

The Mystery of the Stolen FA Cup Medal

Teachers Notes and Key

The main purpose of the pre-reading activities is to allow the student - the reader - to engage creatively with the text. They are being asked to predict, analyse and assess elements of the story before they read it. This will allow them to interact more effectively with the text they read: they become part of the context.

The story is divided into seven short parts, though these parts are not of equal length. It is possible to do the whole story in one session, but the teacher might consider the value of handing out parts sequentially, so the story is told in episodes. Whether the reading activity is done in one session or spread over a few, **do not** give the text of each part to the students before they have worked on the pre-reading activities.

Part One

This activity requires students to assess the kind of life the main character of the story, David, leads. There will be different cultural interpretations, of course, but the facts are these: David is left alone by his mother who goes to work (no mention of a father or siblings) and his mother obviously likes to keep herself to herself (no talking to strangers - not even the next door neighbour, it seems). David seems to be very obedient and follow his mother's rules, even when she is not there to supervise him.

The questions asked help to build a picture of David in the student's mind. Although the answer to the first question is given in the previously given quotes (he '*always listened to football in the evenings*') the rest are open to speculation and imagination, thus there are no correct answers.

1. He was listening to football (**ask:** *why the radio and not the television?*)
2. Speculation - we know he likes football, so perhaps some football related matter?
3. Speculation - students are required to imagine the kind of noises that would be heard at night. (**ask:** *is the setting urban or rural?*)
4. Speculation - students would have to decide what noises might be heard from a neighbour, especially an old man. (**ask:** *is David living in a house or a flat? How sound proof are the walls etc?*)
5. Speculation - the word 'posh' (*superior quality; elegant or stylishly luxurious*) will need to be taught. (**ask:** *does that fit into the kind of neighbourhood the students have so far created?*)

Pre-teach: United (*ref to football team, without being specific*)
housing estate (*usually public housing, often built cheaply*)
posh (*elegant or stylishly luxurious*)

Now hand out part one of the story. Do **not** hand out any more of the story at this stage.

Part Two

1. 'keepy-uppies' is football slang for the ability to keep a football in the air, without touching the ground, using feet, knees and head only. The count - 347 - means he hit the ball with feet, head or knees 347 times before the ball hit the ground. (i.e. you **keep** the ball **up** in the air.)
2. Speculation. Remind students that David has had no contact with the neighbours. (**ask**: *will he lose the ball if it goes into the next garden?*)

Pre-teach:

weighted (*as verb: in this context, a ball that has been expertly controlled*)

lofted (*in this context, a ball that has been kicked in a high arc*)

Dos and Don'ts

Mum doesn't want David to talk to stranger.

Don't talk to strangers.

Mum wants David to go to bed at 9.30

Do go to bed at 9.30

What else is on David's list of 'dos and don'ts'?

Some ideas

Get students to make a longer list as imperatives. They can use ideas from the story (do turn the lights off at 10.30) and can invent their own. In addition, ask the students to invert the imperative, so dos become don'ts and vice versa (eg. Do go to bed at 9.30 don't go to bed after 9.30)

Now hand out Part two of the text.

Part Three

(**ask**: *are the student predictions about the kind of house David and his mum live in (see Part One) borne out by reading the text so far?*)

- Speculation, but a good guess would be football!
- Speculation, could be anywhere. (**ask**: *what is the 'posh' connection?*)
- Speculation, but the fact that the person is climbing in rather than using the door/gate limits the possibilities. (**ask**: *why is the person climbing over the wall?*)
- Speculation - what do the students think he should have done? (**ask**: *what would his mother say?*). But refer students to the next question - does this answer this one too?

Pre-teach:

barely (*hardly*)

gazed (*looked intensely*)

burgling (*robbing a house*)

broken into/in (*entering building illegally*)

Crimestoppers (*voluntary organisation to help ordinary people combat crime; not the police*)

Now hand out the text for Part Three

Part Four

(**ask:** refer to Part Three text: 'Sometimes if people saw a crime and told the police, bad things would happen to them.' What bad things? What does this tell us about the attitude to the police by local people?)

1. There should be a fairly logical connection here, that the medal in the headline was stolen from the neighbour's house. However, students may have other ideas - remember that there is no such thing as a wrong answer (though there will be degrees of probability and improbability)
2. Students will probably speculate that David has made the connection between headline and what he saw happening in his neighbour's garden. His mother seems to have a policy of non-involvement. (**ask:** how will David feel if his mum won't let him help?)

Pre-teach:

thief (*a person who steals from other people, without using violence*)

Now hand out the text for Part Four

Part Five

1. The question here, really, is what do the students remember? The text refers to 'The man in the baseball cap reacted by running in one direction, putting his hands against the wall, then quickly running the other way' (**ask:** what was the man doing with his hands against the wall? why did he run off in another direction?)
2. Explain the word 'grounded' (*not allowed out of the house*). Speculation. (**ask:** what is mum's attitude to contacting strangers?)

Pre-teach:

Prize possessions (*the things that someone values most*)

Now hand out the text for Part Five

Part Six

The title of Part Six is a quote from one of mum's rules. The emphasis on 'talk' implies that perhaps there is another way to communicate, without talking. In other words, David might be able to find a way to obey the letter of mum's rule, even if he doesn't keep to the spirit of it! (**ask:** what ways can students think of to communicate with a neighbour without talking?)

Pre-teach:

shift (*in this context, a period of work*)

to and fro (*from one place to another and back again*)

Now hand out the text for Part Six

Part Seven (the final part)

(ask: (with reference to part six) what did David write on the paper tied to the ball? What did the neighbour do with the information?)

Note: bacon sandwiches ('bacon butties') are a popular breakfast for some families in Britain.

The students are being asked to speculate about the surprise. If they need guidance, steer them towards cause and effect (think about Part Six - what might the result be?). *(ask: is the surprise a kind of reward? What might it be?)*

Pre-teach

kicking off (*the starting time of a football match; Nn kick off*)

Now hand out the text of the final part of the story.

After Reading

1. Once the whole story has been read, the following activity can be used to summarise the complete story. The correct chronological sequence is:

A posh car comes to pick up the old man next door
David accidentally kicks the ball over the fence into the neighbour's garden
David sees a stranger in the next door neighbour's garden
The sound of a police siren makes the man in the baseball cap run away
There is a report in the local newspaper about a football medal being stolen
David's mum phones Crimestoppers
David remembers the man hiding something in the wall
David finds a way of 'talking' to the neighbour without speaking
They have bacon sandwiches for breakfast

Artistic students might be encouraged to illustrate the above moments in the story and create a strip cartoon. Alternatively, the same sequence can be used for students to devise their own mini dramas and act them out in front of the class.

There are two specific Saturdays mentioned: the one where the old man's house gets robbed and the one, a week later, when David kicks the ball with the message over the fence.

The surprise happens on the following day, i.e. a Sunday.

2. This can be given as a group activity - story telling - or as a homework written assignment. The key to the story would be whether or not David and the 'hero' next door forge a relationship which lasts longer than one afternoon at the stadium.

3. a. 'Without revealing your identity' - reporting crime is done anonymously
- b. No. It is 'an independent charity'
- c. It doesn't say you do and the assumption from this page is that it costs only the price of the phone call (note: 0800 numbers can be expensive in the UK).
- d. There is a drop down menu and though London is the one mentioned, the existence of a menu implies that more than London is served by Crimewatchers.
- e. Students can do an internet check for similar organisations in their country. Often there is a TV link to these organisations. (*ask: are these organisations a good idea?*)