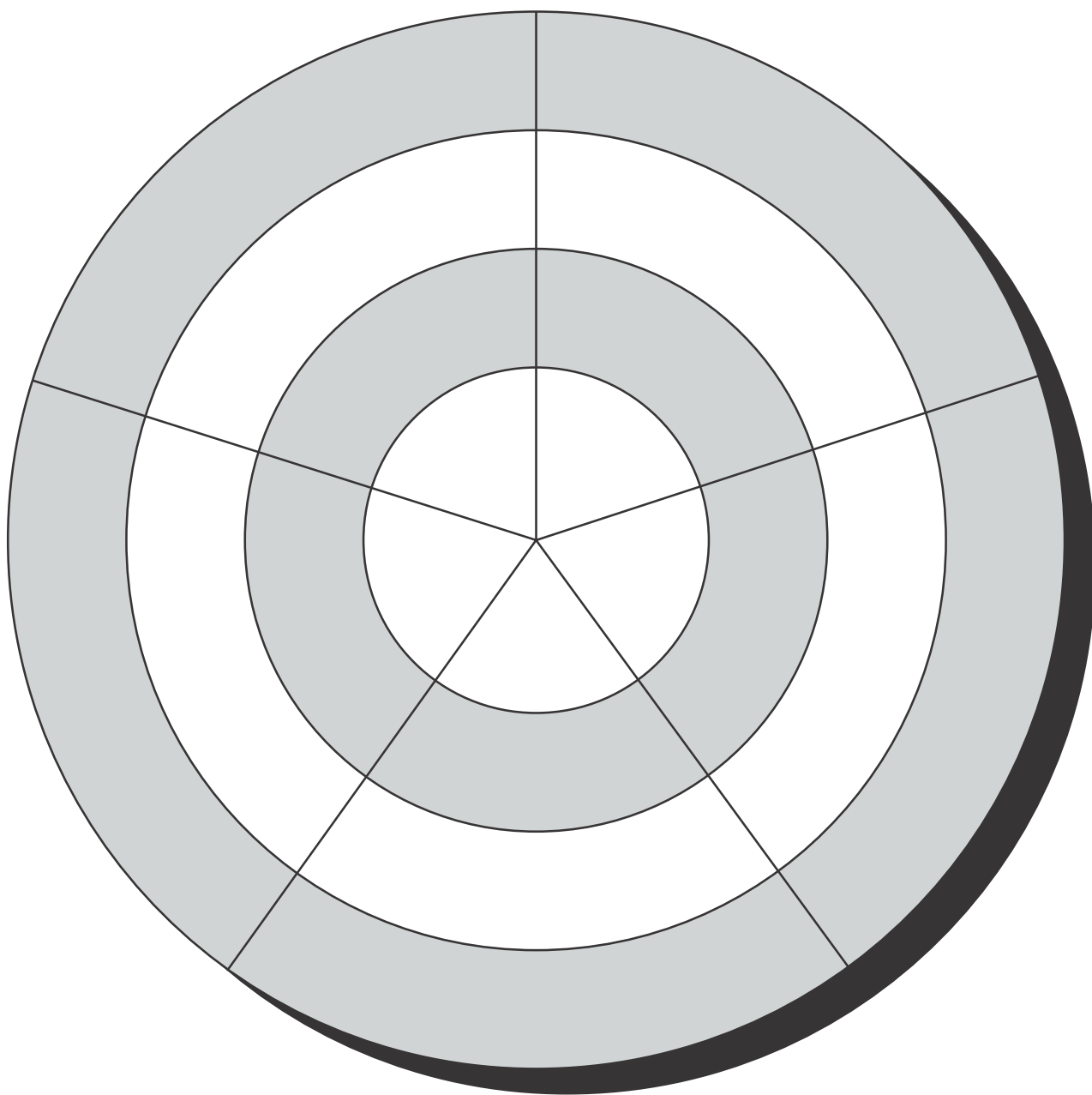
Name of book					
Level of book					
Date started					
Date stopped					
Did you finish the book?	Yes ☐ No ☐				
Quality rating	★★★★★ excellent	★★★★ good	★★★ average	★★ poor	★ terrible
Comments (interesting? enjoyable? sad? funny? exciting? good ending? realistic? best scenes? characters? etc)					
What activities or exercises did you do?					



Reading target

Can you read all the Penguin Readers in the top twenty list? Each time you finish a book, write the title in a section of the target. Start in the outside circle.

Date started:



Date finished:



Bestsellers survey

- A** Write down the titles of all the Penguin Readers bestsellers that you have read.
B Give each book an opinion rating: 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = average, 2 = poor, 1 = terrible

Title of book	Rating	Title of book	Rating
1		11	
2		12	
3		13	
4		14	
5		15	
6		16	
7		17	
8		18	
9		19	
10		20	

- C** Look at the lists for your class or group. Which books are mentioned the most often?
Write the names in the table below with the total number of times the books are mentioned and the average rating for each book.

Title of book	Number of mentions	Average rating
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

- D** Which is more important: the number of mentions or the rating? Write the list of your class or group's favourite bestsellers on a large sheet of paper and put it on the wall in your classroom or library.



What would you do in these situations? Choose some questions and discuss your ideas with another person. Which question do you find the most interesting? Look at the bottom of the page to find out which of the Penguin Readers bestsellers you can read to see what happened to someone else in this situation.

- 1** You see a murder taking place.
- 2** You find out that you, or someone in your family, are working for the Mafia.
- 3** Your parents don't want you to go to school or college. They want you to work for them, but you know you are very clever.
- 4** Your parents decide to adopt another child.
- 5** You find a map which shows where some treasure is buried.
- 6** The person you want to marry goes away. Then you find out that he/she has married someone else.
- 7** You are sitting on a bench, waiting for a bus. A man sits down next to you and starts to tell you his life story. The story is interesting, but the man is very strange.
- 8** You look the same as a rich and famous person. People often think you are this person.
- 9** Someone in your family has a terrible accident. He or she is in hospital in a coma.
- 10** You see someone hitting an animal very badly.
- 11** You find out that you have a brother or sister that you did not know about.
- 12** You are a member of your country's royal family. You realize that you have married the wrong person.
- 13** You are a famous actor. You are very rich and you have an easy life. But you are not happy.
- 14** Someone in your family is accused of a crime he or she has not committed.
- 15** You have just arrived in a country where you cannot speak the language. In your suitcase there is something which is not allowed in the country. The customs officials arrest you.
- 16** You are in an art gallery. The guard who is supposed to be watching a valuable painting seems to be asleep.
- 17** A friend of yours is a little crazy. She/He is always doing things that you think are dangerous or stupid.
- 18** At work, you discover that one of your colleagues has committed a very serious crime. No one knows about it but you.
- 19** You keep a diary. In it you write all your thoughts and opinions, especially about your friends and family. One day you find your friend reading your diary.
- 20** You discover that someone in your family who lived a long time ago played a very important part in the history of your country.

1 = *The Client*; 2 = *The Firm*; 3 = *Matilda*; 4 = *Wuthering Heights*; 5 = *Treasure Island*; 6 = *Four Weddings and a Funeral*; 7 = *Forrest Gump*; 8 = *The Prisoner of Zenda*; 9 = *The Horse Whisperer*; 10 = *White Fang*; 11 = *Rain Man*; 12 = *Princess Diana*; 13 = *Audrey Hepburn*; 14 = *The Railway Children*; 15 = *Amistad*; 16 = *Mr Bean*; 17 = *The Body*; 18 = *The Pelican Brief*; 19 = *The Diary of a Young Girl*; 20 = *Braveheart*



Arranging in the right order

- 1** On the lines below, write the words that your teacher will give you. Then write numbers in the boxes to show the correct order.

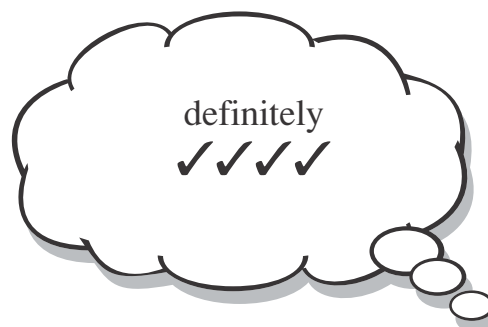
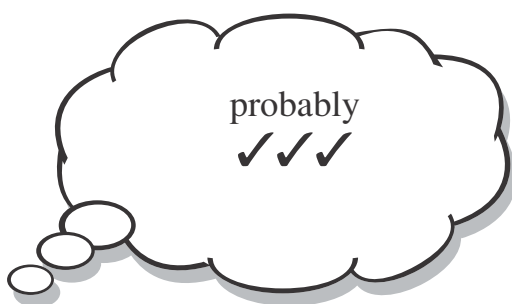
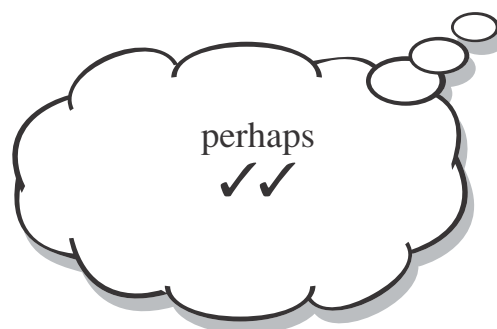
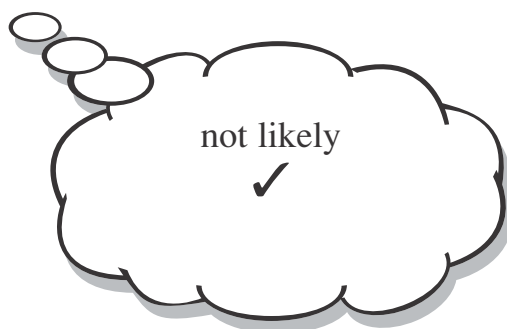
a		
b		
c		
d		
e		
f		
g		
h		
i		

- 2** Now work with another person. Compare your answers. Then write a short outline or summary of the story below.

Story outline



What does the future hold?



Look at this example (based on *The Client*):

	escape?	die?	happy ending?
Mark	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓✓

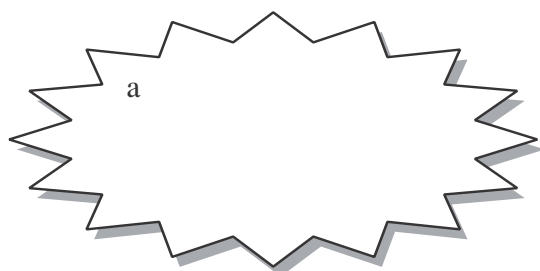
Choose some characters from your book and write their names in the left column of the table below. At the top of the table write some things that might happen. Add more rows or columns if you need to. Then fill in the boxes with ticks to show whether you think the things will happen or not.

Discuss your ideas with another person.

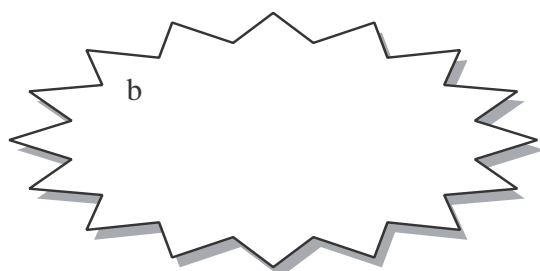


Matching

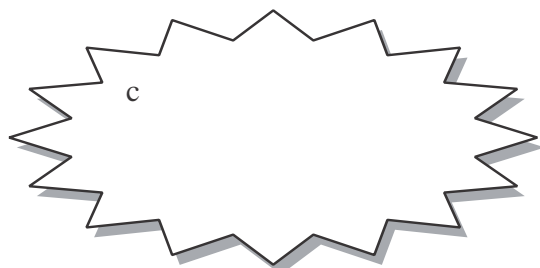
Your teacher will give you some words to write in the stars and boxes. Draw lines to match the stars with the boxes.



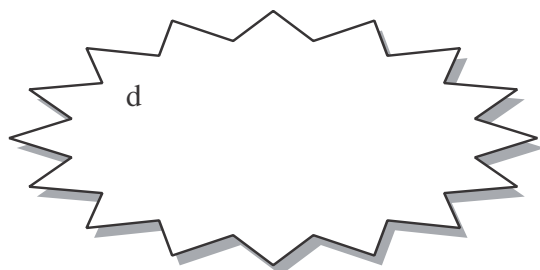
1



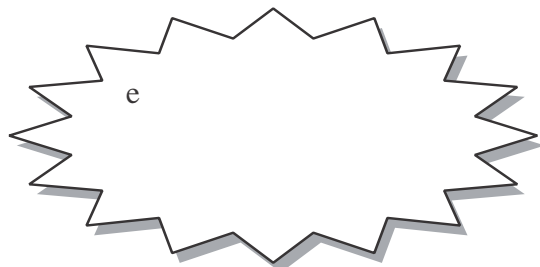
2



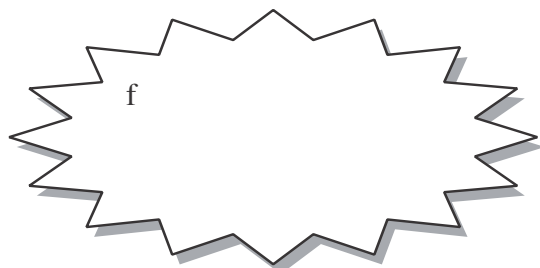
3



4



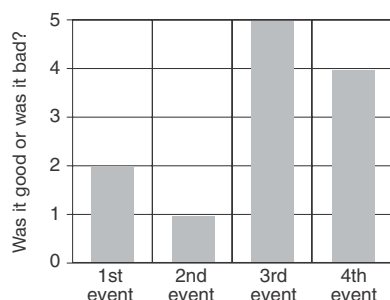
5



6



Was it a good thing or a bad thing?



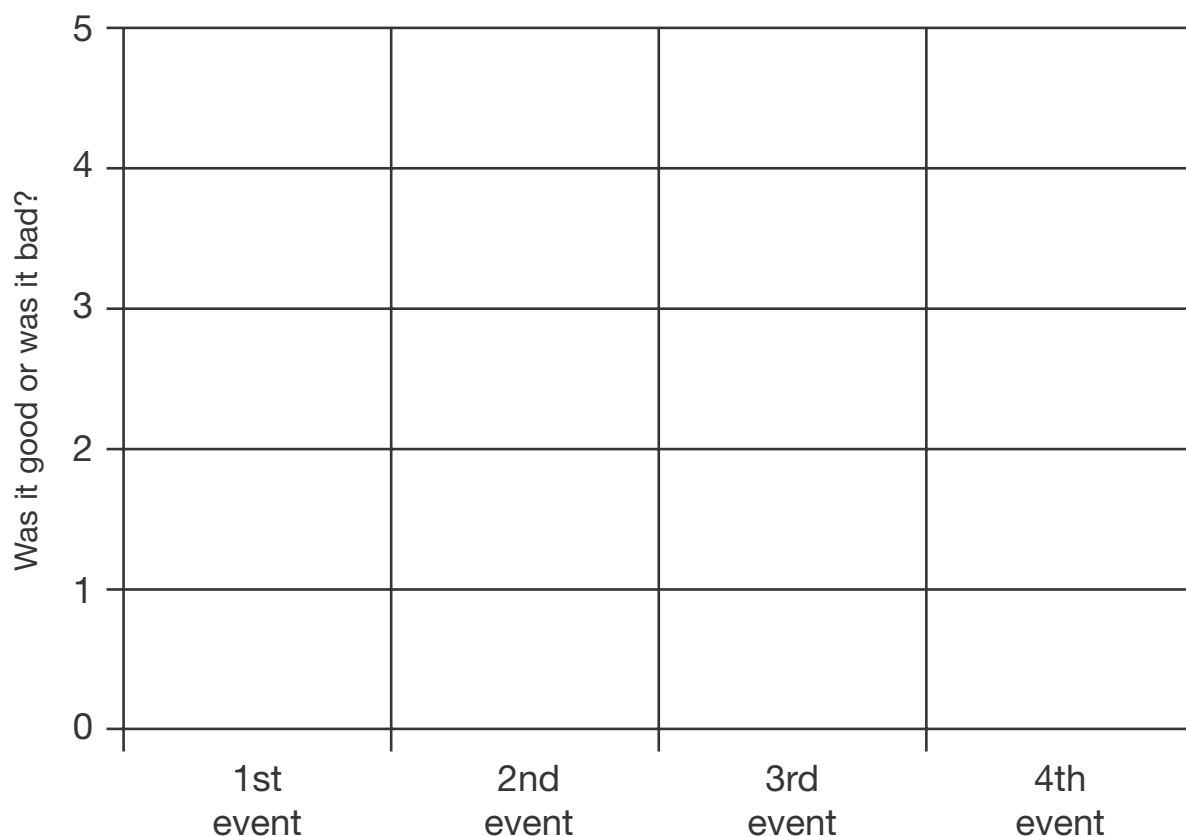
In this worksheet you can make a chart like this for the things that happen in your book.

First choose a character in the book you are reading. Then choose four things that happened to your character. Write the things here:

1st event
 2nd event
 3rd event
 4th event

Now decide how good or bad each event was for your character. Use this scale:

1 = very bad; 2 = quite bad; 3 = not bad or good; 4 = quite good; 5 = very good. Then for each event, make a column (like in the chart above) to show your opinion.



Name of character:

Talk about your chart with another person.



Interview a character

Choose a character from your book and write his/her name in the box. Then write five questions you would like to ask him/her below:

Questions for

Question 1

Answer

Question 2

Answer

Question 3

Answer

Question 4

Answer

Question 5

Answer

When you have finished, give your questions to another person who has read the book. This person should write the character's answers in the boxes above.



One person's view of another

What do the characters in your book really think of each other? Choose one person and write their name in box A. In boxes B and C write the names of two other people in the book. Imagine person A is answering questions 1–5 about person B and person C. What would person A say? Write your ideas in the empty boxes.

	A What really thinks of:	
	B	C
1 What are your true feelings about (person B/C)?		
2 What are his/her good or bad points?		
3 What is the best thing he/she did?		
4 What is the worst thing he/she did?		
5 What would make him/her happy?		



My book from A-Z

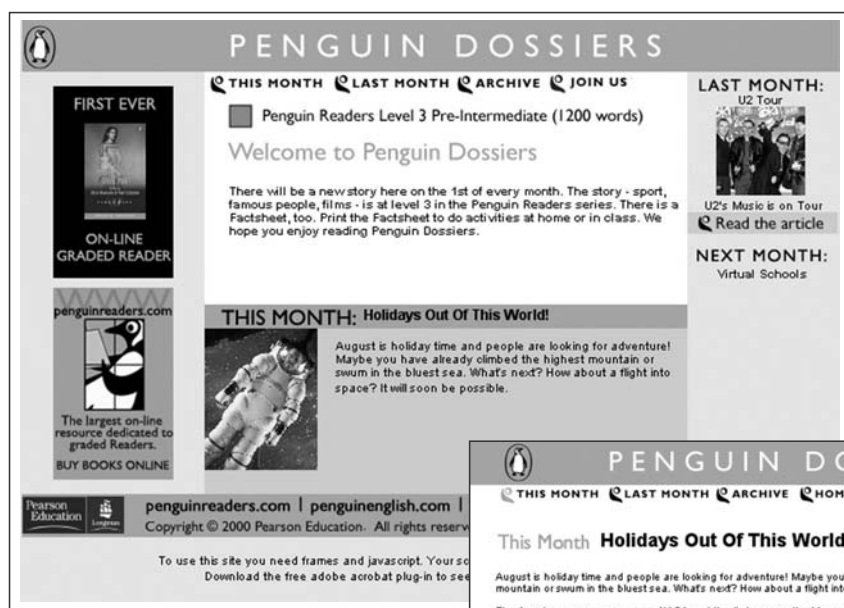
Choose a word for each letter of the alphabet and then write a sentence with the word in it. Choose words which:

- are in the book – for example, names or useful words.
- show your opinion of the book or of something or someone in it.
- are connected with the themes or ideas in the book.

Title of book:

A	N
B	O
C	P
D	Q
E	R
F	S
G	T
H	U
I	V
J	W
K	X
L	Y
M	Z





PENGUIN DOSSIERS

THIS MONTH LAST MONTH ARCHIVE JOIN US

Penguin Readers Level 3 Pre-Intermediate (1200 words)

Welcome to Penguin Dossiers

There will be a new story here on the 1st of every month. The story - sport, famous people, films - is at level 3 in the Penguin Readers series. There is a Factsheet, too. Print the Factsheet to do activities at home or in class. We hope you enjoy reading Penguin Dossiers.

LAST MONTH: U2 Tour
U2's Music is on Tour
Read the article

NEXT MONTH: Virtual Schools

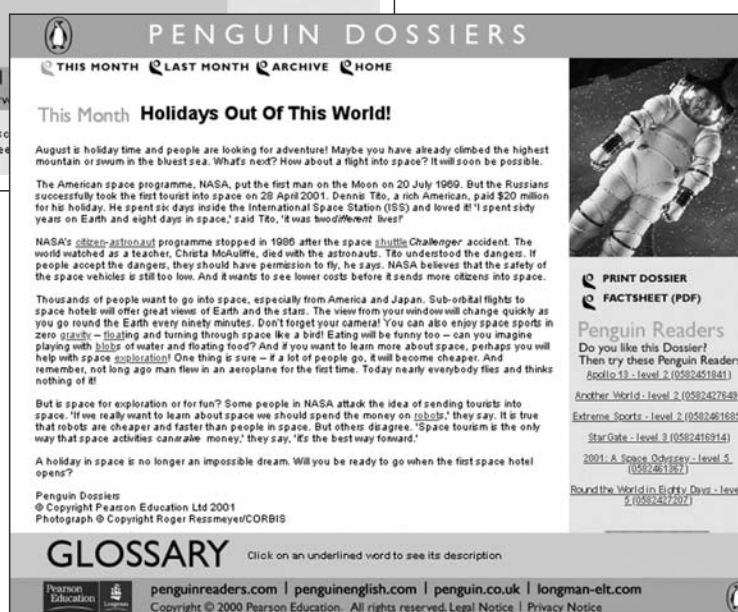
THIS MONTH: Holidays Out Of This World!

August is holiday time and people are looking for adventure! Maybe you have already climbed the highest mountain or swum in the bluest sea. What's next? How about a flight into space? It will soon be possible.

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PENGUIN DOSSIERS

THIS MONTH LAST MONTH ARCHIVE HOME

This Month Holidays Out Of This World!

August is holiday time and people are looking for adventure! Maybe you have already climbed the highest mountain or swum in the bluest sea. What's next? How about a flight into space? It will soon be possible.

The American space programme, NASA, put the first man on the Moon on 20 July 1969. But the Russians successfully took the first tourist into space on 28 April 2001. Dennis Tito, a rich American, paid \$20 million for his holiday. He spent six days inside the International Space Station (ISS) and loved it! 'I spent sixty years on Earth and eight days in space,' said Tito, 'it was two different lives!'

NASA's shuttle programme stopped in 1996 after the space shuttle Challenger accident. The world watched as a teacher, Christa McAuliffe, died with the astronaut. Tito understood the dangers: if people accept the dangers, they should have permission to fly, he says. NASA believes that the safety of the space vehicles is still too low. And it wants to see lower costs before it sends more citizens into space.

Thousands of people want to go into space, especially from America and Japan. Sub-orbital flights to space hotels will offer great views of Earth and the stars. The view from your window will change quickly as you go round the Earth every ninety minutes. Don't forget your camera! You can also enjoy space sports in zero gravity - floating and tumbling through space like a bird! Eating will be funny too - can you imagine playing with balls of water and floating food? And if you want to learn more about space, perhaps you will help with space exploration! One thing is sure - if a lot of people go, it will become cheaper. And remember, not long ago man flew in an aeroplane for the first time. Today nearly everybody flies and thinks nothing of it!

But is space for exploration or for fun? Some people in NASA attack the idea of sending tourists into space. 'If we really want to learn about space we should spend the money on robots,' they say. It is true that robots are cheaper and faster than people in space. But others disagree. 'Space tourism is the only way that space activities can make money,' they say. 'It's the best way forward.'

A holiday in space is no longer an impossible dream. Will you be ready to go when the first space hotel opens?

Penguin Dossiers
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GLOSSARY Click on an underlined word to see its description

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- a summary of the book
- interesting information about the book and author, including a section on the background and themes
- a glossary of new words
- a selection of lively supplementary activities for use with the Reader in class

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Penguin Readers

Teacher's Guide

to Using Bestsellers

The *Penguin Readers Teacher's Guide to Using Bestsellers* offers teachers practical advice on how to get the most from the top 20 bestselling Penguin Readers both in the classroom and in the school library. The guide offers general advice on how to exploit the wealth of material available in the Readers and specific suggestions for exploiting the 20 titles in the list.

It contains 12 photocopiable Student's Worksheets which can be used with these and other Readers in the Penguin series.

This Guide describes:

- the top 20 bestselling Penguin Readers and what they are about
- why these books are so popular
- how to make use of the titles on the list as class Readers and in a library system
- how to use graded Readers for language practice as well as extensive reading
- how to use graded Readers as a basis for project work
- a possible scheme of work for six lessons built around a Penguin Reader

The Student's Worksheet activities contain the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ● Are you a bookworm? | ● Matching |
| ● Reading record | ● Was it a good thing or a bad thing? |
| ● Reading target | ● Interview a character |
| ● Bestsellers survey | ● One person's view of another |
| ● What would you do if...? | ● My book from A-Z |
| ● Arranging in the right order | |
| ● What does the future hold? | |

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