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TRAVELLING

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Запропонований методичний посібник для самостійного опрацювання допоможе студентам краще розуміти оригінальний художній твір і на його основі розвивати власні практичні мовні уміння і навички, культуру мовлення, навчитися сприймати літературний твір в його культурологічному і часовому контексті.

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ПЕРЕДМОВА

Методичний посібник містить текстовий матеріал з системою завдань у супроводі для студентів 2-го курсу, орієнтований на самостійне опрацювання лексичного матеріалу з теми «Travelling».

Мета методичного посібника - допомогти студентам краще розуміти оригінальний художній твір і на його основі розвивати власні практичні мовні уміння і навички, культуру мовлення, навчитися сприймати літературний твір в його культурологічному і часовому контексті.

Методичний посібник пропонує студентам п’ять розділів. Розділи мають визначену структуру, основними компонентами якої є довідковий матеріал про автора (about the author), передтекстові завдання (pre-reading activities), що націлюють читача на проблематику оповідання і розвивають прогностичні навички; уривок або коротке оповідання (the extract) відомого британського або американського письменника; післятекстові завдання (post-reading activities), які містять блок питань для перевірки розуміння прочитаного та завдання для обговорення змісту, проблематики, персонажів і літературних особливостей оповідань. Наприкінці посібника додатково подається тлумачний словник (Glossary) до кожного оповідання окремо.

Лексичні вправи і завдання є різними за своїм рівнем і спрямованістю. Студенти заохочуються до активної роботи з тлумачним словником. Виконання лексичних вправ готує студентів до більш адекватно у лексичному відношенні висловлювання з питань і проблем, що пропонуються у блоці для обговорення оповідань або уривків.

Сподіваємося, що відібрані оповідання принесуть вам задоволення і дадуть імпульс для подальшого ознайомлення з британською та американською літературою.

About the author

Graham Greene was born in 1904 in Hertfordshire in England, the fourth of six children in an influential wealthy family. As a boy, Graham attended Berkhamsted School where his father was headmaster. Bullied at school, the young writer was so unhappy that he 'self-harmed' -cutting himself- and even tried to kill himself several times. Aged 15, he was sent to a psychoanalyst in London for six months, to help him overcome his difficulties.

When he left school, Greene went to Oxford University to study modern history. In his autobiography, A Sort *of Life,* Greene remembers his days at university as a time of debt, drink and political debate -at one point, he joined the Communist party. Whilst at university he published various poems and stories and wrote his first novel, *Antony Sant.* He was also editor of the *Oxford Outlook.* When he left university, Greene became a journalist, working first for a local paper in Nottingham, and then as sub-editor for *The Times.* While Greene was in Nottingham, he met and fell in love with a Catholic woman, Vivien Dayrell-Browning, who had written to him about some errors in his writing about Catholicism. In 1926, Greene became a Catholic himself. The following year, he and Vivien were married. The couple had two children - Lucy Caroline and Francis.

Graham Greene travelled widely throughout his life and his books, both fiction and non-fiction, are set in a wide range of countries. He admitted that he actively looked for adventure in areas of conflict. In 1935 he made a journey across Liberia in Africa which he describes in *Journey without Maps.* In 1938 he was commissioned to visit Mexico in order to report on the religious persecution there. As a result, he wrote *The Lawless Roads* and later, his novel *The Power and the Glory,* which is about a persecuted priest in Mexico. Greene also reported on other conflicts and difficult political situations - his work took him to Vietnam during the Indochina War, Kenya during the Mau Mau outbreak and Poland during Stalin's rule.

In 1940, Greene became editor of The Spectator, a weekly magazine focused on political and current events. I le also worked for the Foreign Office which sent him to Siena Leone in 1941-43. One of his major post-war novels, The Heart *of the Mailer,* is set in West Africa.

Greene also wrote screenplays, including those for many of his own books. His books were made into popular films, including Brighton Rock (1938), *The End of the Affair* (1951), *The* Honorary Consul (1973), and *The Human Factor* (1978). His most famous film is The *Third Man,* for which he wrote the screenplay. Set in Vienna after the Second World War, it has many of the characteristics of Greene's writing: a background of conflict involving different countries, alienated characters, intrigue and preoccupation with moral choices.

Greene was a friend of the British spy Kim Philby and some people have suggested that Greene himself may also have been involved in espionage - trying to find out military or political secrets about African countries during his time there, working for the British government. He joked about his Intelligence[1] activities which he said were trivial. A reflection of his attitude can be seen in *Our Man in Havana* (1958), in which the hero pretends that drawings of a vacuum cleaner are of a deadly secret weapon.

In 1948, Graham and Vivien separated. Although Greene had relationships with other women in his life after this, he remained married to Vivien for the rest of his life.

A colourful and controversial character, Graham Greene always refused to define himself politically. Although his books sometimes reflect anti-Americanism (such as The *Quiet American,* 1955), and he had some sympathy for left-wing regimes, he always denied having any definite political sympathies. Above all, he was a supporter of oppressed people everywhere and a clear-eyed observer of human behaviour in extreme circumstances.

In his later years, Greene lived in Antibes, in the south of France, and continued to write prolifically. In 1986, he was given the British honorary award the Order of Merit. In 1990, he moved to Switzerland with his companion Yvonne Cloetta. He died in Vevey, Switzerland, in 1991.

1 a government organization that collects information about the secret plans and activities of a foreign government, enemy etc; information collected about the secret plans and activities of a foreign government, enemy etc.

About the extract

The Lawless Roads was published in 1939. This excerpt is from Chapter 7 titled 'Into Chiapas'. In 1938, Greene was commissioned to visit Mexico to report on the religious persecution there. As a result, he wrote *The Lawless Roads* and later his novel *The Power and the Glory* (1940).

Summary

It may help you to know something about what happens in the extract before you read it. This summary does not tell you every detail but should help you understand the general meaning.

After an uncomfortable night in the tiny town of Salto, Greene sets oil early in the morning with his guide. They travel by mule, an animal like a small horse used for carrying heavy loads. The route takes them across a hare, exposed plateau- a long stretch of flat, high land. There is very little shade and only a few patches of forest. It is very hot and Greene's cheap helmet (or protective hat) is useless against the heat. Riding the mule is extremely uncomfortable. After six hours, they reach a couple of huts. Greene wants to stay the night. But after half an hour's rest, the guide, who has never been to Palenque and only knows the general direction, wants to continue. Greene does not remember very much about the rest of the journey but it seems to go on forever. His head and body ache and his mind is empty. The ways eventually divide and the guide tells Greene that one way leads to the German *finca* and the other to Palenque. Greene doesn't believe the *finca* exists so he chooses the path to Palenque. Night falls and the journey continues. Eventually, they see an abandoned cemetery and a big ruined church. They have arrived in Palenque. They are very thirsty and try to quench their thirst with warm beer and tequila. They sleep in the local schoolmaster's hut, beside the ruined church. Greene, who has a fever, has a very uncomfortable night.

The next morning, still sick from the journey, Greene has to get back on his mule rot two and a half hours in order to reach the ruins. After looking at one or two temples he can't go on. He struggles to a hut without walls and lies down. He isn't certain what happens next. The guide and the Indian who guards the ruins are worried about him. They take him to another hut and give him coffee. Greene only wants to sleep but the guide pushes him back onto the mule and back to Palenque. There, Greene falls off the mule and goes to the schoolmaster's hut where he lies down. He drinks and drinks but is unable to eat. I le feels that 'it was too hot for life to go on'.

Pre-reading activities

Key vocabulary

Riding the mule

1. Look at the words below which are connected with Greene's description of riding the mule. How many are verbs?

clip clop the sound that a horse's hooves make when it is walking
muzzle the nose and mouth of an animal such as a dog or horse
stirrup a metal object that supports your foot when you ride a horse
trot if a horse trots, it moves more quickly than when walking but it does not run
whinny the high sound that a horse makes through its nose and mouth
canter when a horse travels fairly fast but not as fast as it can go
heave to move up and down with large, regular movements
stable a building where horses or farm animals are kept
strain to try very hard to do something
stiffen to become stiff and difficult to move
amble to walk in a slow, relaxed way
wrench to pull or twist something or someone suddenly and violently
dismount to get off something such as a horse or bicycle
saddle a leather seat that you put on a horse's back when you ride it

2. Complete these sentences with an appropriate form of the words in exercise 1.

1. Suddenly, he.....the phone out of her hands.
2. We.....to see the boat but it was too far away.
3. As the dog swam across the lake, only its.....was visible above the water.
4. I could hear the..... of the horses' hooves as they moved down the street, then an angry-sounding.....from one of them who got left behind, as though he was calling to the others to wait.
5. As you get older, your legs tend to..... .
6. She rode up to the gate and slowly.....,fed the horse and gave him some water, before putting him into the.....for the night.
7. As the sea continued to ..... , everyone on the boat began to feel sick.

8. I nearly fell off the horse a few times - the ..... was loose, and 1 couldn't reach the.....with my feet.
9. The man.....along the road; he was in no hurry.
10. The horse began to go faster: it began ..... , then..... along the path.

Describing the effects of the heat

Greene finds the long, hot journey on the mule very difficult, and becomes tired, ill and miserable.

3 Match the words in the list (1-15) with the correct definitions (a-o).

1	**collapse**	a) a strange effect in a desert or at sea in which you see something that is not really there
2	**cramp**	b) to walk in an uncontrolled way as if you are going to fall over
3	**exertion**	c) feeling as if you have no energy and no interest in anything
4	**faint**	d) to produce liquid on the surface of your skin when you are hot, nervous or ill
5	**flop**	e) the feeling that you are going to vomit
6	**fever**	f) sudden severe pain in a tired muscle that suddenly becomes very tight
7	**grumble**	g) to suddenly fall down and become very ill or unconscious
8	**listless**	h) to move or hang in a loose, heavy and uncontrolled way
9	**nausea**	i) to sleep for a short time, especially during the day
10	**stagger**	j) a medical condition in which the temperature of your body is very high and you feel ill
11	**sunstroke**	k) to suddenly become unconscious for a time, and usually fall to the ground
12	**sweat**	l) when food comes up through your stomach and out through your mouth because you are ill
13	**vomit**	m) a dangerous physical condition that results when your body temperature gets too hot, when you have been working for too long in the sun
14	**doze**	n) great physical or mental effort
15	**mirage**	o) to complain, especially continuously and about unimportant things

4. Put the words in the list in exercise 3 into three categories: nouns, verbs or adjectives.

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives

The ruins at Palenque

Despite the fact that he is tired, ill and not very interested in the ruins, Greene gives a fine description of them and their setting.

5. Look at the phrases (a-j). Which phrases describe the setting and which describe the ruins?

a) a great circular plateau halfway up the mountainside
b) with the jungle falling precipitously below into the plain and rising straight up behind
c) great mounds of rubble
d) low one-storey ruins of grey rock
e) they look more vegetable than mineral
f) no shade anywhere
g) steep loose slopes
h) dark cool little rooms like lavatories
i) old wrinkled faces
j) nothing but trees, going on and on out of sight

6. Match words from the phrases in exercise 5 with the descriptions below. The first one has been done as an example.

1 rounded hill shapes - *mounds*
2(buildings) of one level
3 an area of flat land on a hill or mountain
4 land that is not flat
5 an area protected from the sun
6 the stones that are left after a building has fallen down
7 another word for toilets

8 marked by time or old age
9 an area of thick trees and plants

As you read the extract, ask yourself:

a) What gives Greene the strength to continue his journey?
b) How would you have left in Greene's situation?
c) Does Greene paint a realistic picture or does he exaggerate?
d) In what ways is travel different to ordinary everyday life?

The Lawless Roads

by Graham Greene

The Long Ride

I left my suitcase behind, and because it seemed **absurd** to think of rain I foolishly **abandoned** my cape and took only the net, a **hammock,** and a **rucksack.**

At a quarter past four I got up and dressed by the light of my electric torch, folded up the huge tentlike mosquito net[2]. Everybody in Salto[3] was asleep but my guide - a dark, dapper young man of some education who had come from Las Casas by way of Yajalon - and his father, who had prepared us coffee and biscuits in his home. It was the cool and quiet beginning of one of the worst days I have ever spent. Only the first few hours of that ride were to provide any pleasure - riding out of Salto in the dark with one sleepy **mongrel** raising its muzzle at the clip clop of the mules, the **ferry** across the river in the earliest light, the two mules swimming beside the canoe, with just their muzzles and their eyes above the water like a pair of **alligator** heads, and then the long banana plantations on the other bank, the fruit plucked[1] as we rode tasting tart and delicious in the open air at dawn.

The trouble was, the way to Palenque lay across a bare exposed plateau, broken only occasionally by patches of forest and shade, and by nine in the morning the sun was blindingly up. By ten my cheap **helmet** bought in Veracruz for a few pesos[5] was just the damp hot cardboard it had pretended not to be. I had not ridden a horse for ten years; I had never ridden a mule before. Its trot, I imagine, is something like a camel's: its whole back heaves and strains. There is no **rhythm** you can catch by rising in the stirrups; you must just surrender yourself to the merciless **uneven** bump[6]. The strain on the **spine to** the **novice is appalling:** the neck stiffens with it, the head aches as if it had been struck by sun. And all the time the nerves are worn by the **stubbornness** of the brute[7]; the trot degenerates into a walk, the walk into an amble, unless you **beat** the mule continually. *"Mula. Mula. Mula. Echa, mula*[8]," the dreary lament goes on.

And all the time Palenque shifted like a mirage; my guide had never been there himself: all he could do on the wide plain was to keep a tough[9] direction. Ten hours away the storekeeper had said, and after four hours I thought I could manage that quite easily, but when we stopped at an Indian's hut about eleven in the morning (six hours from Salto) and heard them talk as if it were now not quite halfway, my heart sank. A couple of wattle[10] huts like those of West African natives, chickens and **turkeys tumbling** across the dusty floor, a pack of mongrels

and a few cows listless in the heat under some thorny trees - it was better than nothing on that baked plateau, and I wished later we had stayed the night. They swung a string hammock up and I dismounted with immense difficulty. Six hours had stiffened me. They gave us tortillas - the flat, dry pancake with which you eat all food in the Mexican country - and an egg each in a tin mug, and coffee, delicious coffee. We rested half an hour and then went on. Six hours more, I said, with what I hoped was cheerfulness to my guide, but he scouted[11] the notion. Six hours - oh, no, perhaps eight. Those people didn't know a thing.

I can remember **practically** nothing of that ride now until its close; 1 remember being afraid of sunstroke my head ached so -1 would raise my hat for coolness, and then lower it from fear; I remember talking to my guide of the cantinas[12] there would be in Palenque and how much beer and tequila[13] we would drink. I remember that guide getting smaller and smaller in the distance and flogging at my mule *("Mula. Mula. Echa, mula")* until I **overtook** him at a trot that wrenched the backbone. I remember that we passed a man with the mails[14] travelling on a pony at a smart canter and be said he'd left Palenque in the night. And then somewhere on that immense rolling plain, in a **spot** where the grass grew long, the mule suddenly lay down under me. The guide was a long way off; I felt I could never get up on that mule again; I sat on the grass and tried to be sick and wanted to cry. The guide rode back and waited patiently for me to remount, but I didn't think it was possible - my body was too stiff. There was a small coppice[15] of trees, some monkeys moved **inquisitively,** and the mule got on its feet again and began to eat.

Can't we stay the night somewhere, I said, in some hut, and go on tomorrow? But the guide said there wasn't a single hut between here and Palenque. It was two o'clock in the afternoon; we had been riding for nine hours, with half an hour's break; Palenque was, he said, about five hours away. Couldn't we string our hammocks up to the trees and sleep here? But he had no hammock and besides, there was no food, no drink, and lots of mosquitoes, perhaps a **leopard. I** think he meant a leopard - they call them **tigers** in Chiapas - and I remember how Victorian Dr Fitzpatrick[16] bad met one on his ride across these mountains, standing across his path. It is rather terrifying to believe you cannot go on, and yet to have no choice ...

I got back into the saddle, thanking Cod for the big Mexican pommel[11] which you can **cling** to with both hands when all else fails, and again the ride **laded** into **obscurity** — **I** didn't talk so much now about cantina, I grumbled to myself in undertones[18] that I *couldn't* make it, and I began to hate the dapperness of my guide, his rather caddish[19]white riding-breeches[20] - it was nothing to him, the ride; he rode just as he would sit in a chair. And then the mule lay down again; it

lay down in the end four times before we saw, somewhere about five o'clock when the sun was low, a little smoke **drifting** over the **ridge** of the down[21]. "Palenque," my guide said. I didn't believe him, and that was lucky, because it wasn't Palenque, only a prairie[22] fire we had to ride around, the mules uneasy in the smoke. And then we came into a patch of forest and the ways divided; one way, the guide said - on I don't know whose authority[23], for he had never been here before - led to the German *finca*[24], the other to Palenque. Which were we to take? I chose Palenque: it was nearer and the **lodging** more certain, above all the drink. I didn't really believe in the German and his lovely daughter, and when after we'd been going a quarter of an hour we just came out on the same path, I believed less than ever in them. As the sun sank, the flies emerged more numerous than ever; they didn't bother to attack me; great fat droning[25] creatures, they sailed by and sank like dirigibles[26] on to the mule's neck, grappled fast[27], and sucked until a little stream of blood flowed down. I tried to **dislodge** them with my stick, but they simply shifted their ground. The smell of blood and mule was sickening. One became at last a kind of **automaton, a bundle** of **flesh** and bone without a brain. And then a little party of riders came out of a belt of forest in the last light and bore[28] news - Palenque was only half an hour distant. The rest of the way was in darkness, the darkness of the forest and then the darkness of night as well. That was how we began and ended. The stars were up when we came out of the forest, and there at the head of a long park like slope of grass was a poor abandoned cemetery, crosses **rotting** at an angle and lying in the long grass behind a broken wall, and at the foot of the slope lights moved obscurely up towards a collection of round mud huts thatched[29] with banana leaves as poor as anything I ever saw in West Africa. We rode through the huts and came into a long wide street of bigger huts - square ones these, raised a foot from the ground to avoid **ants**, some of them roofed with tin - and at the head of the street on a little hill a big plain ruined church.

My guide apparently had learned where we could get food, if not lodging - a woman's hut where the school teacher lived, and while food was prepared we staggered out on legs as stiff as stilts[30] to find the drink we had promised ourselves all the hot day. But Palenque wasn't Salto; the Salto cantina loomed in memory with the luxury of an American bar. In the store near the church they had three bottles of beer only - warm, **gassy**, unsatisfying **stuff**. And afterwards we drank a glass each of very new and raw tequila; it hardly touched our thirst. At the other end of the village was the only other store. We made our way there by the light of electric torches, to find they sold no beer at all: all we could get was mineral water coloured pink and flavoured with some sweet chemical. We had a bottle each and I took a bottle away with me to wash down my quinine[31]. Otherwise we had to try and satisfy our thirst with coffee - endlessly; a good drink, hut had for the nerves.

The school teacher was a plump complacent young half-caste[32] with a **patronising** and clerical manner" and a soft boneless hand: that was what the village had gained in place of a priest. His assistant was of a different type: **alert**, interested in his job for its own sake and not for the **prestige** it gave him, good with children, I feel sure. After we had eaten, he led us up the street to his own room, where we were to sleep. It was a small room in a tin-roofed hut beside the ruined church, which they used now as a school. He insisted that I should take his bed, my guide took my hammock, and our host tied up another for himself from the heavy **beams.**

I think the hut had once been a stable; now it seemed to be divided by thin **partitions** into three. In one division we slept, in another small children cried all night, and behind my head, in the third, I could hear the slow movements and the regular coughing of cows. I slept very badly in my clothes – I had cramps in my feet and a little fever from the sun. Somewhere around midnight there was the sound of a horse outside and a **fist** beat on the big-**bolted barn** door. Nobody moved until a voice called, *"Conamistad"* (with friendship), and then the stranger was let in. I put on my electric torch and he moved heavily round the little room tying up a hammock; then he took off his revolver holster[34] and lay down, and again I tried to sleep. It seemed to me that a woman's voice was constantly urging me to turn my face to the wall because that way I lay closer to Tabasco, the Atlantic, and home. I felt sick, but I was too tired to go outside and vomit. The hammocks **creaked** and something **fluttered** in the roof and a child **wailed**. There was no **ventilation** at all.

Visiting the Ruins

Fate had got me somehow to Palenque, and so I thought I had better see the ruins, but it was stupid, after the long ride and the feverish night, to go next morning. And it was stupid, too, to start as late as seven, for it was nearly half-past nine before we reached them and the tropical sun was already high. It wasn't so much stiffness that bothered me now: it was the feel of fever, an overpowering nausea without the energy to vomit, a desire to lie down and never get up again, a continuous thirst. I had tried to get some mineral water to take with me, but our purchases had cleared the store right out, and all the time, if only I had known it, I was in one of the few places in Mexico where it was safe to drink the water. **Springs** rose everywhere; as we climbed through the thick hot forest they **sparkled** between the trees, fell in tiny torrents, spread out, like a Devonshire[35] stream, over the **pebbles** in a little clearing. But I didn't drink, merely watched with sick **envy** the mules take their fill, afraid that the streams might be polluted further up by cattle, as if any cattle could live in this deep forest: we passed the

bleached **skeleton** of something by the path. So one always starts a journey in a strange land - taking too many precautions, until one tires of the exertion and abandons care in the worst spot of all. How I hated my mule, drinking where I wanted to drink myself and, like the American dentist[36], chewing all the time, pausing every few feet up the mountainside to **snatch** grasses.

Nobody had properly opened up the way to Palenque; sometimes the guide had to cut the way with his machete, and at the end the path rose at a crazy angle - it couldn't have been less than sixty degrees. I hung on to the pommel and left it all to the mule and anyway didn't care. And then at last, two hours and half from the village, the ruins appeared.

I haven't been to Chichen Itza[37], but judging from photographs of the Yucatan remains they are immeasurably more impressive than those of Palenque, though, I suppose, if you like wild nature, the setting of Palenque is a finer one -on a great circular plateau halfway up the mountainside, with the jungle falling precipitously below into the plain and rising straight up behind; in the clearing itself there is nothing but a few Indian huts, **scrub** and stone and great mounds of rubble crowned with low one-storey ruins of grey rock, so age-worn they have a lichenous[38] shape and look more vegetable than mineral. And no shade anywhere until you've climbed the steep loose slopes and bent inside the dark cool little rooms like lavatories where a few **stalactites** have formed and on some of the stones are a few faint scratches which they call hieroglyphics[39]. At first you notice only one of these temples or palaces where it stands in mid-clearing on its mound with no more importance than a ruined stone farm in the Oxford[40] countryside, but then all round you, as you gaze, they open up, emerging obscurely from the jungle - three, four, five, six, I don't know how many **gnarled relics.** No work is in progress, and you can see them on the point of being swallowed again by the forest; they have looked out for a minute, old wrinkled faces, and will soon withdraw.

Well, I had told people I was here in Chiapas to visit the ruins and I had visited them; but there was no **compulsion** to see them, and I hadn't the strength to climb more than two of those slopes and peer into more than two of the cold snaky chamber.

I thought I was going to faint; I sat down on a stone and looked down - at trees, and nothing but trees, going on and on out of sight, It seemed to me that this wasn't a country to live in at all with the heat and the **desolation;** it was a country to die in and leave only ruins behind. Last year Mexico City was shaken more than two hundred times by earthquake ... One was looking at the future as well as at the past.

I slid somehow down on the ground and saw my guide set off with the Indian who guards the **site** towards another palace; I couldn't follow. With what seemed awful labour I moved my legs back toward the Indian huts; a kind of stubbornness surged up through the fever - I wouldn't see the ruins, I wouldn't go back to Palenque, I'd simply lie down here and wait - for a **miracle**. The Indian hut had no walls; it was simply a **twig shelter** with a chicken or two scratching in the dust, and a hammock and a packing case. I lay down on my back in the hammock and stared at the roof; outside, according to the authorities, were the Templo del as Leyes, the Templo del Sol, the Templo dela Cruz de Palenque. I knew what they could do with their temples ... And farther off still England. It had no reality. You get accustomed in a few weeks to the idea of living or dying in the most **bizarre** surroundings. Man has a dreadful **adaptability.**

I suppose I dozed, for there were the Indian and the guide looking down at me. I could see the guide was **troubled.** He had a feeling of responsibility, and no Mexican cares for that. It's like a disused **limb** they have learned to do without. They said if I'd move into the other hut they would get me coffee. I felt that it was a **trap:** if they could make me move, they could make me get on that mule again and then would begin the two-and-a-half hour ride back to Palenque. An hour had lost meaning; it was like a cipher[41] for some number too big to comprehend. Very unwillingly, very slowly, I shifted a dozen feet to another open hut and another hammock. A young Indian girl with big silver earrings and a happy sensual face began to make corn coffee – thin grey stuff like a temperance[42] drink which does no harm.

I said to the guide, without much hope, "Why shouldn't we sleep here?" I knew his answer — mosquitoes; he was a man who liked his comforts. He brought up again that dream of a German with a beautiful daughter; I lay on my back, disbelieving. The *finca*, he said, was only a little way from Palenque. We'd go there tonight in the cool. I went on drinking corn coffee, bowl after bowl of it. I suppose it had some **tonic** effect, for I have a **dim** memory of suddenly thinking, "Oh, hell[43], if I'm going to collapse, I may as well collapse in the village where the damned[44] guide won't worry me ..." I got on the mule and when once I was up it was as easy almost - to sit there as in a hammock; I just held on to the pommel and let the mule do the rest. We slid down slowly over the tree roots toward the plain. I was too exhausted to be frightened.

And when time did somehow come to an end, I fell off the mule and made straight for the schoolmaster's hammock and lay down. I wanted nothing except just not to move. The plump complacent schoolmaster sat on the steps and had a philosophical talk with a passing peasant[45] - "The sun is the origin of life," a finger pointed upwards. I was too sick to think then of Rivera's[46] school teachers in

snowy-white blessing with raised episcopal[47] fingers the little children with knowledge, knowledge like this. "That is true. Without the sun we should cease to exist." I lay and drank cup after cup of coffee; the school teachers had lunch, but I couldn't eat, just went on drinking coffee, and sweating it out again. Liquid had no time to be digested; it came through the **pores** long before it reached the stomach. I lay wet through with sweat for four hours - it was very nearly like happiness. In the street outside nobody passed: it was too hot for life to go on. Only a **vulture** or two flopping by, and the whinny of a horse in a held.

2 a piece of material that hangs over the bed and protects you from mosquito bites
3 a small town in the Mexican state of Chiapas
4 *mainly literary:* to pull a piece of fruit from a tree
5 Mexican money
6 refers to the painful and very irregular movement of the mule
7 a big strong animal
8 Move it, mule.'
9 not detailed or exact
10 a material for making fences or walls made of stakes and branches
11 *very unusual:* dismissed
12 Spanish: a place that sells food and drink
13 Spanish: a Mexican drink, very high in alcohol
14 usually singular, 'mail', meaning post or letters
15 a small group of trees growing close together, especially if they are cut regularly
16 an English doctor whom Greene met in Villahermosa. Victorian refers to the period when Queen Victoria reigned in Britain, 1837-1901
17 the upward curving or projecting front part of a saddle
18 saying something in a quiet voice so that someone cannot hear you
19 *old fashioned*: a cad is a man who behaves in an unkind or unfair way, especially towards women
20 tight trousers that are worn when riding a horse
21 a gently rolling hill
22 a large, open area of grassland, usually in North America
23 the source of the information
24 *Spanish* a property, usually in the country
25 making a low continuous noise
26 an aircraft like a large balloon (=a bag filled with gas) with an engine
27 their mouths deeply and firmly into the mule's neck
28 *formal* past tense of the verb 'to bear', meaning 'carry'
29 with their roofs made of, or covered with, banana leaves
30 one of two long narrow pieces of wood with places to put your feet on so that you can stand on them to walk high above the ground
31a drug taken to treat or prevent malaria
32 *offensive:* an old-fashioned word, used to describe a person of mixed race
33 behaving like a priest
34 a container for a revolver, or gun
35 the adjective from 'Devon', an area in southern England
36 Greene had met this man on the boat to Villahermosa. He became Mr Tench the dentist in *The Power and the Glory*
37 ancient Mayan ruins in the peninsula of Yucatan
38 shaped like a small soft plant that grows on surfaces such as trees and walls
39 writing that uses pictures and symbols to represent sounds and words, especially in Ancient Egypt
40 a famous university city in southern England

41 a secret system (if writing, used for sending messages so that no one can understand them unless they know the system

42 the practice of not drinking alcohol and the belief that it is wrong to do so; the ability to control yourself, especially in eating and drinking

43 an exclamation used to express anger, surprise or for emphasis

44 *offensive:* an adjective used to emphasize anger or frustration

45 *old-fashioned:* someone who works on another person's farm or on their own small farm. This word is used mainly about people in poor countries or people in history

46 Diego de Rivera (1886-1957) was a Mexican painter and Communist sympathizer who painted large murals with a strong social content

47 like a bishop, Greene is comparing the teachers to bishops

Post-reading activities

Understanding the extract

Use these questions to help you check that you have understood the extract.

The Long Ride

1.What does Greene take with him on his journey? Why do you think his decision to leave his cape behind was 'foolish' ?

2. Where is Greene's guide from? What does his father do for his son and Greene?
3. What type of transport do they use to cross the river? How do they travel after that?
4. What are the first few hours of the journey like?
5. What is the terrain like? What is the weather like? How does the movement of the mule affect Greene?
6. How many hours does the storekeeper think the journey will take? How many hours have they travelled when they stop for a rest? How long does the guide think the journey will be after that?
7. Why does Greene keep raising and lowering his hat?
8. What does the guide do when Greene's mule sits down under him?
9. According to the guide, why can't they stop somewhere for the night?
10. Why does Greene choose the way to Palenque when the ways divide?
11. What news do the riders bring?
12. When do they finally arrive in Palenque?
13.Why is their search for something to drink unsatisfactory?
14. Why does Greene sleep badly?

Visiting the Ruins

15. Why is it 'stupid' to leave for the ruins at 7 in the morning?
16. Why doesn't Greene drink water from the streams?
17. How many chambers does Greene visit? Why doesn't he see more?
18.Why does Greene go to the Indian hut?
19.Why are the Indian and the guide 'troubled'?
20.What does the Indian girl give Greene?
21.How does the guide persuade Greene to return to Palenque?
22.Where does Greene go when he arrives in Palenque? What does he do? How does he feel?

Language study

Vocabulary

The use of similes

A simile is a comparison between one thing and another, of a different kind.

Similes are usually introduced with the word *like.*

1.Look at these similes from the extract. Match the first parts of the sentences or phrases (1-6) with the second part (a-f).

1*the two mules swimming beside the canoe, with just their muzzles and their eyes above the water*
2 *I had never ridden a mule before. Its trot, I imagine, is*
3*And all the time Palenque*
4 *the flies … sailed by and sank*
5 *Springs … fell in tiny torrents, spread out*
6 *corn coffee - thin grey stuff*

a) *shifted like a mirage*
b) *like dirigibles on to the mule's neck*
c) *something like a camel's*
d) *like a pair of alligator heads*
e) *like a Devonshire stream*
f) like *a temperance drink*

2. Answer these questions.

1.Which similes compare animals to another type of animal?
2.Which simile suggests that Greene might be feeling homesick?
3.Which simile compares something animate (living) to something inanimate (non-living)?
4.What do you think a 'temperance drink' is?
5.In what way is the simile describing Palenque appropriate?

Forming adjectives with noun + *like*

Another way of making a comparison is to form an adjective using a noun followed by the word *like.*

I folded up the huge tentlike mosquito net.

In this sentence, Greene compares the net to a tent because it normally goes over a person's head and around their body to protect them from mosquito bites. Instead of saying 'like a tent', he uses the word 'tentlike'

3. Look at this sentence from extract

… there at the head of a long parklike slope of grass was a poor abandoned cemetery.

What does 'parklike' describe? What impression does it gave?

4. Rewrite the sentence using a noun + *like.* The noun is usually used in the singular. The first one has been done as an example.

1 The flies were like helicopters that flew around the mule's head.

The helicopterlike flies flew constantly around the mule's head.

2The plain was like a desert that stretched for mile after mile.

_____

3 He saw the face of the girl, like a beautiful statue.

_____

4 She took his hands which were soft like cotton.

_____

5 The temples were like caves that sat on the hillside.

_____

6 The drink was like coffee but it made him even thirstier.

_____

7 The man's voice was sharp, like a bird's.

_____

8 The crosses were like trees that leaned at an angle.

_____

Grammar

Adverbs of manner

Greene uses a variety of adverbs of manner to describe events and actions. Most adverbs of manner answer the question *How?* and are often formed by adding *–ly* to an adjective.

5. Which are the adverbs of manner in the extracts (1-8)?

1 *I foolishly abandoned my cape and took only the net, a hummock, and a rucksack.*

2 *By nine in the morning the sun was blindingly up.*
3 *The guide rode back and waited patiently for me to mount.*
4 *Some monkeys moved inquisitively.*
5 *I slept very badly in my clothes.*
6 *He moved heavily round the little room.*
7 *All around you, as you gaze, they open up, emerging obscurely from the jungle.*
8 *Very unwillingly, very slowly, I shifted a dozen feet to another open hut.*

6. Adverbs of manner often go after the verb. In which of the sentences in exercise 5 is this true? In which sentences is this not true? Why do you think this is?

7. Make adverbs from the adjectives in brackets and write them in the correct place in the sentence. There may be more than one correct answer.

1The day began with the arrival of coffee and biscuits. (quiet)

_____

2 When the flies came, the mule smelt of blood. (sickening)

_____

5 They drank coffee. (endless)

_____

4 A voice urged him to turn his face to the wall. (constant)

_____

5 He watched as the mules drank from the stream. (envious)

_____

6 The jungle fell below into the plain. (precipitous)

_____

7 The men spoke of the origin of life. (philosophical)

_____

8 They slid down over the tree roots towards the plain. (slow)

_____

9 Liquid came through the pores before it could reach the stomach. (quick)

_____

10 A vulture or two flopped by. (clumsy)

_____

Literary analysis

Events

1. Number the events below in the order in which they happen.

Greene and his guide go to Palenque.
After six hours, Greene and the guide slop to rest.
After visiting two temples, Greene gives up and goes to lie down.
The guide's father makes breakfast. ***1***
An Indian girl gives Greene coffee.
As the sun sinks, flies attack Greene's mule.
Greene and the guide return to Palenque.
Greene crosses the river on the ferry.
Greene lies down in the storekeeper's but.
Greene spends an uncomfortable night after his long ride.
Greene's mule sits down under him.
They arrive in Palenque at night.
They look desperately round the town for something to drink.

People

2. Think about these people in the extract: the guide, the school teacher, the teacher's assistant. Which words and phrases does Greene use to describe them?
3. Do we know the names of die people in the extract? Is this significant?
4. Think about the guide. What do we learn about him? What is Greene's attitude to him?
5. What impression do we get of the Mexican people from the extract?
6. What do you think the people thought of Greene?

Sense of place

Greene paints a vivid picture of the different landscapes through which he travels.

Look at the phrases below and answer the questions.

The journey to Palenque

the two mules swimming beside the canoe
the banana plantations on the other bank
a bare exposed plateau

patches of forest and shade
a few cows listless in the heat under some thorny trees
that baked plateau
that immense rolling plain
a patch of forest and the ways divided
7.How does Greene cross the river?
8.Which words tell us that the land is flat?
9.Which words tell us that there aren't many trees?
10.Which words or phrases tell us that it is very hot?
11.Which word gives the impression of great size and distance?

The ruins at Palenque
the thick hot forest
a great circular plateau halfway up the mountainside
the jungle falling precipitously below into the plain
great mounds of rubble crowned with low one-storey ruins of grey rock
dark cool little rooms
cold snaky chambers
nothing but trees, going on and on out of sight

12.Where do you think the ruins are situated?
13.Which word tells us that the land is very steep?
14.Which word tells us that the ruins are neglected?
15.Which adjectives are used to describe the inside of the ruins?
16. What do you think 'snaky' means?

The author's voice

17. Look at paragraph 1. Which word suggests that the author is critical of his own actions? On which other occasions is he self-critical? Think about the following: the mule, Greene's headwear, the visit to the ruins, the lack of drinking water.
18. Is Greene critical of other people he meets? When? Why do you think he reacts in this way?
19. Greene observes his own discomfort objectively and even with humour. Find some examples.
20. What is your impression of Greene from the extract? Write down some adjectives to describe him.

Himalaya

by Michael Palin

About the author

Michael Edward Palin was born 1943 in Sheffield, England. He was one of two children, though nine years younger than his sister, Angela. His father was a civil engineer, who left his job managing a toilet-paper factory to work as an export manager for a steel company, which, among other things, made train tracks for the Indian railways.

Palin describes his own childhood as happy and secure. He was close to his mother and sister, and remembers going on train journeys, and to cricket matches with his father, Palin loved to read, particularly adventure and travel stories; he also loved going to the cinema, and was particularly impressed by the film version of Jules Verne's book *Around the World in 80 Days.* Although his family was not rich, they spent the money they had on Michael's education – he went to Birkdale preparatory school, then Shrewsbury School.

In 1959, on holiday in Suffolk in eastern England, Palin met Helen Gibbins, whom he later married, and with whom he has three children.

In 1962, Palin left home to go to Oxford University to study Modern History. Around this time, Palin started writing and acting in his own plays and sketches, With some friends, hi formed a comedy team called Monty Python which became very popular. They made frequent appearances on television, performed live and also made films.

In 1965, Palin began to work in television. He wrote and performed in many light entertainment shows for the BBC[1]. He also appeared in films and played a wide variety of comic and more serious roles. Palin's first travel documentary was part of the 1980 BBC television series *Great Railway Journeys of the World,* in which he travelled through the United Kingdom by train.

In 1989, he presented a travel series ailed *Around the World in 80 Days* in which he tried to travel around the world like Jules Verne's hero Phileas Fogg - using different types of transport, but not the aeroplane. He then made a number of very popular travel programmes: *Pole to Pole* in which he travelled from the North to the South Pole; *Full Circle* in which he travelled around the Pacific Rim; *Hemingway Adventure* in which he followed in the footsteps of the famous American author Ernest Hemingway; *Sahara* in which he crossed the Sahara

1 British Broadcasting Corporation, the original broadcasting network of Great Britain

Desert; and *Himalaya* in which he travelled from the borders of Afghanistan to southwest China.

More recently, Palin has travelled around eastern Europe, visiting former Communist countries. He has also celebrated the 20th anniversary of his *Around the World in 80 Days* trip, by revisiting many of the people and places he met the first time round. Most of Palin's journeys have been turned into books written by Palin himself and illustrated with the photographs of Basil Pao.

About this extract

Michael Palin was commissioned by the BBC to make a television series about travelling in the Himalayas. He and the film crew began their journey on 12th May 2003 and finished it on 7th April 2004.

The book *Himalaya*, from which this extract is taken, was written by Palin and is based on the notes he took during the journey.

Summary

It may help you to know something about what happens in the extract before you read it. This summary does not tell you every detail but should help you understand the general meaning.

The extract describes four days in Palin's long journey or 'expedition' to the Himalayas - days 59 to 62 - during which he and the film crew travel from Xangu in Nepal to the Base Camp of Mount Everest and then on to Shigatse, Tibet's second biggest city. On day 59, the film crew cross the border between Nepal and Tibet. They arrive in Tingri after dark and spend the night there.

On day 60, they leave the main road and take a dirt road into the heart of the Himalayas. As they climb higher, the Himalayas spread out before them with Everest dominating the peaks. They turn past the highest monastery in the world and continue on to the guest house at Rogbuk.

Day 61 is spent at the guest house so that the film crew can acclimatize to the altitude - allow their bodies to adjust to the height and air quality. Palin meets the nuns and monks and gives a present (a *thangka*, or traditional painting, from Kathmandu) to the leader of the monastery, the abbot.

On day 62, the team finally travel to Everest Base Camp. Palin observes the yaks and their herders. After lunch with the herders, he climbs with them towards the glacier until he has to turn back

Pre-reading activities

Key vocabulary

The sounds of Xangu

When Palin tries to go to sleep in Xangu, he finds that the town is noisier at night than during the day. The street outside his room is filled with different sounds.

1. Match the words and phrases (1-7) with the correct definitions (a-g).

1	**drilling**	a) the sound that someone makes when they force air through their mouth
2	**thumping**	b) a long 's' sound like the sound that a snake makes
3	**banging**	c) a low sound made when one heavy object hits another
4	**hissing**	d) making a hole with a tool
5	**clunking**	e) making a short loud noise with something
6	**crackle**	f) hitting someone or something with your fist or a heavy object
7	**whistling**	g) a short continuous sound like the sound of wood burning

2. Choose the best word to complete these sentences.

1 Before he could hang the picture, he had to **drill/crackle** a hole in the wall.

2 The man was furious and **clunked/thumped** his fist on the table.

3 She left the room, angrily **hissing/banging** the door behind her,

4 The boy **whistled/hissed** happily as he walked down the street.

5 'What are you doing?' she **hissed/drilled** under her breath.

6 There was a **whistling/clunking** sound as the train carriages came together.

7 As the logs began to catch fire, they made a loud **crackling/hanging** sound.

Yaks

Yaks are large cow-like animals with long hair and horns that live in the Himalayas. They are very important to the inhabitants of the area, and are looked after by herders.

3.Look at the sentences below and match the words in bold (1-11) with the correct definitions (a-k).

The rancid smell of the tea and the sharp aroma of yak (1) ***dung*** *smoke is not as horrible as it sounds.*

I open the curtains to find a yak (2) ***calf*** *helping itself to a bowl of water which has been put outside my room.*

The yaks (3) ***graze*** *nearby. Their hair is mostly black, though some have white faces. All have the soft eyes of cows and the same sad, (4)* ***long-suffering*** *look, as if resigned to whatever's going to happen. I'm warned that they can turn very (5)* ***truculent.***

They are the preferred carriers at this height ...(6) ***sure-footed*** *on the rocks. They (7)* ***thrive*** *at altitude, protected from the cold by a thick (8)* ***saddle*** *of insulating fat across their backs.*

The herders seem not the slightest bit sentimental about their (9) ***furry*** *charges.*

In return for some grass the yaks give their owners milk, cheese, butter, meat, (10) ***fuel,*** *building materials, clothes and transport.*

There isn't much room at the customs, and trucks, individuals, a bewildered-looking tour group and a (11) ***flock*** *of sheep are all trying to get* through *at the* same *time,*

a) to become very successful**,** happy or healthy
b) a young animal such as a young cow, elephant, whale or giraffe
c) easily annoyed and always ready lo argue or fight
d) a seat that you put on a horse's back when you ride it
e) good at walking or climbing and unlikely to fall
f) to eat grass growing in a field
g) waste from the body of a large animal such as an elephant or cow
h) a group of birds, sheep or goals
i) patient despite having problems or being badly treated over a long period of time
j) covered with fur or soft hair

k) a substance such as oil, gas, coal or wood that produces heat or power when it is burned

Descriptions of people

Life in the Himalayas is hard and this is reflected in the appearance of the local people.

4. Look at the words below and their definitions. Then complete the paragraph with the correct form of the words.

etch (v) to make marks on a hard surface by cutting into it
weathered (adj) marked by the effects of rain, wind, heat and cold
aged (adj) very old
rough (adj) not smooth
stunted (adj) prevented from growing to normal size
features (n, usually plural) a part of your face such as your eyes, nose or mouth
complexion (n) the appearance of the skin on someone's face and whether it is pale, dark, smooth etc
craggy (adj) a face like this looks strong and has deep lines in it

The (1) .....of the farmers and their families is red from the effects of wind, cold and sun. On the faces of these prematurely (2) ..... people, the lines are (3) ..... on their faces like marks on a rock. Even the children have (4).....red cheeks from being outside in the cold air. Their (5).....reflect the climate: their eyes seem small in their ruddy faces, and their noses run continually. Both young and old are short in height, their bodies (6).....from the harshness of their lives. The men who look after the yaks have faces which are (7) .....by years of rain and wind. Their (8).....appearance seems to mirror the mountains and sharp peaks that surround them.

Descriptions of the mountain landscape

Palin describes his own journey through the high mountainous landscape, and the journeys of others before him.

5. Read the passage. Then match the words (1-10) with the correct definitions (a-j).

Neither of us had ever been at this **altitude** *before.* We had felt sick and dizzy as we climbed higher, and we thought about going back down. Instead, we decided to stay at a guesthouse for few days so that we could **acclimatize.** We started our ascent at 4am, when it was still dark. The air was thin and freezing cold, and we had to walk slowly as the climb was so steep. At around 6am, the sun appeared on the horizon and we could see the **glacier** shimmering in the light, like a beautiful frozen river, creeping along the **slopes** of the **gorge** below, a few inches every year. It was a tough climb through the mountain **pass** hut we could see the **summit**, and this kept us going. Our **descent** would be easy after this.

1 altitude (n)	a) a very large mass of ice that moves very slowly
2 acclimatize (v)	b) to become familiar with a new place, different weather conditions, or a new situation
3 ascent (n)	c) a climb upwards, especially up a hill or mountain
4 steep (adj)	d) a straight surface that has one end higher than the other; the side of a hill or mountain
5 glacier (n)	e) the top of a mountain
6 slope (n)	f) a deep valley with high straight sides where a river has cut through rock
7 gorge (n)	g) the height of a place or thing above sea level (= the surface of the sea)
8 pass (n)	h) a path or road that goes through an area of mountains
9 summit (n)	i) rising quickly and difficult to climb
10 descent (n)	j) the act of moving down to a lower place or

Making personal observations

Palin uses adjectives to make personal observations about the people, places and food he comes across on his journey.

6. Look at the words and definitions. Then choose the appropriate adjective lo complete the sentences.

aloof not friendly or does not want to be involved in something
bewildered confused and not certain what to do
daunting something that makes you worried because you think that it will be very difficult or dangerous to do
inaccessible difficult or impossible to reach
inhospitable unfriendly, unpleasant or difficult to visit or live with
mysterious not explained or understood
officious showing an annoying tendency to take your position or status too seriously
rancid not fresh, having an unpleasant taste and smell

1. She had not had a job for five years, and had lost confidence in her abilities. She found the prospect of returning to work very…….
2. The man was quite ..... - he kept himself to himself, did not speak to anyone else in the group, and sat alone at mealtimes.
3.I got lost several times when I arrived in the town, ... by the maze of tiny streets.
4. The meat was ..... - it must have been sitting in the sun for days.
5. The phone rang in the middle of the night, and she wouldn't say who it was. The next day she left the house before breakfast without saying where she was going- it was all very ..... .
6. The lodging was almost completely ....., set high in the mountains, at the end of a very narrow, undulating track.
7. The man behind the desk was unbelievably .....! He refused to listen to us - everything had to be in writing.
8. The valley was steep, dark and rocky, and had very few trees or greenery - it was one of the most.....places I have ever been to. We drove straight through without stopping.

7. Look at the extracts below, in which Palin uses adverbs to describe how he feels about what is happening around him. The adverbs are formed by adding *–ly* to their related adjectives. Use the extracts to match the adjectives (1-4) with their definitions (a-d).

At the summit, a smooth, wide hill at 17,000 feet (5180 m), one of the finest views in the world is suddenly, almost ***abruptly,*** *revealed.*

Leaving the fire is the hardest thing, but once across the yard, beneath a ***bracingly*** *clear night sky, I'm into a pretty little room, so different from last night.*

*...the monumental pyramid of Everest, rising **serenely** above them all at 29,021 feet (8850 m).*

*Apart from the guesthouse and a new, red-brick hotel nearby, ready but **tantalizingly** un-opened, Rongbuk consists of a line of low cottages and the monastery ...*

1 **abrupt**
2 **bracing**
3 **serene**
4 **tantalizing**

a) making you feel excited about having something that you want but hardly ever get
b) sudden and unexpected, often in an unpleasant way
c) cold in a way that makes you feel full of energy
d) calm or peaceful

8. As you read the extract, ask yourself:

a) How does filming a journey affect the journey itself?
b) What are the advantages of travelling alone and travelling with other people?
c) Why are so many people fascinated by Everest?
d) Why has the history of Everest captured Palin's imagination?

Himalaya

by Michael Palin

Day Fifty Nine: Xangmu to Tingri

Xangmu high street, quiet as the grave when we arrived, erupts into life at night. Sounds of shouting, drilling, thumping and banging drift, unhampered[2], through tightly-closed windows and into my head. I pull all the blankets off the unoccupied bed next to me, curl up in a foetal ball and hope it will all just go away. It doesn't. It gets worse. The hissing, clunking, industrial sounds seem to be augmented by flashes and crackles. Can someone really be spot-welding[3] out there at 12.15? The prospect of how exhausted I'll feel in the morning keeps me awake for at least another hour.

Wake at eight, but it's still **pitch dark**. In fact, it doesn't begin to get light for another half-hour. The government of China, in their wisdom, decreed[4] that the whole country, wider than the United States, should have only one time zone. The further west you are the later daybreak comes.

The Street outside, apart from the frequent clearing of throats and whistling of spittle[5], is quiet again this morning. I can find no satisfactory explanation for the **nocturnal** activity other than that Xangmu is a **frontier** town and frontier towns have a life of their own. We walk down the hill to **resume** the customs procedures.

A truck marked 'Four Friends Transport. Live Long Friendship Nepal, India, China, Bhutan' is at the head of a long queue of vehicles heading towards Nepal. There isn't much room at the customs, and trucks, individuals, a bewildered-looking tour group and a flock of sheep are all trying to get through at the same time. Young, officious border guards in slack uniforms either push people around or **ignore** them completely. High up on the wall, and conveniently inaccessible, is a small box marked 'Complaints about Immigration'.

By the time all the formalities have been completed - and to be fair, a British film crew is a very rare sight in Tibet - it's early afternoon. Our final departure is marked by a small ceremony at which the manager of the Bai Ma Hotel gives us each a white scarf to bring us good luck on our journey. He seems a decent man, doing his best, though I notice he doesn't have a complaints box.

As we drive out of Xangmu (with few regrets, in my case) the squash of white-tiled buildings eases and we can see the wooded gorge we climbed yesterday, plunging picturesquely down to Nepal. The road to Lhasa (now, inevitably, re-christened the Friendship Highway) continues to climb steeply, through forested slopes and past tumbling waterfalls, until it brings us at last to the

edge of the Tibetan plateau. The Roof of the World[6] was once a seabed. What lay beneath the ancient Sea of Tethys was heaved up onto the top of the world by the same **collision** of the Indian and Eurasian plates that built the Himalaya. It now rests at an average height of 13,100 feet (4000 m) and from its steep sides stream some of the world's greatest rivers: the Indus, Salween, Yangtze, Irrawaddy, Yellow River and Brahmaputra.

In the relatively short distance from Xangmu, we've made dramatic progress, vertically, if not horizontally. We're only 20 miles from the Bai Ma Hotel, but 5000 feet (1520 m) above it. Apart from a few poplar groves[7], the tree cover has gone and on the mountainsides bare rock shows through tight, tussocky[8] cover. At a cold, exposed little town called Nyalam we stop to have papers checked before entering a new administrative zone. Women in masks sweep the street, outside a modern building a prosperous-looking man makes two of his employees unroll a length of carpet, which he proceeds to examine with great care. Recently completed terraced housing runs along the side of the road, an early indication of Beijing's plans to make Tibet a new frontier. This is a cheerless[9] place, though J-P[10], never daunted, manages to find a shop selling wine and we roll across the River Matsang two bottles of Dynasty Red to the better[11].

The road continues upwards, over long, **undulating**, brown hills, until we reach the prayer flag-bedecked[12] pass of Tong La, over 17,000 feet (5180 m) above sea level and the highest place I've ever been on earth (coming in well ahead of my previous record, the hot springs in San Pedro de Atacama in Chile at 14,700 feet/4480 m).

Everything is bewildering, strange and wonderful. Running the length of the southern horizon is a chain of towering, white peaks and on the grassland below us a herd of yak, short-legged creatures, bodies close to the ground, their thick, black hair standing out against greeny-brown hills behind them.

We stop and walk a little way from the car, every step feeling like 20 at this altitude.

But that doesn't **dampen** the **exhilaration**.

It's dark when we reach the town of Tingri and, after some initial confusion, find our way off the highway and into a capacious[13] courtyard, which looks like that of a monastery, but in fact belongs to the Snow Leopard Hotel. Life centres around a big, low, woody room with painted **beams** and a brick parqueted floor, largely lit by the glow from a stove of burning yak dung in the centre of the room. This is what was lacking in those Inhospitable Annapurna cabins: a fire, so simple and so intensely welcoming. We cluster round it and a lady with braided hair and rubicund, muddied face offers us yak butter tea. Nigel describes the task' as 'liquid gorgonzola[14]', which is absolutely spot on[15]. The rancid smell of the tea

and the sharp aroma of yak dung smoke is not as horrible as it sounds. I find it odd, yes, but interestingly strange and unfamiliar, **quintessentially** Tibetan and proof that north of the Himalaya everything is very different.

In the dim recesses of the room we're served a very good meal of noodles with mushrooms, pork, green peppers and lumps of soft, white, doughy Tibetan bread.

We're advised to break out the sleeping bags tonight. It will be below zero in our un-heated rooms.

Leaving the fire is the hardest thing, but once across the yard, beneath a bracingly clear night sky, I'm into a pretty little room, so different from last night. Proper curtains, a colourful wall with a frieze of painted flowers. Beside the bed I have a wooden cabinet, also very charmingly painted. By the light of a very dim bulb 1 can make out leering gods, dragons, clouds, waves and what look very much like flying teeth.

The only **setback** tonight is that the bottles of wine from Nyalam proved undrinkable.

Day Sixty: Tingri to Rongbuk

Though perfectly comfortable in my congenial little room, sleep was light and fleeting and broken by twinges of headache and nausea. The zero temperatures with which Mr Tse Xiu threatened us didn't materialize and when I should have been sleeping I was engaged in an energy-consuming nocturnal striptease, peeling off the various layers of clothing I'd gone to bed in and dropping them out of my sleeping bag one by one.

Open the curtains to find a yak calf helping itself to a bowl of water which has been put outside my room.

Wash in what's left of it and join the others for breakfast. On the way there I notice a big satellite dish in one corner of the courtyard. There's no evidence of a television anywhere about the place.

This is my first chance to have some time with Migmar, who has so far been preoccupied with getting us into China. He's 27, the son of Tibetan nomads[16] who were enlightened enough to send him to school, from where he won a place at Lhasa University. He read Chinese (the Dalai Lama would have approved) and English, which, despite the fact he's never left Tibet, he speaks pretty well.

I'm impressed by the richness of the decoration on almost every inch of the timber columns[17], beams and ceiling boards, and Migmar explains that in the 9th century a Tibetan **warlord** tried to **eradicate** Buddhism[18] and the only way that the culture survived was through a pictorial **code.** The Buddhist heroes were depicted as animals: dragons, tigers, even sheep. What began as a cipher[19] developed into a

rich tradition of imaginative painting, a particular target during the Cultural Revolution[20], when a renewed and virulent attempt was made to destroy Tibet's Buddhist past.

Instead of continuing along the Friendship Highway to Lhasa, we turn south on a dirt road, towards the heart of the Himalaya. Apart from the occasional **four-wheel drives** like our own, traffic consists of horses and carts trotting between isolated settlements, usually of low, whitewashed houses with prayer flags **fluttering** from poles at each corner of the roof. The harshness of life up here in this dry and windy rain shadow of the Himalaya is etched on the faces of the farmers and their families. Skin is weathered and laces prematurely aged. The children, noses running and cheeks red and rough from the sun, cluster round as soon as we slop, asking us to give them something.

At one stop the villagers are celebrating with music and dancing. Music seems to lighten the load, and getting out the three-string guitars is a popular move. Soon a circle is formed and the dancers are moving slowly round with a step that doesn't seem to vary, though, judging by reactions, the words they sing have been brought **up to date.** The women wear big, coral earrings, flower pattern shirts and the traditional Tibetan *chuba,* a long, sleeveless dress tied with a **sash** at the waist. Some of the men wear their version of the *chuba*, big, wide-sleeved coats, and one or two are in sheepskin jackets, leggings and heavy boots of the kind I haven't really seen since the pop festivals of the late sixties.

Migmar says that at times like New Year dances like this can be **spun out** for several days.

We move on, through desert scenery, with minimal vegetation but every kind of eye-catching rock formation: deep gullies[21], bluffs[22] with **soaring,** scree-covered slopes, exposed synclines and anticlines[23], red and angry, as if freshly split from the **cliffs** around them. A brisk wind creates the only movement in this dead landscape, sending dust devils[24]spiralling across the track in front of us.

A military **checkpoint,** beside a big, modern PLA (People's Liberation Army) **barracks** with a red-tiled roof, stands at the entrance to the Qomolangma National Park, and a metalled road, recently upgraded, leads us smoothly up to the next big pass, Pang La. This is the highest point of our day's journey, in every respect. At the summit, a smooth, wide hill at 17,000 feet (5180 m), one of the finest views in the world is suddenly, almost abruptly, revealed. The full, majestic spread of the central Himalaya is laid out before us, like white-topped waves in a frozen ocean. It's an horizon full of giants: Cho Oyu, a huge massif that peaks at 26,928 feet (8210 m), Makalu 1 at 27,594 feet (8410 m), Lhotse 1 at 27,883 feet (8500 m) and the monumental **pyramid** of Everest, rising serenely above them all at 29,021 feet (8850 m).

The highest point of the earth's surface, which I am seeing today for the first time with my own eyes, is known to the Tibetans as Qomolangma (pronounced 'Chomolungma'),Goddess Mother of the Earth, to the Sherpas[25] as Sagamartha and when the Imperial Survey of India first determined the mountain's precise height it was known on British maps as Peak XV. It was given the name Everest in 1865, in recognition of Sir George Everest, the man who pioneered the mapping of India. (To add to the confusion, what we call Everest should really be called Eev-rest, which was the way Sir George's name was pronounced.)

None of these things goes through my head as I stand at the top of the pass, unable to take my eyes off this stupendous **panorama**.

Like K2, the world's second highest mountain, which straddles China and Pakistan, Everest is divided between two countries, China and Nepal. In the 1920s and 1930s Nepal was a closed country and the pioneering expeditions of George Mallory all came in from Tibet and concentrated on the North Face.

When the expeditions resumed after the Second World War, it was Tibet's turn to be closed off, after the Chinese Communist invasion of 1949, whilst Nepal opened up at around the same time.

The main bulk of Everest ascents, now running at around 100 a year, are made via the South East Ridge from which Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing had conquered the mountain in 1953. The North Face remains the more mysterious; aloof, daunting and much more dangerous. It was first climbed by a Chinese expedition in 1960. They laid a dirt road to transport their equipment up here, which is why we are able to drive up to Base Camp. The track **bounces** over impacted, corrugated earth **strewn** with small **boulders**, but the four-wheel drives don't find it too difficult, and by late afternoon, after winding our way through valleys fed by glacial melt from the slopes of Everest, we turn past the Rongbuk *gompa*, the highest monastery in the world, and in to the walled courtyard of the guesthouse, administered by the monastery.

It looks, for a moment, like the most wonderful place in the world. The same long, low, Tibetan-style layout as the Snow Leopard in Tingri, but with a hugely more spectacular location. This turns out to be its only redeeming feature. From the filthy, littered courtyard to the soulless concrete rooms with broken windows and the foul, doorless lavatories, Rongbuk Guest House is pretty much[26] a hell hole[27].

The redeeming feature, however, is not to be underestimated. There is only one mountain to be seen from here and that is Everest. It stands, massive, grand and solitary, only a few miles away across the end of the valley. It is the horizon.

Day Sixty One: Rongbuk

Last night was desperately uncomfortable. A fierce wind blew, occasionally gusting with such **ferocity** that I feared it might tear the windows out. I lay awake, mouth dry despite regular swigs of water, listening to the village dogs fighting and detritus[28] in the yard being flung about by the wind. As soon as I drifted off to sleep my breathing slowed and within moments I was wide awake, gasping for breath. I need the sleep so much, but I find myself fighting it, forcing myself to stay awake and breathe slow and deep.

The latrine[29] is almost subhuman. It's hard enough to aim through a hole reduced to a slit by the calcified accretions[30] of many previous visitors, without at the same time having to flash a torch to warn other guests and extract thin sheets of Boots travel tissue[31] in a freezing, **force 8 gale**. Many years ago, encountering similarly appalling conditions in a boat on Lake Tanganyika, I took Imodium[32] to prevent me having to go to the toilet ever again. As I squat in this howling tempest[33] three miles up in the sky, I think cyanide[34] might be the better option.

One advantage of this fierce wind is that when daylight comes it is clear and pristine. The summit of Everest trails a plume[35] of spindrift[36], blown off the mountain by winds which, at that height, must be in excess of 100 miles an hour. The rest of the mountain, including the long, flanking shoulders below the arrow-head peak, is crystal clear.

The remainder of the guests who were here last night -Spaniards, Norwegians and a group of Australians - all leave today. They can't believe we're here for three nights, and whoop with joy as they're driven away.

Our cooks are making yak butter tea, which the Tibetans call Bo Cha, in the traditional, long, thin, cylindrical **churn.** It's a mixture of yak butter and tea leaves, with salt and milk added, and is a taste I've yet to acquire, and I'm sure I shall have plenty of opportunity to do so.

We had hoped to move up to Base Camp today, but with the wind still strengthening the decision is taken to stay down here and acclimatize. With atmospheric pressure about half that at sea level, everyone is suffering to some degree and Mr Yang, our **minder**, and John Pritchard, our sound recordist, are particularly uncomfortable.

Apart from the guesthouse and a new, red-brick hotel nearby, ready but tantalizingly un-opened, Rongbuk consists of a line of low collages and the monastery, which looks old but was built less than *10* years ago to replace the one destroyed, along with thousands of others in Tibet, by fanatical Red Guards[37] in the l960s. Outside it stands a sizeable dun-ten'[8] topped with a small, black pyramid and hung with prayer flags like ribbons on a maypole[3']. I walk into a courtyard or two-storey buildings with a painted balcony running round for access, and I follow the

sound of **chanting** up a flight of steps on the far side of the square and into the temple. There are 30 monks and 30 nuns here at the world's highest monastery. With their shaven heads and loose robes, it's difficult to tell them apart.

After prayers they gather outside and I present them with a *thangka*[40] (from Kathmandu). It's accepted by the abbot[41], a big, amiable man with a very dirty, cherry-red duvet jacket over his robes. The monks gather round and study it with great interest.

By evening the wind has dropped as **forecast**. I sit in the room I share with Basil and make my notes as Everest, now completely clear of the cloud, turns pink in the dying sunlight. Apart from the very top, Everest is not one single, symmetrical shape like a Kilimanjaro[42] or a Machhapuchhre[43], its outline being composed of a series of huge blocks.

Suddenly my view is obscured by two women banging on the window, staring in at me and holding their hands out. They're some of the saddest people I've seen and for a moment I feel a sense of frustration that the monastery can do so little for them.

Getting in and out of my sleeping bag are the most uncomfortable moments of the day. The cold snaps at my heels and yet dressing and undressing cannot be hurried at this altitude.

Day Sixty Two: Rongbuk to Everest Base Camp

Last night I slept. Indeed, I slept so long and so deeply that Basil thought I might be dead.

What a difference it makes to everything. The sky looks bluer, the food tastes better, the yak butter tea is like nectar[44] and the prospect of a **trek** beyond Everest Base Camp and up toward the Rongbuk Glacier is the only thing I want to do with the rest of my life.

It takes us 20 minutes to drive the eight miles from Rongbuk to Base Camp, passing on the way the remains of the old monastery.

Some of the walls still stand, but it's little more than a skeleton, barely distinguishable from the rubble-covered slopes on which it stands. Above these desiccated ruins a flock of blue sheep are nosing some nourishment out of the rocks.

Everest Base Camp is nowhere near as romantic as it sounds. Part of it is protected by a l00-foot-high moraine, a wall of stone and shale, carried down and dumped by the glacier that has gouged out the valley. A stream trickles through but any standing water is frozen solid. In high season, between June and August, this area and the rock-strewn valley floor beyond are packed with mountaineers and trekkers. This year there were 32 separate expeditions.

Now, in early November, the camp is all but deserted though the legacy of the summer lies around: discarded brandy bottles, playing cards, batteries and bits of **sodden,** scrumpled clothing.

A couple of motorbikes are parked beside a caretaker's tent, outside which a young man sits in the sun, having his hair cut by two ladies. Nearby, the yak herders with whom we shall be walking up to the glacier have set up two or three small tents of their own, while the yaks graze nearby, nibbling at the scatterings of wheat and dry grass laid out for them. One has made a small hole in the ice and is drinking from it. Their hair is mostly black, though some have white faces. All have the soft eyes of cows and the same sad, long-suffering look, as if resigned to whatever's going to happen. Despite looking eminently embraceable[45], they don't seem at all interested in my friendly advances, and I'm warned that they can turn very truculent.

I learn, too, that though yak is their generic name, it refers only to the male; a female is called a *dri* and a yak crossed with a cow is a *dzo* (this is a useful word to know when playing Scrabble[46], as my ever helpful Bradt guide points out). They are the preferred carriers al this height, stoical and persistent, sure-footed on the rocks. They thrive at altitude, protected from the cold by a thick saddle of insulating fat across their backs, and the big expeditions rely on them to transport heavy equipment up as high as 21,500 feet (6550 m). It's on the lower slopes that the yaks suffer. Anything below 8000 feet (2440 m) can be very uncomfortable for them, as they tend to overheat.

Though the herders seem not the slightest bit sentimental about their furry charges[47], theirs is one of the most one-sidedly symbiotic relationships between man and beast. In return for some grass the yaks give their owners milk, cheese, butter, meat, fuel, building materials, clothes and transport.

I join the herders around a fire of brush wood and bamboo kindling, which they keep alive by **tossing** on the odd yak nugget and pumping hard with an ancient sheep's bladder bellows[48]. Sitting in a circle, eating cake made from *tsampa*, the barley flour and tea mix, they're jolly company, naturally given to smiling and cracking jokes, most of which are **at my expense.**

Their clothes are made from skins and fur and look as if they have been part of their bodies since they were born. Their complexions, skin textures, their whole physiognomy[49] is a reflection of the life they lead. Coloured by the wind and rain, stunted by the bitter cold, their features sculpted in a craggy resemblance to the weird and wonderful landscape around them, they're elemental figures, created by and in the likeness of the mountains.

Maybe all this accounts for the ease of their manner. They know what to do here. They know what to expect and how to deal with it. They have slope cred[50].

This morning means having fun with foreigners, and being paid for it. First of all, it's tea, invigoratingly salty, with a knob of yak butter thrown in, then it's time to get out the *chang,* a fermented barley beer, for me to try. It's poured out of a stained, dusty container, the sort of thing you might find at the back of the **shed** ten years after you put it there. Before drinking, Migmar shows me the important procedure of giving thanks.

I must dip my third finger into the brew, and, flicking it each time, give thanks first to the mountain, second to the Buddha and third to the assembled company. It's a pleasing taste, *chang,* like chilled ginger **beer**, with a hint of apples.

This is the start of one of those magical meals that may not win any gastronomic[51] medals but are unique and unforgettable - a Sunday lunch 16,900 feet (5150 m) up in the heart of the Himalaya. The ingredients include perfect weather, cloudless blue sky, light breeze, generous sunshine, the comforting presence of the yaks and the cheeriness of their owners, the reassuring company of big black crows, and the presence, at our backs, of the highest mountain in the world.

The conquest of Everest in 1953 was one of the **milestones** of my childhood. 1 was ten at the time and, like every other Briton, bursting with national pride (we somehow dealt with the fact that Everest had been conquered by a Tibetan and a New Zealander). What happened on the mountain behind me 50 years ago defined the heroic, and led to a fascination with exploration that I suppose has brought me here today, completing the circle.

Only later did I learn that Everest might have been conquered 29 years earlier, when George Mallory and Andrew Irvine disappeared into a cloud close to the summit and were never seen again.

As the years went by, this heroic failure came to fascinate me more than 1 Hilary and Tenzing's success. The fact that Mallory and Irvine left from a base camp almost exactly where we are now and lost their lives on the face of the mountain I can see clearly ahead of me makes this a very special place, somewhere that has been in my imagination for so long.

Lunch completed, the yaks are loaded up, the tents struck and we begin the walk up to the glacier.

The warmth of the sun and the gentle tinkle of yak bells makes up for the grimly lunar landscape of grey stones and boulders. The herders seem in no hurry, whistling every now and then to keep the yaks together and occasionally singing as we plod slowly upwards. As the afternoon wears on, and the snowdrifts become less avoidable, it becomes increasingly obvious that the requirements of filming are slowing us down and we shall not reach the glacier before the light goes. We've

also lost Basil and John Pritchard, both of whom seemed fine at lunch but, unable to cope with the increased altitude, have had to turn back.

We carry on for as long as we can, past valley walls hung with rocks eroded into wonderful sculptural shapes: pinnacles of mud with enormous boulders poised on top of them and Stonehenge[52]-like slabs teetering on the edge of mud cliffs. At just over 18,000 feet (5480 m), I get as close to Everest as I think I ever shall. A moment of regret as we turn back. The ribbed stone pyramid above looks daunting but **beckoning** at the same time. I can see why it makes people do crazy things. In the 1930s a man called Maurice Wilson planned to crash-land a plane on the side of Everest and climb on up to the summit. In 1980 Reinhold Messner made a successful ascent of the North Face, on his own, there and back, in four days, without oxygen.

As I take one last look, I put myself, as I have done so many times in the past, in Mallory and Irvine's stout[53] walking boots and tweed[54] jackets and feel what it must have been like for them to stand here 80 years ago, knowing that only two miles separated them from the top of the world.

2 free from difficulties or responsibilities
3 a type of welding, i.e. joining two pieces of metal by heating them and pressing them together
4 if a leader or government decrees something, they officially decide or order it
5 *old-fashioned:* word for saliva, the liquid produced by glands in your mouth
6 the Himalayan mountains are known as this because of their great height
7 a group of trees of a particular type, especially trees arranged in lines
8 a small area of stiff grass that is higher than the glass around it
9 *mainly literary:* making you feel sad because o(being cold, dark or unpleasant
10 John Pritchard, the man who worked as sound recordist with the film crew
11 with the addition of two bottles of local red wine
12 *literary:* with lots of decoration - in this case, flags
13 *formal:* large enough to contain a lot of things easily
14 a type of soft white and blue Italian cheese with a strong taste
15 *informal:* exactly right
16 people who move from place to place in order to find food or water for their animals or themselves
17 tall thick posts, made of wood (timber), used for supporting a roof or decorating a building
18 the set of religious beliefs based on the teaching of Siddhartha Gautama
19 a secret system of writing, used for sending messages so that no one can understand them unless they know the system
20 a political movement led by Mao Zedong in China in the 1960s and 70s
21 a long narrow valley with steep sides
22 a steep cliff by the sea or by a river
23 in geology, folded layers of rock
24 small but strong circular winds
25 someone from Tibet or Nepal whose job it Is to help people who walk in the Himalayas
26 *informal:* almost
27 *informal:* a place that is very dirty and unpleasant
28 *formal:* waste that remains after something has been destroyed, used or is finished
29 a toilet outside, eg in a military camp
30 *formal, here:* waste which has gradually increased in size and has hardened
31 toilet paper for travellers, sold in Boots, a well-known chain of chemist shops in Britain

32 a medicine which stops you from having bowel movements
33 *literary:* a severe storm with strong winds and heavy rain
34 a very poisonous chemical
35 a long narrow cloud of dust, smoke etc that moves upwards
36 snow which is blown by the wind
37 a group of people who supported the regime of Mao Zedong in China
38 a Buddhist temple or sanctuary
39 a tall pole with long, thin pieces of cloth fastened to the top that people traditionally danced round in England, especially on May Day
40 a traditional Tibetan painting
41 a man who is in charge of an abbey, or in this case a monastery
42 the highest mountain in Africa (Tanzania)
43 a peak in the Great Himalayas
44 a drink that tastes very good
45 *unusual:* likeable, so that you want to embrace or put your arms around them
46 a board game in which players build up words from small lettered squares or tiles
47 this refers to the hairy yaks that the herders look after
48 a tool used for blowing air into a fire
49 *very formal:* the way that someone's face looks
50 slope credibility; a variety of the informal expression 'street I red' win. Ii means worthy of respect or admiration among young, fashionable people
51 *formal:* relating to skilful cooking and the enjoyment of good food
52 a prehistoric monument in Wiltshire, England, consisting of huge, standing si ones
53 strong and thick
54 a type of thick, rough cloth made from wool of different colours

Post-reading activities

Understanding the extract

Use these questions to help you check that you have understood the extract.

Day Fifty Nine: Xangmu to Tingri

1 Why does Palin find it difficult to sleep in Xangmu?
2 How does Palin explain to himself what happened during the night?
3 Why does it take a long time to go through customs?
4 How fast do they travel into Tibet? Why?
5 What does Palin find particularly welcoming in the hotel at Tingri?
6 What do they eat and drink at the hotel?

*Day Sixty: Tingri*to *Rongbuk*

7 Why does Palin sleep badly in Tingri?
8 Who is Migmar? What does he tell Palin about the decoration on the wooden beams?
9 What do the children in the villages do when the film crew stops?
10 Which activities 'lighten the load' of the villagers?
11 What does Palin describe as a 'monumental pyramid'?
12 When was the North Face of Everest first climbed? Who climbed it?
13 What is the Rongbuk Guest House like?

Day Sixty One: Rongbuk

14 Why is Palin 'desperately uncomfortable' on his first night in Rongbuk?
1 5 What is the attitude of the other guests when they leave the guesthouse?
16 Why don't they make the trip to Base Champ on the first day?
17 I low does Palin feel when he sees the two women looking through his window?

Day Sixty Two: Rongbuk to Everest Base Camp

18 How does Palin feel after his second night in Rongbuk?
19 How far is from Ronbuk to Everest Base Camp?
20 What time of year is it? How is the Base Camp different between June and August?
21 Why are the yaks so important?
22 Who does Palin eat with? Why is it a 'magical' meal for him?
23 When did Palin's fascination with Everest begin?
24 Why is progress up to the glacier slow? Why do Basil and John Pritchard turn back?
25 How close does Palin get to the summit of Everest?

Language study

Vocabulary

Compound adjectives

These are adjectives made up of two or more words. Palin uses them frequently to describe people and clothes, animals, buildings and landscape.

1. Which adjectives below refer to these four categories –
a) people and clothes; b) animals; c) buildings; and d) landscape?

bewildered-looking tourists
prosperous-looking man
cherry-red jacket
sure-footed yaks
short-legged creatures
white-tiled buildings
two-storey buildings
much-repaired windows
prayer flag-bedecked pass
greeny-brown hills
eye-catching rock formation
scree-covered slopes
rock-strewn valley floor

-ed or -ing?

The ending *-ed* can be used to turn nouns into adjectives. The meaning of *–ed* in these cases is similar to *with* or *having,* eg *prayer flag-bedecked pass* = the pass [was] bedecked with prayer flags.
The ending *-ing* can also be used to describe how things look or sound, eg *sad-looking faces = faces that look sad*
Notice that when a noun is used as an adjective before another noun, it is usually singular even if the meaning is plural, eg *worm-eaten* = eaten by worms.

2. Rewrite the phrases below using a compound adjective.

1 trousers which are green like an apple
apple-green trousers

2 roofs with red tiles

3 people who look happy

4 walls with blue tiles

5 a beach covered with pebbles

6 doors which have been painted heavily

7 a hotel of ten storeys

8 men with strong arms

9 pots decorated by hand

10 music that sounds harsh

Grammar

Ellipsis

In informal spoken English, we often omit words at the beginning of sentences if the meaning is clear from the context - this is called ellipsis. We also use ellipsis when making written notes. Palin's writing is developed from notes he makes on his journeys in the form of a diary. Sometimes, he uses ellipsis in his final written account. This gives the writing a more conversational style, gives us a sense of immediacy, as though we are there, and brings an incident to life.

3. Look at these examples from the extract. Which word has been left out?

Open the curtains to find a yak calf helping itself to a bowl of water which has been put outside my room.
Wash in what's left of it and join the others for breakfast.

4. Write the phrases below as complete sentences.

1 You got a passport?

2 Not very pretty here, is it?

3 Anybody want more noodles?

4 Wrote my diary this morning.

5 Better this morning, John?

6 Wife and I are going up Everest tomorrow.

7 Finished your lunch yet, Bas?

8 Don't know why I feel so cold.

The use of the passive

Palin uses the passive when he wants to emphasize the action taking place more than the people performing it. For example:

*Our final departure is **marked** by a small ceremony.*

*At a cold, exposed little town, we stop to **have papers checked.***

He also uses it when the specific identity of the people performing the action is unknown:

*The Buddhist heroes **were depicted** as animals: dragons, tigers, even sheep.*

*A renewed and virulent attempt was **made** to destroy Tibet's Buddhist past.*

Another use of the passive is in the description of landscape:

*The full, majestic spread of the central Himalaya **is laid out** before us. Everest is **divided** between two countries, China and Nepal.*

When the performer of the action is important, the word *by* is used:

*[The North Face] **was** first **climbed by** a Chinese expedition in 1*960.

5. Rewrite these sentences using the passive voice.

1 They did not underestimate the difficulty of the climb.

The difficulty of the climb was not underestimated.

2 The monastery administered the guest house.

3 Our cooks were making yak butter tea.

4 They called the mountain Everest after Sir George Everest.

5 You can see only one mountain from here.

6 They have cancelled our visas.

7 The Red Guards destroyed the original buildings.

_____

8 Two women obscured my view.

_____

Literary analysis

Events

1 Look at the events below (1-10) and put them into the following categories:

a) Historical and factual information
b) Personal reaction and reflection
c) Description of landscape
d) Description of people
e) Description of things that happen on the journey

1 *The government of China ...decreed that the whole country should have only one time zone*
2 *...the manager of the Bai Ma Hotel gives us each a white scarf to bring us good luck on our journey.*
3 *The road* to *Llasa continues to climb steeply, through forested slopes and past tumbling water jails.*
4 *Everything is bewildering, strange and wonderful.*
5 *I'm impressed by the richness of the decoration on almost every inch of the timber columns.*
6 *When expeditions resumed after the Second World War, it was Tibet's turn to be closed off.*
7 *Skin is weathered and faces prematurely aged.*
8 *1 join the herders around a fire of brush wood and bamboo kindling.*
9 *Their clothes are made of skins and fur and look as if they have been part of their bodies since they were born.*
10 *The conquest of Everest ... was one of the milestones of my childhood.*

2 Think about the extract as a whole. Is there a good balance of the above categories or do some categories occur more than others?

People

3 Think about the different people Palin meets on his journey. Match the phrases (1-7) with the people (a-g).

1 *... they're jolly company, naturally given to smiling and cracking jokes*
2 *With their shaven heads and loose robes, it's difficult to tell them apart*
3 *... a lady with braided hair and rubicund, muddied face*
4 *Young, officious ... [they] push people around or ignore them completely*
5 *The women wear big, coral earrings ... Some of the men wear ... big, wide-sleeved coats*
6 *He seems a decent man, doing his best ... though I notice he doesn't have a complaints box*
7 *He's 27, the son of Tibetan nomads.*

a) the border guards
b) the manager of the Bai Ma Hotel
c) the woman at Tingri who serves yak butter tea
d) Migmar the guide
e) the dancing villagers
f) the monks and nuns
g) the yak herders

4 Is Palin interested in the people he meets? How do you know?
5 Palin does not speak the local language. How do you think he communicates with the people ?
6 Why do you think Palin writes in such detail about the yak herders?
7 Why does Palin write about Mallory and Irvine?

Sense of place

8 Look at the first three paragraphs of Day 59. What impression does Palin give us of Xangmu? How does he achieve this?

9 Palin often tells us the height, in feet and metres, of the mountains he is travelling through or observing. Find some examples of this. What effect does it give?
10 Palin uses similes and comparisons to make his impressions more vivid. In Tingri, a member of the crew compares the yak butter tea to 'liquid gorgonzola, which is spot on'. His bedside cabinet is painted with 'what look very much like flying teeth'. The men dancers in the village wear 'heavy boots of the kind I haven't really seen since the pop festivals of the late sixties'.
Do you find these comparisons effective? Why?
11 Look at Palin's description of Everest Base Camp (Day 62). Is it an attractive place? Why?

12 Which of Palin's descriptions of the Himalayan landscape do you find most effective? Why?

The author's voice

13 Palin is a comedian as well as a traveller and writer. Find some examples of his humour. How would you describe his humour -cruel, gentle, eccentric, observant, slapstick...or something else?

14 Palin is an enthusiastic traveller despite the inevitable discomforts. On Day 59, as he climbs up to the 'highest place I've ever been on earth', he is filled with exhilaration and writes: 'Everything is bewildering, strange and wonderful.' Find some more examples of this enthusiasm.

15 Look again at the second paragraph of Day 61 beginning: 'The latrine is almost subhuman...' What does this tell us about Palin? How would you feel in the same situation?

16 Whai evidence is there that Palin has a social conscience and thathe takes a personal interest in people?

17 What is your overall impression of Palin? Are the adjectives below appropriate?

Friendly	interested in people	tolerant

Can you think of some more adjectives or phrases to describe him?

About the author

George Eric Newby was born in London in 1919. His father was a partner in a firm of wholesale dressmakers, but shared his excitement about travel with his son, reading him stories about faraway places. The stories fired Eric's imagination and, as a child, he tried to run away to sea - but he only got a few miles. He went to St Paul's School, where he was inspired by a lecture by Apsley Cherry-Gerrard, who had accompanied Robert Falcon Scott on his journey to the Antarctic, about which he wrote a book, *The Worst Journey in the World.* The title didn't put Newby off travelling.

Newby left school at 16, and took a job in an advertising agency. In 1938 he left and became an apprentice on a Finnish grain ship which was bound for Australia. His first book, *The Last Grain Race* (1956), was partly based on that experience.

World War II started a few months after Newby returned to England. He joined the army, but later became a member of the Special Boat Section - in 1942 he was captured whilst on a mission off the coast of Sicily, and remained a prisoner of war in northern Italy until 1945. During this time, he met a Slovenian woman called Wanda. When the Italians surrendered, she, and an Italian doctor, helped Newby to escape for a short time, first to a hospital run by the church, then to a village in the Appenine mountains. However, he was recaptured and stayed in a prisoner-of-war (POW) camp in Germany until the end of the war, when he received a Military Cross for his services in the Special Boat Section. Newby returned to Italy to find Wanda, and they married in Florence in 1946. He later published a book, *Love and War in the Appenines* (1971), about his time in the mountains.

Newby spent the next ten years working for his father's dressmaking business. After that, he worked for the fashion house of Worth Paquin (1955-56) and then for the publishers Seeker & Warburg. Alter this, he returned to fashion as a buyer for the John Lewis department stores, but he did not like the routine and was always more interested in navel and writing.

Newby's best-known work, *A Short Walk in the Hindu Kush*, was published In 1958, and Inspired a lively new genre of British travel writing: the humorous portrait of an Englishman abroad Innocent, amateur and understated. In the book, Newby describes how Ins navels in the Afghan mountains, where he and his

friend, Hugh Carless, both inexperienced, set out to climb Mir Samir, a peak of 20,000 feet (6,100 m) in the Hindu Kush mountains of Afghanistan.

Newby was finally sacked from his job with John Lewis in 1963. For the next ten years, he was travel editor for *The Observer* newspaper, and travelled widely as a result, often accompanied by Wanda - his book *Slowly Down the Ganges*, published in 1963, describes one such adventure, a three-month voyage down the Ganges River in India. Newby stayed at *The Observer* until 1973, and he said afterwards that it was the only job that he was sorry to leave.

In 1977 he fulfilled his ambition to travel with Wanda on the Trans-Siberian Railway, about which he wrote *The Big Red Train Ride*, which was published in 1978. More books followed including On *The* Shores *of the Mediterranean* (1984) and *Round* Ireland *in Low Gear* (1987) which described a bicycle journey round Ireland. In 1994, Newby was given a CBE - an honorary award from the Queen to recognize his services to Britain.

Newby also made travel films for the BBC, returning to Parma with his wife in The *Travel Show* in 1994 and visiting one of his favourite cities, Istanbul in Turkey, in 1996. Newby continued to be active, cycling from Scotland to Dorset on the south coast of England when he was over 70. His autobiography, *Around the World in Eighty Years* (2000), celebrated his many navels. Eric Newby died in Guildford, England, in 2006 aged 86.

About the extract

The Land of the Camels is included in *Departures and Arrivals* (1999), a collection of travel essays. It describes the visit of Newby and his wile Wanda to Rajasthan in northern India in 1989. The highlight of their visit was the time spent at the important religious festival near Pushkar.

Summary

It may help you to know something about what happens in the extract before you read it. This summary does not tell you every detail but should help you understand the general meaning.

The story begins in Northern Rajasthan, India, about 150 miles from the Pakistan border. Newby and his wife are travelling in an old car driven by an Indian driver. Newby describes the landscape as they head south west - the Aravalli Range of mountains, the Luni river, the 'semi-desert'. It is November and it is hot. They pass

sheep, goats and large herds of camel but the only real colour they see is in the jewellery and clothes of the local people.

There is very little water, and Newby comments on the importance of the wells that they pass along the way. He describes the magnificent Thar desert between India and Pakistan. He also tells us about the history of the area and the many fortresses (or castles) built by the Rajputs.

At last they arrive at the town of Ajmer. They are late because of problems with the car. It takes several hours to repair it, and there is no time to visit the local shrine and mosques. They travel on to Pushkar, their main destination and the site of the huge annual festival. Arriving at sunset, they look for the tent reserved for them by the local tourist board. This takes some time as there are 600 of these tents and the 'streets' all look the same.

The Fair has been going on for seven days. It is the night of the 12th—13th of November; at 4 o'clock in the morning of the 13th, thousands of Hindu pilgrims will bathe in the sacred lake under the full moon of Kartik. The local people light camp fires and prepare evening meals, while Newby spends some time finding his tent, the toilets and somewhere to put his rubbish and his valuables. At 4am, the bathing starts and people enter the lake from the 25 *ghats*, or entry points, around the lake. Newby tells the story behind the tradition, which involves Lord Brahma, the Creator of the Universe.

Newby spends most of the next day on a hill overlooking the camp, drinking a strange drink and observing the scene. He watches the camel sellers and the astrologers telling people's fortunes.

The closing ceremony lasts several hours and ends with a competition between local and foreign women to see who is the strongest. Newby stays on the hill until sunset and then makes his way back to the camp through the crowds of departing pilgrims.

Pre-reading activities

Key vocabulary

Describing the wells

Newby describes the ornate wells he sees on his journey, where people can collect their water from underground springs.

1. Look at the extract below. Try to picture what the wells look like. Then match the words and phrases (1-8) with the correct definitions (a-h).

*The **wells** were unique. They were so beautiful to look at that when you first set eyes on them, you thought that you were looking at some sort of **domed tomb** or temple. The **shaft** itself was surrounded by four slender columns that resembled **minarets,** or sometimes there were only two, one on either side of it. The water from these wells was, and in some cases still is, raised to the surface in leather waterskins by **bullocks** driven down an inclined ramp. The wells were popular meeting places and at each one there was a **shrine** to Hanuman, the Monkey God, who was much **venerated** by the Rajputs who lived there.*

1 well	a) a deep hole that is dug in the ground to provide a supply of water
2 domed	b) a tall tower that is traditionally part of a mosque, where someone stands to call people to prayer
3 tomb	c) a young male cow
4 shaft	d) shaped like the top half of a ball
5 minaret	e) a religious place built to remember a particular holy person or event
6 bullock	f) a grave where a dead person is buried
7 shrine	g) *formal:* very respected or often worshipped
8 venerated	h) a long narrow passage which often leads from the surface down into the ground

2. Complete the sentences using a suitable form of the words in exercise 1.

1 The Indian farmer used ..... to pull his cart.
2 The king's ..... was marked by a tall stone.
3 In the dry season, the ..... was almost empty.

4 The Monkey God is ..... in parts of India.
5 Many Greek churches have ..... roofs.
6 The mine ..... went down a long way into the earth.
7 The woman kept a small ..... to her favourite saint.
8 The many ..... looked like fingers pointing into the sky.

Words relating to religious practice

Newby explains the religious significance of the wells. He also describes words that relate to the religious beliefs and practices of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs.

3. Look at the words and definitions. Then answer the questions (1-4).

mosque (n) a building in which Muslims (followers of Islam) worship
ceremony (n) the formal traditions, actions or words used to celebrate a traditional or religious event
temple (n) a building used for worship in some religions, typically religions other than Christianity
pilgrim (n) someone who travels to a holy place that is important in their religion
sacred (adj) considered to be holy or connected with God in a special way
sacrifice (n) the act of killing a person or animal as part of a ceremony to honour a god or a spirit
saint (n) someone who the Christian church officially honours after their death because they have lived an especially holy life
inviolable (adj) too ii upon am or respected to be attacked
worshipper (n) someone who feels or shows love and respect for something or someone, usually a god

1 Which words relate to people?
2 Which words relate to buildings?
3 Which words relate to religious practice(s)?
4 Which word(s) could be used to describe a place of religious importance?

Describing the landscape

Newby describes the diverse landscape around him - from farmland to desert.

4. Look at the words and definitions. Then answer the questions.

abundant existing or available in large quantities
crop a plant grown for food, usually on a farm
dam a wall built across a river to stop the water from flowing, especially in order to create a lake or to help produce electric power
desert a large area of land with few plants and little water, where the weather is always dry
fertile fertile land is able to produce good crops or plants
marsh an area of soft wet land
peninsula a long piece of land that is mostly surrounded by water, but is joined at the one end to a larger area of land
reservoir an artificial or natural lake where water is stored so that it can be supplied to the houses in an area
sand dune a hill of sand that is formed by the wind in a desert or near a beach
shrub a low thick bush, especially one that has been planted in a garden

1 Which words are adjectives?
2 Which words relate to plants?
3 Which words describe manmade structures?
4 Which words describe natural structures ?

Words connected with military action

Newby spent time in the army and he is very interested in the fortresses - or castles - and the military past of Rajasthan.

5. Look at the words and definitions. Then use the appropriate word to complete the paragraph below.

warrior a soldier, especially in the past
chieftains in the past, the leaders of tribes in Scotland
martial prowess skill in fighting
clansmen members of a large group of families that are related to each other, especially in Scotland
artillery bombardment an attack on a place made by dropping bombs from planes or by firing large guns for a long time
garrison a group of soldiers living in and defending a particular place
fortress a strong, well-protected building used for defending a place
impregnable (adj) very well protected and difficult to attack
soldier of fortune someone who is willing to light as a soldier In any army that pays them

The great ..... rose up majestically in the middle of the desert. Most of it was intact, although it had suffered an ..... in the previous year. It certainly looked, with its strong walls and towers. Inside lived a ..... of several hundred soldiers. They were known for their great ..... : nobody was more skilled in fighting. People compared them to the ..... of ancient times because they fought to the death. They were extremely loyal to each other, just like the ..... of Scotland. Their leaders resembled the Scottish ..... and led their men fearlessly into battle. Nobody ever left the fortress or became ..... with a foreign army. Such a thing was unthinkable.

As you read the extract, ask yourself:

a) What would it be like to live somewhere like this?
b) Would you enjoy a trip like this?
c) Why do you think so many tourists go to the Pushkar festival?
d) What aspects of the festival do you find attractive/unattractive?

The Land of the Camels

by Eric Newby

We were out in the sticks[1], which were very abundant up in Northern Rajasthan, about 150 miles from the Pakistan border. Our vehicle was a Hindustan Ambassador[2], a faithful copy of an early 1950s Morris Oxford[3]. The driver was also a faithful copy of every other early 1950s-vintage driver we had ever travelled with in India.

We were heading south-westwards, towards Ajmer. To the left, running in the same direction, was the Aravalli Range, the only mountain range in Rajasthan, which is what used to be known as Rajputana, and the oldest mountain range in the world.

It is, therefore, not surprising that having been where it is for some 700 million years - it originally extended from the Kumaon Himalaya to the southern end of the Indian peninsula - it is now the colour of old bones and so worn down that it rarely **exceeds** 3,000 feet (Mount Abu is 5,000 feet but is detached from the main range).

The Aravalli begin near Delhi and finally expire on the inner edge of the Rann of Kutch, a **spooky,** 8,000-square-mile expanse of saline marsh or saline desert, according to the time of year, which borders on the Arabian Sea, south of Karachi, in Gujarat (and is, or was nothing Is for ever - populated with wild asses[4], which must be one of the few places remaining in India where they have a chance of not being mucked about[5]).

The only river of any value in this part of Rajasthan is the Luni. It rises near Pushkar, which we were on our way to visit, and it, too, ends up in the Rann of Kutch. On its banks, before it becomes brackish[6] further downstream, barley and wheat[7] can be grown, the only place in Northern Rajasthan where this is possible. Apart from this fine fertile bit the whole of Northern and Western Rajasthan is a vast, more or less sandy tract[8].

It was midday in mid-November 1989 and the temperature was still about 32°C (89.6°F), and whatever anyone tells you at this time of year there is no need to **wrap up well** in the evenings. This is a region of extremes. In May/June, when no sane traveller would be here, the main day temperature is 94°F, but it can and does go up to 120°F, which is **insupportable** unless you are a fire worshipper. In December/January you really need your woollies[9], when the night temperature often falls below freezing. October-March are the best months in Rajasthan.

We were in the midst of seemingly endless expanses of sandy semi-desert, but one in which, in spite of being a semi-desert, equally endless groves of trees gave merciful shade and a touch of variety to what would otherwise have been an

utterly **monotonous** landscape, and, goodness knows[10], it was monotonous enough even with them.

They were pretty trees, at a distance a bit reminiscent of olives. From time to time they were rigorously **pruned** so that their leaves could be used as feed for the animals and after this was done they looked terrible, like trees after an artillery bombardment.

Under them were flocks of sheep, bred mostly for their wool, goats that had done their best to make the semi-desert what it is and had every intention of keeping it that way, great herds of camels, of what looked like various degrees of domesticity[11], the same colour as the sand, which did all the pulling and **ploughing** here and, rather surprisingly, cows.

At that season, apart from some stunted shrubs, some clumps of coarse grass, and what looked like pampas grass[12], the only real colour in that wilderness was provided by the people who lived in it - the women loaded with chunky jewellery which must have weighed a ton and would have done well in Van Cleef and Arpels[13], all dressed in the brilliantly coloured wraps which took the place of saris[14]; the men in their equally **dazzling** headcloths, in shades of pink and green and every other conceivable colour under the sun, which there, in the land of the Rajputs, seemed to be twice the size of similar headgear worn anywhere else in India.

There were few enough hamlets[15], let alone villages, and those that could be seen from the road mostly consisted of mud huts roofed with thatch and were so far apart that you wondered how anyone ever got to the intervening fields to work them.

In fact the only reason why those habitations[16] were where they were was because there was water. If it failed, as it sometimes did, then the occupants moved.

In that part of Rajasthan almost all the surface water was brackish and on the borders of Jaipur and Jodhpur we passed Lake Sambhar which produced large quantities of salt, said to be carried to it on the wind from the Rann of Kutch. Some rainwater was collected in reservoirs called *johras.*

The wells were unique. They were so beautiful to look at that when you first set eyes on them, you thought that you were looking at some sort of domed tomb or temple. The shaft itself was surrounded by (our slender columns that resembled minarets, or sometimes there were only two, one on either side of it. The water from these wells was, and in some cases still is, raised to the surface in leather waterskins by bullocks driven down an inclined **ramp.** The wells were

popular meeting places and at each one there was a shrine to Hanuman, the Monkey God, who was much venerated by the Rajputs who lived there. The only crop in the semi-desert was millet[17], although gram-chick pea[18] was grown for **fodder.** The **monsoon** rains began, that is if they came at all, towards the second half of September, and continued, more off than on, until the beginning of November, but never amounted to more than ten inches a year, more often five. The rain gods were invoked[19] with the air of fire. The sands were ploughed with wooden ploughs pulled by camels. Only a few showers were needed to bring the crop to maturity.

To the north and west of where we were, somewhere north of Ajmer, was the Thar, the Indian Desert, the Sanskrit name for which, pre-dating any other, is Marusthali, which signifies Death. The Thar separates India from Pakistan along a 300-mile front and its sands, wind-borne, make deep inroads into[20] the semi-desert and in some places, where we were then, the roads were partially blocked by it.

It was an **awe-inspiring** sight: long, straight, parallel ridges of sand, each one up to a couple of miles long, as regularly spaced as **ripples** on a seashore, their summits, blown up to a height of between fifty and a hundred feet by the prevailing westerly winds, were constantly on the move. Difficult to believe that a friendly monsoon could turn it into a temporary paradise of **succulent** vegetation for sheep and cattle almost overnight.

There were a lot of birds in the semi-desert: peacocks in thousands, regarded as inviolable by Hindus, made the air **hideous** with their screaming, and there were **partridges** and Indian rollers. We also saw nilgai, a sort of deer.

Most of the inhabitants were Hindus, although it was the Rajputs of the warrior (Kshatriya) caste[21] who still had the most **clout,** as they had done since time immemorial[22]. To them, rather like Scottish chieftains, riches have always been less important than birth and martial prowess. Their clansmen could be penniless[2'] but they were just as welcome at the chief's house.

Like the Normans[24], these Rajputs were mighty fortress builders. The fortresses looked impregnable with their gates covered with iron plates and spikes at an appropriate level to discourage elephants from **bashing** them in with their heads. Some of them had huge catchment systems which delivered the rainwater to cisterns[25] underneath the courtyards.

Some of these fortresses looked impregnable but they were not always so. If they were penetrated by the enemy, usually Muslims, the Rajput garrisons, their robes stained with bright yellow turmeric, the garb of doom[26], and inflamed by large doses of *bhang* (hashish[27]), fought to the last, leaving their women to practice *jauhar,* self-immolation[28] on a great pyre, taking their children with them.

But not every Rajput fought to the last man, or the last woman. Sometimes, when forced out of their positions by Muslim *force majeure*[19], they either managed to found a new town or city, or else went off to serve as soldiers of fortune either with those who had defeated them, or any other employers who could afford their services.

That afternoon we arrived in Ajmer, late as we invariably were whenever we travelled by car in Rajasthan, due to events beyond anyone's control. This time the sump'[0] fell off and a back wheel ran over it, **squashing** it flat, a mishap unusual even for India.

It took two sump beaters three and a half hours to unsquash it and then it wouldn't lit. Eventually a replacement was found in a **dump** full of old, wrecked Ambassadors, where any sane person would have looked in the first place.

No time, in Ajmer, to visit the Dargah, burial place of Khwaja Muin ud din Chishti, a Sufi[31] saint (1143-1235), whose shrine is regularly visited by innumerable Muslims, many of whom travel long distances on foot. Akbar, who used to come every year from Agra, built a mosque there; Shah Jahan built another; Humayun completed the shrine and the Nizam of Hyderabad had the doors made which are now covered with horse shoes nailed to them by horse copers[32] in memory of successful deals.

No time either to visit the mosque called Adhai-din-ka-Jhopra, otherwise the 'hut of two and a half days', which was what it took to build it. A bit slow considering that it was all done supernaturally[33].

Why no time? Because in order to get to Pushkar we had another seven miles to go; the sun was already sinking in the west, and when we got there we had to find a **tent** reserved for us in a tented village set up by Rajasthan Tourism, one of 600 more or less identical tents, not *une mince affaire* (an insignificant matter) after nightfall, as one French couple described it to us the following morning, having been faced with the necessity of doing just this.

And so we set off along the beautiful shores of the Ana Sagar, a lake made in the twelfth century by damming the river Luni, the one that flows into the Rann of Kutch, which had a luxury hotel on its shores and two marble **pavilions** built by Shah Jahan in 1637.

Then the Ambassador ground up over a rocky saddle in the Nag Pahar, the Snake Mountains, and after a long freewheel[34] downhill we found ourselves in the environs of Pushkar where the Fair was going full blast[35]. It had already been going on for seven days.

This was the night of 12-13 November and four o'clock on the morning of the 13th would be Kartik Purnima, the auspicious moment of the full moon of

Kartik (October/November) when every Hindu present in and around Pushkar at that moment would be trying to bathe in the Pushkar Sarowar, the sacred lake.

Pushkar lies between ranges of stony mountains with the lake hidden away below it to the south, and it is overlooked by two steep hills with temples on top of them - the one to the southwest is the Ratnagiri Hill which supports the temple of Savitri. To the west of the village the great sand dunes of the Thar desert begin.

At this moment, around five o'clock in the evening, there was not much to see of Pushkar, what with about 200,000 Rajasthani and other assorted pilgrims on its doorsteps, hordes[36] of sadhus[37] down from the Himalayas (one of them hanging in a tree), innumerable merchants in innumerable booths selling all sorts of merchandise, including trappings[38] for camels and cattle, not all of it tourist junk[39], plus thousands of foreign tourists. (The Rajasthan Tourist Authority estimated 100,000 for the whole fair, but one never quite believes hundreds of thousands and millions in India.)

The tented camp was on the edge of the sands with the temple of Savitri looming up behind it on its hill. On them a large proportion of the 200,000 humans, together with something like 50,000 camels, cows, bullocks, calves, sheep, goats and horses were encamped, together with the carts in which they had come, some hauled by bullocks, some by camels, a few by **tractors.**

The sun was setting now, a big, red blood orange that looked as if it was **floating** in a jar of honey, and the smoke of whatever number of camp fires 200,000 people need to cook their evening meals rose in the air, together with all the noises that domestic animals make before settling down for the night, **grunts** and **groans** and the **excruciating** noise made by one camel which, for some reason, was having its nostrils **pierced.** Soon it was quite dark.

The de luxe[40] tents were not all that luxe, but how can you make a tent luxe in the middle of a sandy waste unless it has a wooden floor? They were laid out on a simple grid-iron plan[41] but nevertheless it was difficult to find one's own and we had some interesting encounters with various Japanese, Swedes, Americans, Germans and Brits[42] in the course of looking for it, some of them being without clothes.

Take a big plastic bag, if you are a luxe tent inhabiter, or a non-luxe one for that matter, as it is almost impossible to find a **dustbin.** The loos were some way off but, once there, you could get hot water for washing, brewed up on an open fire.

The principal problem was to know what to do with one's **valuables** as tents don't have locks. There were some strong boxes[43] in 'Reception' but they were usually full, so you had to carry anything you didn't want to lose with you. In fact

we didn't hear of anyone being robbed. There were also **dormitory** sleeping tents which were much cheaper.

Serve-yourself meals were taken in a huge, communal, gaily-coloured[44] tent, most dishes of Indian inspiration - vegetables only and no alcoholic drinks in it or anywhere else in Pushkar. The food was not bad. The bathing began at 4 a.m., with the huge full moon of Kartik overhead, from the twenty-five bathing ghats[45] which almost entirely surround it.

This is the most sacred lake in the whole of India, the place where Lord Brahma, Creator of the Universe, while flying over head on his **tame** goose, dropped a lotus[46] petal while searching for a suitable place to perform a *yagna* (a Vedic sacrifice). Where the petal landed the lake appeared and there Brahma landed to perform it.

In order to perform the *yagna* satisfactorily it was necessary for Savitri, Brahma's wife, to be present, but she took so long to get ready that Brahma used a complaisant[47] milkmaid[48] as a **stand-in.** By the time Savitri arrived the whole thing was over.

She put a curse on Brahma to the effect that henceforth he would only be worshipped in Pushkar, and today the Brahma temple there is the only temple in India in which he is worshipped. Savitri then left for the Ratnagiri Hill, above the lake, one of the two now crowned with temples, and there immolated herself in one of these feats[49] of combustion[50] so irresistible to Hindu gods and goddesses.

Watching this vast concourse of brilliantly clad bathers entering the turgid waters of the lake, hour after hour, for it is impossible for 200,000 people to do so at one time, 1 couldn't help worrying about a passage in Murray's great *Handbook for Travellers in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon,* 19th edition, 1962. It reads: 'The sacred **crocodiles** in the lake will be fed by the Mahants [the guardians of the temples] on request, when a small gratuity[51] of one or two rupees[52] will be appropriate.' I hoped that this information was out of date.

For much of the rest of the day we sat out under a **canvas** tilt" on top of a sandhill, in what was a temporary teahouse, drinking endless cups of what I thought was a delicious beverage which didn't taste of anything recognizable, certainly not tea.

From this eminence, looking out towards the temple of Savitri on the hill above, we watched the owners putting their camels through their paces for prospective customers, or consulting a team of Brahman[54] astrologers out on the sands about prospects for the Hindu equivalent of 1990.

The closing ceremony took hours and ran late. We left after a great tug-of-war[55] between a hastily assembled team of young memsahibs[56] from all over the world and their tough Rajasthani equivalents, which ended in a **draw.**

We stayed on the hill until the moment when the sun sank and the moon, now **on the wane,** was already high in the sky behind it. Then we churned our way through the sand back through the **encampments** from which the country people were now in full retreat[57] in bullock and camel carts and painted buses that looked like brilliant insects. It was all over. In all our lives we had seldom enjoyed ourselves more.

1 *informal:* an area far from a town or city
2 a car first made in India in 1958
3 a British car which was the model for the Ambassador
4 *old-fashioned:* word for donkeys
5 *informal:* to spoil or damage something
6 brackish water has a slight taste of salt and is therefore not pure
7 plants that produce grain for making food
8 a large area of land
9 *informal:* clothing made from wool, especially knitted clothing
10 phrase used for emphasizing what you say, or expressing surprise
11 referring to home and family life - some of the annuals were wilder than others
12 a plant with very tall stems and long white flowers that look like feathers
13 a famous French jewelers
14 a very long wide piece of cloth, especially silk, that women in India wrap around their bodies to make a type of long dress
15 a small village
16 *literary:* houses
17 a type of grain often used as food for birds
18 a round yellow-brown seed
19 to ask for help from someone who is stronger or more powerful, especially a god
20 to take or use a large part of something
21 one of the traditional social classes that people were born Into in Hindu society
22 a phrase meaning for an extremely long time
23 *literary:* having no money
24 people from Normandy in northern France, ["he Normans ruled England in the 11* and 12'[1]' centuries
25 a container for holding water
26 *here,* clothes signifying death, destruction or complete failure
27 a form of the drug cannabis
28 *very formal:* suicide by burning
29 French: greater strength or power
30 the part at the bottom of the engine that holds the oil
31 a member of an Islamic religious group whose aim is to communicate directly with God and to understand spiritual mysteries
32 someone who looks after and sells horses
33 events/actions that seem to come from a power such as magic and do not have a natural or scientific explanation
34 to move on a bicycle without moving the pedals, or to move in a car without switching on the engine, usually down a slope
35 as loudly or with as much power as possible
36 a large number of people
37 Hindu holy men
38 possessions that show that someone is rich, powerful or important
39 things that are of very low quality
40 used about things that are better in quality and more expensive than other things ol the same type
41 a street plan based on parallel lines and lines that cross at right angles I ' *informal:* someone who comes from the UK
43 a box that can be locked to keep money and other important things inside

44 with bright, attractive colours
45 in India, the steps leading down to a river or lake where people wash themselves
46 an Asian water plant with Large white or pink flowers
47 *unusual use:* trying to please other people
48 an old word meaning 'a woman whose job is to milk cows'
49 something impressive and often dangerous that someone does
50 the process of burning
51 a small amount of money that you give to someone to thank them for doing something for you
52 the unit of money used in India, Pakistan and some other countries
53 a sloping cover above your head
54 a Hindu who belongs to the highest caste, in which men were traditionally priests
55 a game in which two teams pull on opposite sides of a rope until one team sun eeds in pulling the other team across a line between them
56 *Indian English:* an old word used for referring to European women
57 they were all leaving

Post-reading activities

Understanding the extract

Use these questions to help you check that you have understood the extract.

1 Which country is Newby travelling in?
2 What kind of transport is he using?
3 Who is driving?
4 What is 'the colour of old bones'?
5 What is the Rann of Kutch?
6 What is most of Rajasthan like?
7 What is possible because of the river Luni?
8 What time of year is it? What is the weather like?
9 Why is Newby grateful for the 'groves of trees'?
10 Which animals do most of the 'pulling and ploughing'?
11 What do the local men and women wear?
12 Why are the villages located in certain places?
13 Why are the wells 'unique'?
14 When do the rains usually come?
15 What is the Thar?
16 What is 'difficult to believe'?
17 What form of wildlife does Newby see?
18 What religion are most of the inhabitants of the area?
19 How does Newby describe the Rajputs?
20 What is *jauhur?*
21 What did the Rajputs often do if their fortresses were taken by their enemies?
22 Why does Newby arrive late in Ajmer?
23 What does Newby not visit in Ajmer? Why?

At the Fair

24 How long has the Fair been going on when Newby arrives?
25 What lakes place on 13th November?
26 Who is at the Fair?
27 How many people and animals are there at the Fair?
28 What are the tractors used for?
29 How do the pilgrims cook their food?
30 Why is the camel making a noise?
31 Why do you think it is difficult for Newby to find his tent?
32 Who are 'without clothes'?

33 Why is it important to have a plastic bag?
34 How can hot water be obtained?
35 What is the 'principal problem' according to Newby?
36 What are the 'serve-yourself meals like?
37 What time does the bathing begin?
38 According to the legend, what did Brahma perform on the lake?
39 Why was Savitri angry?
40 What curse did Savitri put on her husband?
41 Why is Newby worried as he watches the bathers enter the lake?
42 What does Newby observe from the hill?
43 What takes a long time?
44 How does Newby feel as the Fair ends?

Language study

Vocabulary

Formal language

The author sometimes mixes rather formal vocabulary with more informal vocabulary. This occasionally results in a comic effect.

1. Match the formal words in bold in the examples below with the informal equivalents in the box.

means	crowd	hill	biggest	drink	end
like	meetings	from that time	dressed		

*The **principal** problem was to know what to do with one's valuables.*

*The Aravalli finally **expire** on the inner edge of the Rann of Kutch.*

*To the north and west of where we were ...was the Thar, the Indian desert, the Sanskrit name for which ... is Marusthali, which **signifies** death.*

*... we had some interesting **encounters** with various Japanese, Swedes, Americans, Germans and Brits.*

They were pretty trees, at a distance a bit reminiscent of olives.
... watching this vast concourse of brilliantly clad bathers...
*we sat ... drinking endless cups of what I thought was a delicious **beverage.***

*She put a curse on Brahma to the effect that **henceforth** he would only be worshipped in Pushkar.*

*From this **eminence** ... we watched the owners putting their camels through their paces.*

Grammar

Multiple-clause sentences

Newby often uses longer, multiple-clause sentences, especially when he is describing the landscape and surroundings. Look at this extract describing the animals in the desert.

> *Under them were flocks of sheep, bred mostly for their wool, goats that had done their best to make the semi-desert what it is and had every intention of keeping it that way, great herds of camels, of what looked like various degrees of domesticity, the same colour as the sand, which did all the pulling and ploughing here and, rather surprisingly, cows.*

Notice how all this information can be broken down into separate sentences:

> *There were flocks of sheep under them [the trees].*
> *The sheep were bred mostly for their wool.*
> *There were goats.*
> *The goats had done their best to make the semi-desert what it is.*
> *They had every intention of keeping it that way.*
> *There were great herds of camels.*
> *They were of what looked like various degrees of domesticity.*
> *They were the same colour as the sand.*
> *They did all the pulling and ploughing here.*
> *Rather surprisingly, there were cows.*

Notice how Newby uses *that* and *which* to connect the clauses describing the animals.

Here is another example. This extract describes the hot, dry conditions in the desert-like landscape.

> *In May/June, when no sane traveller would be here, the main day temperature is 94°F, but it can and does go up to 120°F, which is insupportable unless you are a fire worshipper.*

2. Try and break down the above sentence into shorter sentences. Use these phrases to help you.

No sane traveller .....

The main day temperature .....

It can and does go up .....

This is .....

Do the same with this sentence.

> *The shaft itself was surrounded by four slender columns that resembled minarets, or sometimes there were only two, one on either side of it.*

The use of preposition + *which*

Newby sometimes uses a preposition followed by *which* to introduce a new clause. This is quite a formal structure. Look at this example:

> *Then we churned our way through the sand back through the encampments* ***from which*** *the country people were now in full retreat in bullock and camel carts.*

This could be expressed using two separate sentences:

> *Then we churned our way through the sand back through the encampments.*
>
> *The country people were now in full retreat from the encampments in bullock and camel carts.*

3. Look at these examples from the extract and underline the prepositions + *which*. How could you express the same ideas without using a preposition + *which?*

Example: *To the north and west of where we were, somewhere north of Aimer, was the Thar, the Indian Desert, the Sanskrit name <u>for which</u>, pre-dating any other, is Marusthali, which signifies Death.*

To the north and west of where we were, somewhere north of Ajmer, was the Thar, the Indian Desert. The Sanskrit name for the Thar, predating any other, is Marusthali, which signifies Death.

On [the hills] a large proportion of the 200,000 humans, together with something like 50,000 camels, cows, bullocks, calves, sheep, goats and horses were encamped, together with the carts in which they had come, some hauled by bullocks, some by camels, a few by tractors.

We were in the midst of seemingly endless expanses of sandy semi-desert, but one in which, in spite of being a semi-desert, equally endless groves of trees gave merciful shade.

4. Write the following as single sentences using a preposition + *which.*

1 There were a lot of animals. About half were camels.

2 We stopped at an old well. There was a dome on the top of it.

3 The merchants carried large bags. There was a variety of goods in them.

4 The fortress had been huge. There was very little left.

5 The village was very poor. We stopped to eat there.

---

6 The women wore saris. Some of them were brightly coloured.

Literary analysis

Events

1. Write these events from the extract in the correct order.

a) The bathers enter the sacred lake.
b) The car breaks down.
c) Newby looks for his tent at Pushkar.
d) They arrive at Ajmer.
e) Newby sees the sand dunes of the Thar desert.
f) The closing ceremony takes place.
g) The camel complains when its nostrils are being pierced,
h) Newby watches the Fair from up on a hill.

2. Match the extracts (a-h) with the following four categories.

1 Historical background
2 Legend
3 Description of landscape
4 Advice to travellers

a) *Take a big plastic bag, if you are a luxe tent inhabiter, or a non-luxe one for that matter, as it is almost impossible to find a dustbin.*
b) *It was an awe-inspiring sight: long, straight, parallel ridges of sand, each one up to a couple of miles long, as regularly spaced as ripples on a seashore...*
c) *She put a curse on Brahma to the effect that henceforth he would only be worshipped in Pushkar.*
d) *In December/January you really need your woollies, when the night temperature often falls below freezing.*
e) *Pushkar lies between ranges of stony mountains with the lake hidden away below it to the south*
f) *Most of the inhabitants were Hindus, although it was the Rajputs of the warrior*

(Kshatriya) caste who still had the most clout, as they had done since time immemorial.

g) *This is the most sacred lake in the whole of India, the place where Lord Brahma, Creator of the Universe, while flying overhead on his tame goose, dropped a lotus petal while searching for a suitable place to perform a* yagna *(a Vedic sacrifice).*

h) *Humayun completed the shrine and the Nizam of Hyderabad had the doors made which are now covered with horse shoes nailed to them by horse copers in memory of successful deals.*

People

3. Does Newby name any of the people he meets? What effect does this have?
4. Which words does Newby use to convey the great number and variety of people at the Fair?
5. Newby worked as a fashion buyer for some years. How is this experience reflected in his description of the way people dress?

Sense of place

Newby gives his impression of different places by mixing description, personal comment and historical anecdote. Look at the extracts below and answer the questions.

> *It is, therefore, not surprising that having been where it is for some 700 million years - it originally extended from the Kumaon Himalaya to the southern end of the Indian peninsula — it is now the colour of old bones and so worn down that it rarely exceeds 3,000 feet (Mount Abu is 5,000 feet but is detached from the main range).*

6. What is Newby describing here? What is 'not surprising'?

> *The Aravalli begin near Delhi and finally expire on the inner edge of the Rann of Kutch, a spooky, 8,000-square-mile expanse of saline marsh or saline desert, according to the time of year, which borders on the Arabian Sea, south of Karachi, in Gujarat (and is, or was - nothing is for ever -populated with wild asses, which must be one of the few places remaining in India where they have a chance of not being mucked about).*

7. What is the Rann of Kutch? How does it change 'according to the time of year'? Why? Why do the asses 'have a chance of not being mucked about'? Which adjective describes Newby's reaction to it?

> *It was an awe-inspiring sight: long, straight, parallel ridges of sand, each one up* to *a couple of miles long, as regularly spaced as ripples on a seashore, their summits, blown up to a height of between fifty and a hundred feet by the prevailing westerly winds, were constantly on the move.*

8. What is Newby describing here? Which adjective describes his reactions to the landscape? Which comparison does he use? Which phrases tell us that the sand hills are huge but also changing?

9. Find the paragraph beginning: 'The wells were unique'. What is unique about them? How does Newby convey this uniqueness to the reader?

10. Find the paragraph beginning: 'Some of these fortresses looked impregnable'. How does Newby use his imagination to convey what happened when a fortress was penetrated?

11. Find the paragraph beginning: 'The sun was setting now', in which Newby describes the camp in the evening. Which of our senses does this description appeal to?

The author's voice

12. Newby often inserts phrases into a sentence which modify what he is saying or give us an idea of what he is thinking. For example, in his description of the Rann of Kutch, he says:

> *[it] is, or was - **nothing is for ever** - populated with wild asses*

The phrase 'nothing is for ever' shows that Newby has travelled widely and has seen big changes even in his lifetime. Look at the examples below and underline the phrases in which Newby gives a personal comment on something or speaks directly to the reader. What do the phrases show in each case?

> *It was midday in mid-November 1989 and the temperature was still about 32°C (89.6°F), and whatever anyone tells you at this time of year there is no need to wrap up well in the evenings.*

> *In May/June, when no sane traveller would be here, the main day temperature is 94 °F.*

We were in the midst of seemingly endless expanses of sandy semi-desert, but one in which, in spite of being a semi-desert, equally endless groves of trees gave merciful shade and a touch of variety to what would otherwise have been an utterly monotonous landscape, and, goodness knows, it was monotonous enough even with them. That afternoon we arrived in Ajmer, late as we invariably were whenever we travelled by car in Rajasthan, due to events beyond anyone's control.

The Rajasthan Tourist Authority estimated 100,000 for the whole fair, but one never quite believes hundreds of thousands and millions in India.

13. Newby often comments humorously on events, for example, when he sees the bathers entering the lake. What does the guide book tell him? Why does he hope it is 'out of date'?

14. Think about the episode of the squashed sump and the amount oi time it takes to fix. Do you find Newby's comments amusing? Can you find any other examples of his humour?

15. Which of the following words would you use to describe Newby?

experienced	patient	funny	curious	bored
ignorant	enthusiastic	humble	tolerant	lazy

What other words might describe him?

About the author

Bill Bryson was born William McGuire Bryson in 1951 in Des Moines, Iowa, USA, one of three children. His father, William Bryson, was a sports journalist for the Des *Moines Register,* a job he held for 50 years. Bill Bryson went to Drake University but left in 1972, without finishing his degree, and decided to travel around Europe for four months. He found this so interesting that he returned to Europe in 1973, this time with a friend from school. Eighteen years later, in 1991, in his book *Neither* Here *Nor There,* Bryson writes about a later trip to Europe and includes reflections on his earlier experiences there.

As part of his trip in 1973, Bryson visited the United Kingdom for the first time and decided to find a job there. He worked in a psychiatric hospital where he met a nurse, Cynthia, whom he later married. They moved to the United States in 1975 so that Bryson could complete his university studies. In 1977, the couple returned to England, where they remained until 1995 and had four children. Bryson worked mainly as a journalist and for the business sections of The *Times* and *The Independent* newspapers. He also wrote books in a variety of genres which reflected his interest in travel, history, science and the English language. His book about Britain, Notes *from a Small Island* (1995), became a best seller and was later adapted for television.

In 1995, the Brysons returned to the United States where they lived in Hanover, New Hampshire. Bryson wrote about these years in *Notes from a Big Country* (1999). He also wrote A *Walk in the Woods* (1998), based on his attempt to walk the Appalachian Trail, a long walk through the Blue Ridge Mountains of the east coast of the United States. In 2003 the Brysons returned to England to live in Norfolk.

In 2004, Bryson won the prestigious Aventis Prize for best general science book with A *Short History of Nearly Everything,* in which he explores the origins of scientific discoveries. In 2005, he was appointed Chancellor of Durham University in the north of England where he became actively involved in the world of higher education. He also continued to write prolifically. His most recent works include a book on Shakespeare, *Shakespeare: The World as* Stage (2007), and At Home: An *Informal History of Private Life* (2010) in which he writes a history of the world through common, everyday rooms and objects.

Bryson and his wife continue to live in England. His warm personality and lively, accessible style of writing ensure that his activities and books are as popular as ever.

About the extract

Hammerfest is a chapter from Bryson's book *Neither Here* Nor *There*, published in 1991. The book is about the author's tour of Europe in 1990. He also reflects on two earlier trips made in the early 1970s. Bryson's trip begins in the winter, in Hammerfest, Norway, where his goal is to see the natural spectacle of the Northern Lights.

Summary

It may help you to know something about what happens in the extract before you read it. This summary does not tell you every detail but should help you understand the general meaning.

Bryson is staying at the Haja Hotel in Hammerfest at the end of December. On his first walk through the town, he finds little to interest him. The shops are closed and there are very few people in the streets. He walks to the harbour and is blown off his feet by the strong wind. After visiting a monument called the Meridianstotten, he returns to the hotel.

In the evening, Bryson expects some excitement because it is New Year's Eve. However, the only thing that happens in the hotel is an incident in which the waiter throws one of the few customers into the street. Bryson goes outside where again, nothing is happening. However, just before midnight, the people come out of their houses and set fireworks off in the street. This display continues for half an hour.

The days pass and Bryson gets more and more frustrated because he hasn't seen the Northern Lights, his main aim in coming to Hammerfest. He spends the time walking, looking at the sky and reading on his bed. He tries to watch the local TV station but finds it extremely boring.

Little by little, Bryson begins to meet people in the town. He visits the Mayor. An Englishman and his wife invite him to dinner at their house. There, he learns something of the history and the local news of Hammerfest. He gradually becomes more interested in the town.

On the sixteenth day of his visit, Bryson sees a cloud of different colours above the town - the Northern Lights. It is a short display but he is delighted with

it. In the evening the Lights return but this time they last much longer. Despite the cold, Bryson stays and watches for about two hours, unable to pull himself away.
The next day, Bryson goes to the tourist office to tell Hans, the tourism director, about his experience and to book a place on the bus for the following week. He finds that there is a bus leaving in ten minutes and runs back to the hotel for his luggage. Soon, he is on his way to Oslo.

Pre-reading activities

Key vocabulary

Around the harbour

Bryson describes Hammerfest as a very quiet harbour town. The life and economy of the town centres around the sea - mainly with fishing, and around the sky - the tourism for the Northern Lights.

1. Look at the extracts below, then match the words (1-11) with their definitions (a-k).

> *I took a room in the Haja Hotel near the* ***quay.. .1*** *dumped my things,briefly investigated the* ***amenities*** *and went out* to *look at Hammerfest.*
> *The hotel was in a dark neighbourhood of* ***shipping*** *offices and* ***warehouses****.*
> *I walked up to the main street, Strandgatan, which ran for about 300yards along the* ***harbour,*** *lined on the inland side by an assortment of businesses...*
> *Beyond the high street, the road curved around the* ***hay,*** *leading out to a narrow* ***headland.***
> *.. .on the harbour side by the town hall, a few more shops and the dark hulking mass of a Birds* Eye *Findus fish-****processing plant.*** *The head land proved unrewarding, just a jumble of warehouses and small* ***ship-repair yards,*** *loomed over by groaning* ***cranes.***
> *The town itself was wonderfully bright and snug-looking, a* **haven** *and light in the endless Arctic night.*

1 quay	a) a very tall machine used for lifting or moving heavy objects and building tall buildings
2 amenities	b) a hard surface next to a sea or river, where boats can stop
3 shipping	c) a place where people or animals can feel safe or happy
4 warehouse	d) a big building where large amounts of goods are stored
5 harbour	e) a narrow piece of land that sticks out into the sea
6 bay	f) an area of water near the land where it is safe for boats to stay
7 headland	g) an area of the coast where the land curves inwards
	h) the business of carrying goods, especially in a

8	**processing plant**	ship
9	**ship yard**	i) *usually plural* something that makes it comfortable or enjoyable to live or work somewhere
10	**crane**	j) a place where ships are built or repaired
11	**haven**	k) a factory that treats a food or another substance to make it ready for use

Describing the Northern Lights

Bryson uses a range of words to describe the movement and appearance of the Northern Lights.

2. Look at the verbs below and their definitions. Imagine the lights they describe. Which verbs do you think only describe light (including the light from a fire)? Which verbs could be used to describe other things?

glimmer to shine with a soft weak light that is not steady
swirl to turn round and round quickly
shoot to move very suddenly and quickly
hang to be suspended in the air or sky
glitter to shine with a lot of small quick flashes of light
creep to move quietly and slowly
flash to shine brightly for a very short time, or to shine on and off very quickly
spin to move quickly in circles
flicker to go on and off (a light), or not burn evenly (a flame)
vanish to disappear suddenly

3. Choose the best word to complete the sentences below.

1 The flame **flickered/crept** briefly and then went out.
2 The full moon **hung/swirled** in the night sky like a beautiful jewel.
3 The burglar **flashed/crept** quietly into the darkened house.
4 He **flashed/flickered** his torch on and off several times to warn his friend.
5 The fireworks **glimmered/shot** across the sky like giant rockets.
6 The cat's eyes **glittered/spun** in the shadows.
7 The aeroplane appeared briefly and then **flickered/vanished** into the clouds.
8 As the dancer turned around, her skirts **swirled/shot** around her.

9 It's hard to imagine that the planet is **creeping/spinning** all the time.
10 As her jewels caught the light, they **glimmered/vanished** softly.

Describing the experience of seeing the Northern Lights

4. Look at the adjectives and definitions in the box, and then answer the questions below.

luminous very bright **weird** strange and unusual, sometimes in a way that upsets you **eerie** strange and mysterious, and sometimes frightening **unsettling** something like this makes you feel nervous, confused or upset **shimmering** reflecting a gentle light that seems to shake slightly **terrifying** extremely lightening **translucent** clear enough for light to pass through hut not completely clear **frantic** clone- in a very urgent way **languorous** slow, calm and relaxed

1 a) Which four words describe the effect of the Northern Lights on Bryson?

b) Which of these words describes the most intense feeling?

2 Which three words describe the quality of light?

3 Which two words are near-antonyms or opposites?

5. Complete the paragraph with the words above. More than one word is sometimes possible.

1 The Lights were sometimes a little ..... but at other times they were absolutely ..... .

2 The smoke from his pipe made its way upwards in a ..... fashion towards the ceiling.

3 When she found the house was on fire she immediately made a ..... phone call to the emergency services.

4 The clouds were so thin they were almost ..... .

5 The weak sun reflected gently on the ..... water.

6 What a ..... person he is; I can never tell what he's thinking.

7 In the dark, the wolf's eyes were almost ..... .

As you read the extract, ask yourself:

a) How easy is it for Bryson to adapt to life in Hammerfest*!*

b) What would it be like to live in such a place?

c) How would you feel if you went to Hammerfest and didn't see the Northern Lights?

d) How does Bryson feel when he finally sees the Lights?

Hammerfest

by Bill Bryson

I took a room in the Haja Hotel near the quay. The room was small but comfortable, with a telephone, a small colour television and its own bathroom. I was highly pleased and full of those little pulses of excitement that come with finding yourself in a new place. I dumped my things, briefly investigated the amenities and went out to look at Hammerfest.

It seemed an agreeable enough town in a thank-you-God-for-not-making-me-live-here sort of way. The hotel was in a dark neighbourhood of shipping offices and warehouses. There were also a couple of banks, a very large police station, and a post office with a row of telephone kiosks in front. In each of these, I noticed as I passed, the telephone books had been set alight by some desperate thrill seeker[4] and now hung **charred** from their chains.

I walked up to the main street, Strandgatan, which ran for about 300 yards along the harbour, lined on the inland side by an assortment of businesses - a bakery, a bookstore, a cinema (closed), a cafe called Kokken's - and on the harbour side by the town hall, a *few* more shops and the dark hulking mass of a Birds Eye Findus fish-processing plant. Christmas lights[5] were strung **at intervals** across the street, but all the shops were shut and there wasn't a sign of life anywhere, apart from an occasional cab speeding past as if on an urgent mission.

It was cold out, but nothing like as cold as I had expected. This pleased me because I had very nearly bought a ridiculous Russian-style fur hat - the kind with ear flaps - for 400 kroner in Oslo. Much as I hate to stand out in a crowd, I have this terrible occasional compulsion to make myself an unwitting[6] source of merriment[7] for the world and I had come close to **scaling new heights** with a Russian hat. Now, clearly, that would be unnecessary.

Beyond the high street, the road curved around the bay, leading out to a narrow headland, and after a half a mile or so it presented a fetching[8] view back to the town, sheltering in a cleft[9] of black mountains, as if in the palm of a giant hand. The bay itself was black and impenetrable; only the whooshing[10] sound of water **hinted** at what was out there. But the town itself was wonderfully bright and snug-looking, a haven of warmth and light in the endless Arctic night.

Satisfied with this initial reconnaissance[11], **I trudged** back to the hotel, where I had a light but astonishingly expensive dinner and climbed gratefully into bed.

In the night I was woken by a storm. I crept to the window and peered out. Snow was blowing wildly, and the wind howled. Lightning lit the sky. I had never seen lightning in a snowstorm. Murmuring, 'Oh, sweet Jesus, where am I?', I

climbed back into bed and buried myself deep in the covers. I don't know what time I woke, but I dozed and tossed for perhaps an hour in the dark until it occurred to me that it never was going to get light. I got up and looked out of the window. The storm was still raging. In the police-station car park below, two squad cars[12] marked POLITI were buried in **drifts** almost to their roofs.

After breakfast, I ventured out[13] into the gale. The streets were still deserted, snow piled in the doorways. The wind was playing havoc with the town. Street lights flickered and **swayed,** throwing spastic shadows across the snow. The Christmas decorations rattled. A cardboard box sailed across the road ahead of me and was **wafted** high out over the harbour. It was intensely cold. On the exposed road out to the headland I began to wish again that I had bought the Russian hat. The wind was **unrelenting:** it drove before it tiny particles of ice that seared[14] my cheeks and made me **gasp.** I had a scarf with me, which I tied around my face bandit-style[15] and trudged on, leaning heavily into the wind.

Ahead of me out of the swirling snow appeared a figure. He was wearing a Russian hat, I was interested to note. As he drew nearer, I pulled my scarf down to make some cheering greeting — 'Bit fresh out, what?[16]' or something - but he passed by without even looking at me. A hundred yards further on I passed two more people, a man and his wife tramping stolidly[17] into town, and they too passed as if I were invisible. Strange people, I thought.

The headland proved unrewarding, just a jumble of warehouses and small ship-repair yards, loomed over by **groaning** cranes. I was about to turn back when I noticed a sign pointing the way to something called the Meridianstotten and decided to **investigate.** This took me down a lane on the seaward side of the headland. Here, wholly exposed to the pounding sea, the wind was even more ferocious. Twice it all but[18] picked me up and carried me forward several yards. Only the toe tips of my boots maintained contact with the ground. I discovered that by holding out my arms I could sail along on the flats of my feet, propelled entirely by the wind. It was the most wonderful fun. Irish windsurfing, I dubbed it. I had a great time until an unexpected burst whipped my feet from under me. I cracked my head on the ice so hard that I suddenly recalled where I put the coal-shed[19] key the summer before. The pain of it, and the thought that another gust might heft me into the sea like the cardboard box I had seen earlier, made me abandon the sport, and I proceeded to the Meridianstotten with prudence[20].

The Meridianstotten was an obelisk[21] on a small elevation in the middle of a graveyard of warehouses. I later learned that it was a memorial erected to celebrate the completion in 1840, on this very spot, of the first scientific measurement of the earth's circumference. (Hammerfest's other historical distinction is that it was the first town in Europe to have electric street lights.) I

clambered up to the obelisk with difficulty, but the snow was blowing so thickly that I couldn't read the **inscription,** and I returned to town thinking I would come back again another day. I never did.

In the evening I dined in the hotel's restaurant and bar, and afterwards sat nursing Mack beers at fifty 0re[22] a sip, thinking that surely things would liven up in a minute. It was New Year's Eve[23], after all. But the bar was like a **funeral parlour** with a beverage service. A pair of mild-looking men in reindeer sweaters[24] sat with beers, staring silently into space. After a time I realised there was another customer, alone in a dark corner. Only the glow of his cigarette revealed him in the gloom. When the waiter came to take my plate away, I asked him what there was to do for fun in Hammerfest. He thought for a moment and said, 'Have you tried setting fire to the telephone directories by the post office?'

Actually he didn't say that, because just as he was about to speak, the lone figure in the corner addressed some slurred remark to him, which I gathered was something along the lines of 'I ley, you dismal, slope-headed slab of reindeer shit[25], what does ii lake to gel some service around here?' because the waiter dropped my plate back onto the table with a suddenness that made the silverware[26] jump and went straight to the man and began furiously dragging him by his arm and shoulder from his seat and then pushing him with enormous difficulty to the door, where he finally heaved him out into the snow. When the waiter returned, looking flushed and disconcerted, I said brightly, 'I hope you don't show all your customers out like that!' but he was in no mood for **pleasantries** and retired sulkily to the bar, so I was unable to determine just what there was to do in Hammerfest to pass the time, other than set telephone books alight, insult the waiter and **weep.**

At eleven-thirty, with the bar still dead, I went out to see if there was any life anywhere. The wind had died but there was hardly anyone about. Every window in every house blazed with light, but there was no sign of revelry[27] within. Then just before midnight, as I was about to return to the hotel, an odd thing happened. Every person came out of every house and began to set off **fireworks** — big industrial-sized fireworks that shrieked across the sky and exploded with a sharp bang and filled the night with colour and sparks. For half an hour, from all around the peninsula, fireworks popped and glittered over the harbour and drifted spent into the sea. And then, precisely thirty minutes after it all began, everyone went back inside and Hammerfest slept again.

The days passed. At least three times a day I went for long walks and **searched** the sky for the Northern Lights, and in the evenings I went out every hour to see if anything was happening yet, but it never was. Sometimes I rose in the night to look out of the window, but I never saw anything. Once or twice a day it would snow — fat, fluffy snowflakes, like the ones you see in a Perry Como

Christmas special[28] - but the rest of the time the sky was clear. Everyone told me it was perfect Northern Lights weather. 'You should have been here just before Christmas - ah, fabulous,' they would say and then assure me that tonight would almost certainly be the night. 'About eleven o'clock you go out. Then you'll see.' But it didn't happen.

When I wasn't walking or searching the sky, I sat in the bar of the hotel drinking beer or lay on my bed reading. 1 tried once or twice to watch television in my room. There is only one network in Norway and it is stupefyingly bad. It's not just that the programmes are dull, though in this respect they could win awards, but that the whole thing is so wondrously unpolished[29]. Films finish and you get thirty seconds of **scratchy** white circles like you used to get when your home movies[30] ran out and your dad didn't get to the **projector** fast enough, and then suddenly the lights come up on the day's **host,** looking faintly **startled,** as if he had been just about to do something he wouldn't want the nation to see. The host, always a handsome young man or woman with a lively sweater and sculpted hair, fills the long gaps between programmes by showing endless **trailers** for the rest of the evening's highlights: a documentary on mineral extraction in Narvik. A Napoleonic[31] costume drama in which the main characters wear moustaches that are patently not their own and **strut** around as if they have had a fence post inserted rectally[32] (but are trying not to let it affect their performance) and a jazz session with the Sigi Wurtmuller Rhythm Cadettes. The best that can be said for Norwegian television is that it gives you the sensation of a coma without the worry and inconvenience.

I began to feel as if a doctor bad told me to go away for a complete rest ('someplace really boring, where there's nothing at all to do'). Never bad 1 slept so long and so well. Never had 1 bad this kind of leisure just to **potter about.** Suddenly I had time to do all kinds of things: unlace my boots and redo them over and over until the laces were precisely the same length, rearrange the contents of my wallet, deal with nose hairs, make long lists of all the things 1 would do if I had anything to do. Sometimes I sat on the edge of the bed with my hands on my knees and just gazed about me. Often I talked to myself. Mostly I went for long, cold walks, bleakly watching the unillumined[33] sky, then stopped for coffee at Kokken's Cafe, with its steamy windows and luscious warmth.

It occurred to me that this was just like being retired. I even began taking a small notebook with me on my walks and keeping a **pointless** diary of my daily movements, just as my dad had done when he retired. He used to walk every day to the lunch counter at our neighbourhood supermarket and if you passed by you would see him writing in his notebooks. After he died, we found a cupboard full of these notebooks. Every one of them was filled with entries like this: 'January 4-

Walked to supermarket. Had two cups of decaff[34]. Weather mild.' Suddenly I understood what he was up to.

Little by little I began to meet people. They began to recognise me in Kokken's and the post office and the bank and to treat me to cautious nods of acknowledgement. I became a fixture'[5] of the hotel bar, where I was clearly regarded as a harmless **eccentric,** the man from England who came and stayed and stayed.

One day, lacking anything at all to do, 1 went and saw the Mayor[36]. I told him I was a journalist, but really I just wanted someone to talk to. He had an **undertaker's** face and wore blue jeans and a blue work shirt, which made him look unsettlingly like a prisoner on day release, but he was a kind man. He told me at length about the problems of the local economy and as we parted he said:

'You must come to my house one evening. I have a sixteen-year-old daughter.' Gosh, that's jolly gracious[37] of you, I thought, but I'm a happily married man. 'She would like to practise her English.'

Ah. I'd have gone, but the invitation never came. Afterwards, I went to Kokken's and wrote in my diary, 'Interviewed Mayor. Weather cold.'

One Sunday afternoon in the hotel I overhead a man about my age talking to the proprietor in Norwegian but to his own children in Home Counties[38] English. His name was Ian Tonkin. He was an Englishman who had married a Hammerfest girl and now taught English at the local high school[39]. He and his wife Peggy invited me to their house for dinner, fed me lavishly on reindeer (delicious) and cloudberries (mysterious but also delicious) and were kindness itself, expressing great sympathy for my unluckiness with the Northern Lights. 'You should have seen it just before Christmas - ah, fabulous,' they said.

Peggy told me a sad story. In 1944 the retreating Germans, in an attempt to **deprive** the advancing Russian Army of shelter, burned down the town. The residents were **evacuated** by ship to live out the rest of the war billeted with strangers. As the evacuation flotilla left the harbour, they could see their houses **going up in flames.** Peggy's father took the house keys from his pocket and dropped them **overboard,** saying with a sigh, 'Well, we shan't be needing those any more.' After the war the people returned to Hammerfest to find nothing standing but the chapel. With their bare hands and almost nothing else they built their town again, one house at a time. It may not have been much, it may have been on the edge of nowhere, but it was theirs and they loved it and I don't think I have ever admired any group of people quite so much.

From Peggy and Ian and others I met, I learned all about the town - about t he parlous[40] state of the fishing industry on which everyone depended in one way or another, about the previous year's exciting murder trial, about accusations of

incompetence concerning snow removal. I began to find it **engrossing.** Hammerfest grew to feel like home. It seemed entirely natural to be there and my real life in England began to feel oddly distant and dream-like.

On my sixteenth day in Hammerfest, it happened. I was returning from the headland after my morning walk and in an empty piece of sky above the town there appeared a translucent cloud of many colours — pinks and greens and blues and pale purples. It glimmered and seemed to swirl. Slowly it stretched across the sky. It had an oddly oily quality about it, like the rainbows you sometimes see in a pool of petrol. I stood transfixed.

I knew from my reading that the Northern Lights are immensely high up in the atmosphere, something like 200 miles up, but this show seemed to be suspended just above the town. There are two kinds of Northern Light - the curtains of shimmering gossamer[41] that everyone has seen in pictures and the rather rarer gas clouds that I was gazing at now. They are never the same twice. Sometimes they shoot wraith-like[42] across the sky, like smoke in a wind tunnel, moving at enormous speed, and sometimes they hang like luminous drapes[43] or glittering spears of light, and very occasionally — perhaps once or twice in a lifetime - they creep out from every point on the horizon and flow together overhead in a spectacular, silent explosion of light and colour.

In the depthless blackness of the countryside, where yon may be a hundred miles from the nearest **artificial** light, they are capable of the most weird and unsettling optical illusions. They can seem to come out of the sky and fly at you at enormous speeds, as if trying to kill you. Apparently it's terrifying. To this day, many Lapps[44] earnestly believe that if you show the Lights a white handkerchief or a sheet of white paper they will come and take you away.

This display was relatively small stuff, and it lasted for only a few minutes, but it was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen and it would do me[45] until something better came along.

In the evening, something did - a display of Lights that went on for hours. They were of only one colour, that eerie luminous green you see on radar screens, but the activity was frantic. Narrow swirls of light would sweep across the great dome of sky, then hang there like **vapour trails.** Sometimes they flashed across the sky like falling stars and sometimes they spun languorously, reminding me of the lazy way smoke used to rise from my father's pipe when he was reading. Sometimes the Lights would flicker brightly in the west, then vanish in an instant and reappear a moment later behind me as if **teasing** me. I was constantly turning and twisting to see it. You have no idea how immense the sky is until you try to **monitor** it all. The eerie thing was how silent it was. Such activity seemed to

demand at the very least an occasional low **boom** or a series of static-like crackles, but there was none. All this immense energy was spent without a sound.

I was very cold — inside my boots I wore three pairs of socks but still my toes were **numb** and I began to worry about **frostbite** - but I stayed and watched for perhaps two hours, unable to pull myself away.

The next day I went to the tourist office to report my good news to Hans, the tourism director who had become something of a friend, and to reserve a seat on the following week's bus. There was no longer any need to **hang around.** Hans looked surprised and said, 'Didn't you know? There's no bus next week. It's going to Alta for its annual maintenance.'

I was crushed[46]. Two more weeks in Hammerfest. What was I going to do with myself for two more weeks?

'But you're in luck,' Hans added. 'You can go today.'

I couldn't lake this in. 'What?'

'The bus should have arrived yesterday but it didn't get through because of heavy snows around Kautokeino. It arrived this morning. Didn't you see it out there? They're going back again today.'

Today? Really? When?'

He looked at his watch with the casualness[47] of someone who has lived for years in the middle of nowhere and will be living there for years more yet. 'Oh, in about ten minutes, I should think.'

Ten minutes! I have seldom moved so quickly. I ran to the bus, **begged** them not to leave without me, though without any confidence that this plea[48] was understood, ran to the hotel, threw everything into my suitcase, paid the bill, made my thanks and arrived at the bus, trailing oddments[49] of clothes behind me, just as it was about to pull out.

The funny thing is[50] that as we were leaving Hammerfest, just for an instant I had a sudden **urge** not to go. It was a nice town. I liked the people. They had been kind to me. In other circumstances, I might just have settled down and stayed. But then, I realised, such thinking was crazy. It was time to return to Oslo and the real world. Besides, I had a hat to buy.

4 someone who likes doing exciting and dangerous things

5 lights which decorate the streets during the period before and after 25th I V, ember, celebrated by Christians as the day Jesus C Christ was born

6 not conscious or deliberate

7 *mainly literary:* laughter and fun

8 *old fashion:* attractive

9 a narrow space in the surface of something, for example in a rock or in someone's chin

10 *informal:* making a sound like the wind when it blows

11 the use of soldiers or aircraft to go into an area and get information about an enemy; here, used humorously

12 cars used by police officers

13 to go somewhere unpleasant, dangerous or exciting
14 here, caused a painful sensation like burning or cutting
15 a thief who attacks travellers, usually with other thieves
16 Bryson is parodying an old-fashioned, English way of commenting on the weather. The phrase means something like: 'It's a bit cold outside today, isn't it?'
17 in a slow, serious manner
18 almost
19 a small building, often made of wood and usually in a garden, used !<>i storing coal, a hard, black fuel used to provide heat
20 carefully
21 a tall, pointed, stone pillar that has been built to remember an important person or event
22 Norwegian currency; there are 100 ore in one kroner
23 31st December
24 sweaters with pictures of reindeer on them
25 an elaborate insult, which Bryson has invented
26 objects made from silver, especially objects used at meals
27 *mainly literary:* a situation in which people celebrate or enjoy themselves in a lively and noisy way, especially by singing, dancing and drinking alcohol
28 a television programme made especially for Christmas and starring Perry Como (1912-2001), a popular American singer
29 poor quality, not properly finished
30 *informal:* films which someone makes for their own use, often about their own life and family
31 about Napoleon, the French military and political leader
32 *medical:* into the lowest part of the tube through which solid waste leaves your body
33 *literary:* dark, not lit
34 *informal:* decaffeinated coffee is coffee without caffeine, a substance that makes you feel awake
35 used about a person considered to be permanently established in a Job, place, etc
36 the most important elected official in a town or city
37 *old-fashioned expression:* very kind
38 Southern England; used for describing attitudes or qualities that ate thought to be typical of conservative, middle-class English people
39 in the USA, a school for children between the ages of 14 and 18
40 *very formal:* full of dangers or difficulties
41 *literary:* something very light and delicate
42 *literary:* like a ghost
43 *mainly US English:* curtains made of heavy cloth
44 people from Lapland
45 it would be enough for me
46 very disappointed, embarrassed or upset
47 relaxed, unworried attitude
48 *formal:* an urgent or emotional request for something
49 pieces of something that are left after you have done or made something
50 *spoken:* used for saying that you think something is strange

Post-reading activities

Understanding the extract

Use these questions to help you check that you **have understood the extract.**

1 What is the hotel room like?
2 How does Bryson feel at the beginning of his stay in Hammerfest?
3 What are Bryson's first impressions of the town?
4 What does Bryson suggest is the reason behind the burning of the telephone books?
5 What is the main street like at night? What is the only sign of life?
6 Why is Bryson glad that the weather is not as cold as he expected?
7 What does the town look like from a distance?
8 Why doesn't Bryson sleep well on his first night?
9 What is the weather like the next day?
10 Why does Bryson think the people of the town are 'strange'?
11 What is the headland like?
12 What does Bryson describe as 'Irish windsurfing'? Why does he stop doing it?
13 What is the Meridianst0tten? What is Hammerfest's 'other historical distinction'?
14 What is the atmosphere like in the hotel on New Year's Eve?
15 What does Bryson ask the waiter? Why doesn't he answer him?
16 Where does Bryson go at eleven-thirty? What happens?
17 How does Bryson spend the following days?
18 What is his impression of Norwegian television?
19 What effect does all his free time begin to have on him?
20 Who does Bryson compare himself to? Why?
21 Who does Bryson have dinner with?
22 What happened in Hammerfest in 1944? What effect does this Story have on Bryson?
23 What else does Bryson learn about the town? How does he begin to feel about it?
24 What happens on Bryson's sixteenth day in Hammerfest? What is Bryson's reaction?
25 What happens in the evening? What is 'eerie' about it?
26 Why does Bryson go to the tourist office the next day?
27 How does Bryson feel when he learns that there is no bus the following week?
28 Why does Bryson run back to the hotel?

29 What does Bryson feel 'just for an instant' as he leaves Hammerfest?
30 What has he finally decided to buy? What do you think it will be like?

Language study

Grammar

Making comparisons with *as if* and like

Bryson often uses the expression *as if* to make an unreal comparison, in which he compares a feeling or situation to something he has imagined. *As if* is usually followed by a clause.

Look at these examples from the extract in which Bryson uses *as if* to comic effect.

> *I began to feel as if a doctor had told me to go away for a complete rest ('somewhere really boring where there's nothing at all to do').*
>
> *... and then suddenly the lights come up on the day's host, looking faintly startled, as if he had been just about to do something he wouldn't want the nation to see.*

In 'unreal' comparisons, *were* can be used instead of *was.*

> *... they too passed, as if I were invisible.*

Bryson also uses the preposition *like,* followed by a noun, to make more direct comparisons between things or people.

> *[The Mayor] had an undertaker's face and wore blue jeans and a blue work shirt, which made him look unsettlingly* ***like*** *a prisoner on day release...*
>
> *Sometimes [the Lights] shoot wraith-like across the sky,* ***like*** *smoke in a wind tunnel.*

1 Complete the following sentences with *as if* or *like.*

1 The lights seem to come out of the sky and fly at you at enormous speeds ..... they were trying to kill you.
2 The cloud had an oddly oily quality about it, ... the rainbows you sometimes see in a pool of petrol.
3 The waiter's face turned red, ... he were very angry.

4 My feet felt heavy, ... there were stones in my boots.
5 The town looked ..... a toy in the palm of a giant hand.
6 The fireworks exploded all around ..... jewels in the night sky.
7 In his thick coat, he looked just ..... a large, brown bear.
8 The street was in darkness, ... someone had suddenly turned out all the lights.

2 Join these phrases to make one sentence using *as if* or *like*. You may have to make some other changes.

1 A cab sped past. It seemed to be on an urgent mission.

_____

2 The cars were buried in snow. They resembled large boulders lying by the side of the road, covered with a fluffy white blanket.

_____

3 I tied my scarf around my face. I looked like a bandit.

_____

4 The man was still and silent. He seemed to have fallen asleep.

_____

5 The Lights flashed across the sky. They were like falling stars.

_____

6 The clouds rushed towards me. I thought they wanted to attack me.

_____

7 I wrote busily in my notebook. I tried to make it look important.

_____

8 He watched the Lights for hours. He was hypnotized by them.

_____

Talking about the past: *used to* and would

Both *used to* and *would* can be used to talk about past habits. Look at these examples from the extract.

Films finish and you get *thirty seconds of scratchy white circles like you* ***used to*** *get when your home movies ran out and your dad didn't get to the projector fast enough...*

He ***used*** **to** *walk every day to the lunch counter at our neighbourhood supermarket and if you passed by you* ***would*** *see him writing in his notebooks.*

Used to can be used to talk about states and situations as well as actions. *Would* can only be used for repeated actions.

For example: *We* ***used to*** *have an old projector.* (not *would)*

3 Complete these sentences with *used to* or *would*. Sometimes both are possible.

1 My father ..... be a storekeeper.
2 During those Arctic nights, the Lights ..... flicker briefly in the West.
3 Bryson ..... live in the USA.
4 During his visit, he ..... drink endless cups of tea.
5 Every day, he ..... walk to the end of the harbour and back.
6 We ..... travel a lot after I retired.
7 When she was a child, she ..... never eat fish.
8 They ..... have a dog before they moved to the city.
9 He ..... sit there, just staring into space.
10 He was very rich and he ..... own several houses.

Literary analysis

Events

1 Number the events below in the order in which they happen.
Bryson catches the bus to Oslo.
Bryson has dinner with Ian and Peggy.
Bryson sees the Northern Lights.
Bryson is woken by a storm.
Bryson watches the fireworks on New Year's Eve.
Bryson arrives in Hammerfest. *1*
Bryson is blown off his feet by the wind and hurts his head.
The waiter at the hotel throws a man into the street.
Bryson visits the obelisk.

2 Is Bryson's stay in Hammerfest eventful? Which is the most important event?

3 Some of the longest passages in the extract are not based on important events, for example, the description of Norwegian television. Which other examples are there?

4 Bryson has a lively imagination. How is this shown in the episode of the waiter in the hotel?

5 Why do you think Peggy's story about the evacuation of the local people affects Bryson?

6 Do you think Bryson exaggerates what happens after he discovers that the bus is leaving in ten minutes? Why?

People

7 What is Bryson's impression of the local people at first? Think about his encounters with other people walking in the street, the waiter and customers in the bar and the people setting off fireworks on New Year's Eve.
8 How is Bryson's opinion of the Norwegians affected by what he sees on television?
9 What do you think Bryson thinks of the Mayor? How does he find humour from their conversation?
10 What does Bryson think of Peggy and Tom? What words does he use to describe them?
11 How does Bryson describe the Hammerfest people after he hears Peggy's story?
12 Does Bryson make any friends during his stay? Who are they?
13 How does Bryson's attitude to the local people change during his stay? What does he say about them as he is leaving Hammerfest on the bus?
14 What do the people in the hotel think of Bryson?
15 How would you describe the people of Hammerfest?

Sense of place

16 What is Bryson's first impression of Hammerfest? Which detail tells us that there isn't much to do there? How does the weather affect his opinions?
17 How does Hammerfest appear looking back from the harbour?
18 How docs Bryson convey the effects of boredom on his own behaviour?
19 What moments of pleasure or beauty does Bryson experience (.luring his stay?
20 Does Bryson describe the Northern Lights only as he sees them? What effecl

does this have?
21 How do Bryson's feelings about Hammerfest change during his slay? 1 low do you think he will remember the town in future?
22 Does the extract give you a vivid impression of Hammerfest? Is there any extra informal ion that you would like to have about the town?

The author's voice

23 Which phrase in the first paragraph tells us that Bryson enjoys travelling?
24 Bryson often livens up his narrative by inserting a personal opinion or confession. Find an example of this in the second paragraph. What other examples are there?

25 Bryson also obtains a comic effect by imagining or developing the story behind what he sees. Find an example of this in the second paragraph. Look again at the episodes involving the hotel waiter and the Mayor. How does Bryson treat dialogue in a humorous way?
26 The humour in the extract is often a result of exaggeration. Look at the passage about Norwegian television. Do you think Bryson exaggerates? Are there any more examples of this?
27 Can Bryson laugh at himself? What effect does this have?
28 How does Bryson convey the drama and beauty of the Northern Lights?
29 What is your impression of Bryson as a person?

The Amateur Emigrant

by Robert Louis Stevenson

About the author

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850. His father was a wealthy engineer and Robert was his only child. From his early childhood Robert suffered from poor health, and he was often at home in bed. His nurse, Alison Cunningham, read him Bible stories and tales from Scottish history, and he dreamed of adventure and travel.

Stevenson studied engineering at Edinburgh university, but he did not complete his studies. He then studied law in order to have a profession, but he really wanted to be a writer. The Scottish climate and the strict social conventions of his family did not suit him, and he went in search of other places, societies and lifestyles.

Stevenson's travels started in Europe, and he visited fashionable health resorts on the French Riviera with his parents. His health problems did not stop him from travelling and writing. In 1876 he canoed through the rivers and canals of Belgium and north-east France with a friend. This journey was described in *An Inland Voyage* (1878). Two years later, he walked across the hills and valleys of the Cevennes region of southern France, this time with a donkey for company. Travels *with a Donkey* was published in 1879.

While Stevenson was staying in an artists' colony in northern France, he met the American artist Fanny Vandegrift Osbourne, who was there with her two young children. In 1879, after Fanny had returned to the United States, Stevenson followed her, sailing to New York, and then taking a train across America to the West coast. He married fanny in San Francisco in 1880. They returned to Britain as a family, and for several years be divided his time between Scotland and mountain towns in the Alps.

The 1880s were the most productive decade of Stevenson's writing career. In 1883, his first novel was published - an adventure about pirates, treasure and mutiny at sea, called *Treasure Island*. His next novel, *Kidnapped*, published in 1886, was another adventure story -this time, about one man's experiences of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. Stevenson followed this with his famous study of good and evil, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and* Mr Hyde. He also wrote a book of poems for children, A *Child's Garden of Verses* (1885), and wrote widely for newspapers and magazines.

In 1887, Stevenson left Europe for the United States. He then travelled on to the South Seas, where he hoped to find a healthier climate and lifestyle. He

eventually settled with his family on a small island in Samoa, where he was known as 'Tusitala' or storyteller. He did a lot for the community and was popular with his neighbours.

Stevenson died in 1894, at the age of 44, from a brain haemorrhage. He was buried in Samoa. His essays, diaries, short stories, novels and poems have all survived him, and his reputation as a writer has grown since his death.

About the extract

The three chapters come from the beginning of *The Amateur Emigrant*, Robert Louis Stevenson's travel memoir of his journey from Scotland to California in 1879-1880. The book covers the first part of the trip, the journey by ship across the Atlantic from Glasgow via Ireland to New York. *The Amateur Emigrant* was not published in full until 1895, one year after Stevenson's death.

Summary

It may help you to know something about what happens in the extract before you read it. This summary does not tell you every detail but should help you understand the general meaning.

In the first chapter, *The Second Cabin The Second Cabin,* Stevenson sails down the River Clyde to Greenock where he joins the ship that will take him to New York. He describes the ship and the location of the different cabins. Although he is 'anxious to see the worst of emigrant life', he is not travelling with the lowest-paying passengers but by 'the second cabin'. He explains the advantages of this: bedding and dishes are provided, there is a small table to work on, and there are some small improvements in diet - for example, there is a choice of tea or coffee at breakfast. The poorer passengers travel in 'steerage' class. Stevenson observes that in steerage, people are 'males and females' while in the second cabin, a brass plate gives passengers the label of 'lathes and gentlemen'. He is pleased that for eight guineas he is travelling more comfortably than the lowest-paying passengers.

He describes the other people in the second cabin: a group of Scandinavians and various Scotsmen and Irishmen, some of whom do not behave very well. There is also a devoted married couple and a woman who spends her time trying to keep her watch 'to Glasgow time'. Stevenson makes good friends with Mr Jones, a hopeful, positive-thinking Welshman who shares Stevenson's love of looking into people's characters.

Early Impressions

In the second chapter, *Early Impressions*, the ship leaves the Clyde and heads for Ireland where the last group of emigrants come on board. People begin to meet on the decks - there are plenty of Scotsmen and Irishmen, a few English, a few Americans, some Scandinavians, one or two Germans and one Russian. They have a ten-day journey in front of them.

After observing the other passengers, Stevenson begins to change his mind about emigration. He had associated it with bravery and new ideas and thought the emigrants would be young and heroic. In fact, the majority of the passengers are 'quiet, orderly, obedient citizens', many are over thirty and some of them are quite old. Stevenson reflects on the circumstances that have brought them to the ship and concludes that he is in the company of failures, 'the rejected, drunk, incompetent and weak'. However, he praises their cheerfulness. They are full of hope for the future and try to get to know each other. He admires the children and their mothers who watch them swinging dangerously from the rails without running after them. The men are slower to become friends, mostly talking about their jobs and their hopes for the future. Most of all, they complain about the food onboard and the conditions in steerage. Stevenson is surprised at their attitude to the food and concludes that they are used to eating better food than he previously thought.

The weather is calm and Stevenson decides to sleep on deck so that he can enjoy some fresh air. He is surprised when nobody comes to join him but eventually enjoys being alone.

The next day, the weather gets worse. The passengers entertain themselves by singing songs in different languages. Some of the Scotsmen prepare to do a dance but are too shy to perform it successfully. Stevenson describes the variety of popular songs, most of which are cheerful although some reflect the sadness of the emigrants' situation.

On Sunday, the weather is bad and a lot of passengers are seasick. Despite this, many go to the religious service. The sea eventually calms.

Steerage Scenes

In the third chapter, *Steerage Scenes*, Stevenson describes the area in Steerage 2 and 3 where passengers often gather to sing and dance. On Monday morning, he finds a man there playing his fiddle (violin). The man is obviously seasick and so are the women listening to him. Stevenson observes how the music improves their spirits and hi- tells the fiddler that he is lucky to have his talent. The fiddler agrees. That night, in Steerage 4 and 5, the fiddler appears again. This time he accompanies a group of young men and women as they dance. The fiddler's brother is his greatest admirer and spends all of his time praising him and

encouraging other people to do the same. Stevenson finds this admirable but a bit boring.

Later that night, Stevenson and Mr Jones visit Steerage 1 where they have friends. The sea is rough and Steerage 1 is at the front of the ship where the movement is strongest.

The heat, smell and noise are awful as most people are being sick. A small group of men try to forget everything by singing. One man sets a riddle for the others to guess. This takes such a long time that Stevenson and his friend leave soon afterwards. Stevenson spends the night on the floor in second cabin where there is a current of air. The night is filled with the sounds of coughing, crying and people being sick, and a man who thinks the ship is sinking. Stevenson thinks what a tragedy it would be if this happened and how many families would be affected.

The next day, the weather has calmed and the sun shines. Different games are played to pass the time - chess, cards, puzzles and guessing the ship's progress. The air is filled with the sounds of storytelling and laughter. Stevenson is kept busy making cigarettes for various people. The fiddler plays his tunes. Suddenly, 'a gentleman and two young ladies' appear on the scene. They do not say anything but they seem to think they are better than everyone else, and Stevenson is upset by this. Stevenson feels that they have brought an 'icy influence' to a cheerful and good-hearted scene.

Pre'reading activities

Key vocabulary

This section will help you familiarize yourself with some of the more specific vocabulary used in the extract. You may want to use it to help you before you start reading, or as a revision exercise after you've finished the extract.

Words for describing a person's character or personality

One of Stevenson's favourite activities on board ship is observing his fellow passengers and discussing them with his friend Mr Jones.

1. Look at the adjectives Stevenson uses to describe different people, then consider the questions below.

voluble used for describing someone who talks a lot
devoted loving someone very much
quaint interesting or attractive with a slightly strange and old-fashioned quality
skilful very good at doing something that involves special ability or training
industrious always working very hard
bold confident and not afraid of people
eager very keen to do something or enthusiastic about something
obedient doing what a person, law or rule says that you must do
incompetent lacking the ability or skills to do something
merry happy and lively
sober not drunk
vehement involving extremely strong feelings or beliefs
imperturbable always calm and not easily upset

1 Which words are positive, or complimentary?
2 Which words are negative, or critical?
3 Which words do you think are neither complimentary nor critical?

2. Complete the sentences with the words above.

1 The girls were bored and seemed ..... for new experiences.
2 I was feeling ..... so I went and asked him for more money.
3 He is a wonderful painter with a very ..... use of colour.
4 They were ..... to each other throughout their marriage.
5 Despite the shock, her face remained ..... .

6 The doctor was totally ..... and was banned from practising medicine.
7 She is very ..... and never stops working until the job is finished.
8 The party was loud and ..... , with lots of singing and dancing.
9 Don't drive the car unless you are perfectly ..... .
10 The workers were angry and made a ..... protest to the authorities.
11 That old lady uses some very ..... expressions.
12 That politician is certainly .....: his speech lasted for three hours.
13 They are ..... children and always do what I tell them.

Words connected with poverty, hunger and bad luck

3. Use the words in the box to complete the sentences.

famine	homeless	strike	starving
calamity	struggle	defeat	misfortune

1 A.....is an event that causes serious damage, or causes a lot of people to suffer, for example a flood or a fire.
2 To.....is to try hard to do something that you find very difficult.
3 People who are.....have nowhere to live.
4 If you are....., you are ill or dying because of a lack of food.
5 .....means bad luck.
6 If you suffer a....., you fail to win a competition or to succeed in doing something.
7 People who go on.....refuse to work as a protest about pay or conditions of work.
8 There are countries where people regularly suffer from.....,a serious lack of food that continues for a long time and causes illness and death.

Words connected with ships and the sea

4. Use the paragraph below to match the words with their definitions.

The **voyage** from Scotland to New York took ten days. The ship was incredible - it was my first time on a **steamer**. When everyone was **on board** the heavy **anchor** was raised. Soon we had left behind the river and its wide **estuary.** Little by little the **shore** of our country disappeared. At first the sea was calm but after a while the waves grew and the **vessel** began to **lurch** from side to side. I lay in my **cabin,** trying to read but I felt too ill. Coming out on **deck,** I turned right to the **starboard** side and stood by the rail. **Spray** from the huge waves blew into my face. An **officer** stopped and asked kindly if I was well - he said it might be better on the

port side. I could not stop thinking of my comfortable bed at home. What a contrast to the hard **berth** down below in my cabin!

1 voyage **2 steamer** **3 onboard** **4 anchor** **5 estuary** **6 shore** **7 vessel** **8 lurch** **9 cabin** **10 neck** **11 starboard** **12 spray** **13 officer** **14 port** **15 berth**	a) a private room on a ship for a passenger or one of the ship's workers b) a large boat or ship c) the part of a large river where it becomes wide and flows into the sea d) a bed on a train or ship e) a heavy object dropped into the water to prevent a boat from moving f) many small drops of water that are forced into the air together, for example from the sea g) a ship that moves by steam power h) one of the levels on a ship where you can walk i) the land that is on the edge of a lake, river or sea j) the right side of a ship as you look towards the front k) the side of a ship that is on your left as you look towards the front 1)to move suddenly in a way that is not smooth or controlled m)in or on a ship, bus, plane or train n) someone with a position of power in the army,navy or air force o) a long journey, especially by boat

Literary language

Stevenson wrote in a very formal, literary style. Some of the words and phrases that he uses are no longer in use or have changed their meaning.

Below is a selection of some of the language used in the **extract** which we would now describe as 'old-fashioned', as well as some extracts from the text. We have included them here to give you an Idea of what you will find in the extract- you don't need to learn the words.

5. Look at the words and definitions, and then see how they are used in the extracts below.

behove very *formal:* used for saying that someone should do something because it is the right thing to do
ere *literary:* an old word meaning 'before'
hitherto *very formal:* until the present time
thenceforward *literary:* starting from a particular period of time
lest *formal:* in case something unpleasant happens
maladies *old-fashioned:* illnesses
partake *old-fashioned:* to take or be given something to eat or drink
anon *literary:* an old word meaning 'soon'
in the midst *old-fashioned, formal:* while something else is happening
own *old-fashioned:* to admit that something is true

As you read the extract, do not worry if you cannot understand every word - you are reading for a general understanding.

Describing a woman and her watch

Once, when prostrated by sickness, *she let it run down. It was inscribed on her harmless mind in letters of adamant that the hands of a watch must never be turned backwards; and so it* ***behoved*** *her to lie in wait for the exact moment* ***ere*** *she started it again. When she imagined this was about due, she sought out one of the young second-cabin Scotsmen, who was embarked on the same experiment as herself and had* **hitherto** *been less neglectful.*

Describing emigration and his journey

I began for the first time to *understand the nature of emigration. Day by day throughout the passage, and* ***thenceforward*** *across all the* States, *and on* to *the shores oj the Pacific, this knowledge grew more clear and melancholy.*

Describing medicine

But ***lest*** *I should show myself ungrateful, let me recapitulate every advantage. It was called G****olden*** *Oil, cured all* ***maladies*** *without exception; and 1 am hound to say that I* ***partook*** *of it myself with good results.*

Describing one of the passengers

... at our concerts, of which more ***anon,*** *he was the president who called up performers to sing, ...*

Describing being 'caught' observing the other passengers

*Once, **in the midst** of a serious talk, each found there was a scrutinising eye upon himself; I **own** 1 paused in embarrassment at this double detection; but Jones, with a better civility, broke into a peal of unaffected laughter.*

As you read the extract, ask yourself:

a) What are the differences between Stevenson and the people he mixes with?
b) Is it true that most of the emigrants are escaping difficulties in their own countries?
c) What kinds of entertainment are most popular among the passengers?
d) How is the entertainment different from that of today?

The Amateur Emigrant

by Robert Louis Stevenson

The Second Cabin

I first encountered my fellow-passengers on the Broomielaw in Glasgow. Thence we descended the Clyde in no familiar spirit, but looking askance on each other as on possible enemies. A few Scandinavians, who had already grown acquainted[1] on the North Sea, were friendly and voluble over their long pipes; but among English speakers distance and suspicion reigned supreme[2]. The sun was soon overclouded, the wind freshened and grew sharp as we continued to descend the widening estuary; and with the falling temperature the **gloom** among the passengers increased. Two of the women wept. Anyone who had come aboard might have supposed we were all absconding from the law'. There was scarce a word interchanged, and no common sentiment but that of cold united us, until at length, having touched at Greenock, a pointing arm and a rush to the starboard now announced that our ocean steamer was in sight. There she lay in mid-river, at the Tail of the Bank, her sea-signal flying: a wall of bulwark[4], a street of white deck-houses, an aspiring forest of spars[5], larger than a church, and soon to be as populous[6] as many an incorporated town in the land to which she was to bear[7] us.

I was not, in truth, a steerage passenger. Although anxious to see the worst of emigrant life, I had some work to finish on the voyage, and was advised to go by the second cabin, where at least I should have a table at command. The advice was excellent; but to understand the choice, and what I gained, some outline of the internal disposition of the ship will first be necessary. In her very nose is Steerage No. 1, down two pair of stairs. A little abaft, another companion, **labelled** Steerage No. 2 and 3, gives admission to three galleries, two running forward towards Steerage No. 1, and the third aft towards the engines. The starboard forward gallery is the second cabin. Away abaft the engines and below the officers' cabins, to complete our **survey** of the vessel, there is yet a third nest of steerages, labelled 4 and 5. The second cabin, to return, is thus a modified oasis in the very heart of the steerages. Through the thin partition you can hear the steerage passengers being sick, the **rattle** of tin dishes as they sit at meals, the varied accents in which they converse[8], the crying of their children terrified by this new experience, or the clean flat smack of the parental hand in chastisement[9].

There are, however, many advantages for the inhabitant of this strip[10]. He does not require to bring his own bedding or dishes, but finds berths and a table completely if somewhat roughly furnished. He enjoys a distinct superiority in diet;

but this, strange to say, differs not only on different ships, but on the same ship according as her head is to the east or west. In my own experience, the principal difference between our table and that of the true steerage passenger was the table itself, and the **crockery** plates from which we ate. But lest[11] I should show myself ungrateful, let me recapitulate[12] every advantage. At breakfast we had a choice between tea and coffee for beverage; a choice not easy to make, the two were so surprisingly alike. I found that I could sleep after the coffee and lay awake after the tea, which is proof conclusive of some chemical disparity[13]; and even by the **palate** I could distinguish a smack of snuff[14]in the former from a flavour of **boiling** and dish-cloths in the second. As a matter of fact, I have seen passengers, after many **sips**, still doubting which had been supplied them. In the way of eatables at the same meal we were gloriously favoured; for in addition to **porridge**, which was common to all, we had Irish stew[15], sometimes a bit of fish, and sometimes rissoles[16]. The dinner of soup, roast fresh beef, boiled salt junk[17], and potatoes, was, I believe, exactly common to the steerage and the second cabin; only I have heard it rumoured that our potatoes were of a superior brand; and twice a week, on pudding-days, instead of duff[18], we had a saddle-bag filled with currants under the name of a plum-pudding. At tea we were served with some broken meat from the saloon; sometimes in the comparatively elegant form of spare patties or rissoles; but as a general thing mere chicken-bones and **flakes** of fish, neither hot nor cold. If these were not the scrapings of plates their looks belied them[19] sorely; yet we were all too hungry to be proud, and fell to[20] these leavings greedily. These, the bread, which was excellent, and the soup and porridge which were both good, formed my whole diet throughout the voyage; so that except for the broken meat and the convenience of a table I might as well have been in the steerage outright. Had they given me porridge again in the evening, I should have been perfectly contented with the fare[21]. As it was, with a few biscuits and some whisky and water before turning in, I kept my body going and my spirits up to the mark[22].

The last particular in which the second cabin passenger remarkably stands ahead of his brother of the steerage is one altogether of sentiment. In the steerage there are males and females; in the second cabin ladies and gentlemen. For some time after I came aboard I thought I was only a male; bur in the course of a voyage of discovery between decks, I came on[23] a brass plate[24], and learned that I was still a gentleman. Nobody knew it, of course. I was lost in the crowd of males and females, and **rigorously** confined to the same quarter of the deck. Who could tell whether 1 housed on the port or starboard side of steerage No. 2 and 3? And it was only there that my superiority became practical; everywhere else I was **incognito,** moving among my inferiors with simplicity, not so much as a **swagger** to indicate that I was a gentleman after all, and had broken meat to tea. Still, 1 was like one

with a patent of nobility in a drawer at home; and when I felt out of spirits I could go down and refresh myself with a look of that brass plate.

For all these advantages I paid but[25] two guineas[26]. Six guineas is the steerage fare; eight that by the second cabin; and when you remember that the steerage passenger must supply bedding and dishes, and, in five cases out of ten, either brings some dainties[27] with him, or privately pays the **steward** for extra rations, the difference in price becomes almost nominal. Air comparatively fit to breathe, food comparatively varied, and the satisfaction of being still privately a gentleman, may thus be had almost for the asking. Two of my fellow-passengers in the second cabin had already made the passage by the cheaper fare, and declared it was an experiment not to be repeated. As I go on to tell about my steerage friends, the reader will perceive that they were not alone in their opinion. Out of ten with whom I was more or less **intimate,** I am sure not fewer than five vowed, if they returned, to travel second cabin; and all who had left their wives behind them assured me they would go without the comfort of their presence until they could afford to bring them by saloon[28].

Our party in the second cabin was not perhaps the most interesting on board. Perhaps even in the saloon there was as much **good-will** and character. Yet it had some elements of curiosity. There was a mixed group of Swedes, Danes, and Norsemen[29], one of whom, generally known by the name of 'Johnny,' in spite of his own protests, greatly diverted[30] us by his clever, cross-country efforts to speak English, and became on the strength of that an universal favourite - it takes so little in this world of shipboard to create a popularity. There was, besides, a Scots mason, known from his favourite dish as 'Irish Stew,' three or four **nondescript** Scots, a fine young Irishman, O'Reilly, and a pair of young men who deserve a special word of **condemnation.** One of them was Scots; the other claimed to be American; admitted, after some fencing[31], that he was born in England; and ultimately proved to be an Irishman born and nurtured, but ashamed to own his country. He had a sister on board, whom he faithfully neglected throughout the voyage, though she was not only sick, but much his senior, and had nursed and cared for him in childhood. In appearance he was like an imbecile[32] Henry the Third of France. The Scotsman, though perhaps as big an ass[33], was not so dead of heart; and I have only bracketed them together because they were fast[34] friends, and **disgraced** themselves equally by their **conduct** at the table.

Next, to turn to topics more agreeable, we had a newly-married couple, devoted to each other, with a pleasant story of how they had first seen each other years ago at a preparatory school, and that very afternoon he had carried her books home for her. I do not know if this story will be plain to southern readers; but to me it recalls many a school idyll[35], with wrathful[36] swains[37] of eight and nine

confronting each other stride-legs[38], flushed with jealousy; for to carry home a young lady's books was both a delicate attention and a **privilege.**

Then there was an old lady, or indeed 1 am not sure that she was as much old as antiquated'[9] and strangely out of place, who had left her husband, and was travelling all the way to Kansas by herself. We had to take her own word that she was married; for it was sorely contradicted by the testimony of her appearance. Nature seemed to have sanctified[40] her for the single state; even the colour of her hair was incompatible with matrimony, and her husband, I thought, should be a man of saintly spirit and phantasmal[41] bodily presence. She was ill, poor thing; her soul turned from the viands[42]; the dirty tablecloth shocked her like an impropriety; and the whole strength of her endeavour[43] was bent upon keeping her watch true to Glasgow time till she should reach New York. They had heard reports, her husband and she, of some unwarrantable[44] disparity of hours between these two cities; and with a spirit commendably scientific, had seized on this occasion to put them to the proof. It was a good thing for the old lady; for she passed much leisure time in studying the watch. Once, when prostrated by sickness[4'], she let it run down. It was inscribed on her harmless mind in letters of adamant[46] that the hands of a watch must never be turned backwards; and so it behoved her to lie in wait for the exact moment ere she started it again. When she imagined this was about due, she sought out[47] one of the young second-cabin Scotsmen, who was embarked on the same experiment as herself and had hitherto been less neglectful. She was in quest[48] of two o'clock; and when she learned it was already seven on the shores of Clyde, she lifted up her voice and cried 'Gravy!' I had not heard this innocent **expletive** since I was a young child; and I suppose it must have been the same with the other Scotsmen present, for we all laughed our fill[49]**.**

Last but not least, I come to my excellent friend Mr Jones. It would be difficult to say whether I was his **right-hand man,** or he mine, during the voyage. Thus at table I carved, while he only **scooped** gravy; but at our concerts, of which more anon, he was the president who called up performers to sing, and I but his messenger who **ran his errands** and **pleaded** privately with the over-modest. I knew I liked Mr Jones from the moment I saw him. I thought him by his face to be Scottish; nor could his accent undeceive[50] me. For as there is a *lingua franca* of many tongues on the moles'' and in the feluccas[52] of the Mediterranean, so there is a free or common accent among English-speaking men who follow the sea. They catch a twang[53] in a New England Port; from a cockney[54] skipper[55], even a Scotsman sometimes learns to drop an H[56]; a word of a **dialect** is picked up from another band in the forecastle[57]; until often the result is undecipherable[58], and you have to ask for the man's place of birth. So it was with Mr Jones. I thought him a Scotsman who had been long to sea; and yet he was from Wales, and had been

most of his life a **blacksmith** at an inland **forge;** a few years in America and half a score[59] of ocean voyages having sufficed to modify his speech into the common pattern. By his own account he was both strong and skilful in his **trade.** A few years back, he had been married and **after a fashion** a rich man; now the wife was dead and the money gone. But his was the nature that looks forward, and goes on from one year to another and through all the extremities of fortune undismayed[60]; and if the sky were to fall to-morrow, I should look to see Jones, the day following, perched on a step-ladder and getting things to rights[61]. He was always **hovering** round inventons like a bee over a flower, and lived in a dream of patents. He had with him a patent medicine, for instance, the composition of which he had bought years ago for five dollars from an American pedlar[62], and sold the other day for a hundred pounds (I think it was) to an English apothecary[63]. It was called Golden Oil, cured all maladies without exception; and I am bound to say that I partook of it myself with good results. It is a character of the man that he was not only perpetually dosing himself with Golden Oil, but wherever there was a head aching or a finger cut, there would be Jones with his bottle.

If he had one taste more strongly than another, it was to study character. Many an hour have we two walked upon the deck **dissecting** our neighbours in a spirit that was too purely scientific to be called unkind; whenever a quaint or human **trait** slipped out in conversation, you might have seen Jones and me exchanging glances; and we could hardly go to bed in comfort till we had exchanged notes and discussed the day's experience. We were then like a couple of anglers comparing a day's kill. But the fish we angled for were of a metaphysical species, and we angled as often as not in one another's baskets. Once, in the midst of a serious talk, each found there was a **scrutinizing** eye upon himself; I own I paused in embarrassment at this double detection; but Jones, with a better civility, broke into a peal of unaffected laughter, and declared, what was the truth, that there was a pair ol us indeed.

Early Impressions

We steamed out of the Clyde on Thursday night, and early on the Friday forenoon"" we took in our last batch of emigrants at Lough Foyle, in Ireland, and said farewell to Europe. The company was now complete, and began to draw together, by **inscrutable** magnetisms, upon the decks. There were Scots and Irish in plenty, a few English, a few Americans, a good handful of Scandinavians, a German or two, and one Russian; all now belonging for ten days to one small iron country on the deep[66].

As I walked the deck and looked round upon my fellow-passengers, thus curiously assorted from all northern Europe, I began for the first time to understand the nature of emigration. Day by day throughout the passage, and thenceforward

across all the States, and on to the shores of the Pacific, this knowledge grew more clear and **melancholy.** Emigration, from a word of the most cheerful import[67], came to sound most dismally[68] in my ear. There is nothing more agreeable to picture and nothing more pathetic to behold. The abstract idea, as conceived at home, is hopeful and adventurous. A young man, you fancy[69], scorning[70] restraints and helpers, issues forth[71] into life, that great battle, to fight for his own hand. The most pleasant stories of ambition, of difficulties overcome, and of ultimate success, are but as[72] episodes to this great epic of self-help. The epic is composed of individual heroisms; it stands to them as the victorious war which subdued an empire stands to the personal act of bravery which spiked[73] a single cannon[74] and was adequately rewarded with a medal. For in emigration the young men enter direct and by the shipload on their heritage of work; empty continents **swarm,** as at the bo's'un's[75] whistle, with industrious hands, and whole new empires are domesticated to the service of man.

This is the closet picture[76], and is found, on trial, to consist mostly of **embellishments.** The more I saw of my fellow-passengers, the less I was tempted to the lyric note[77]. Comparatively few of the men were below thirty; many were married, and **encumbered** with families; not a few were already up in years[78]; and this itself was out of tune with my imaginations[79], for the ideal emigrant should certainly be young. Again, I thought he should offer to the eye some bold type of humanity, with bluff[80] or hawk-like[81] features, and the stamp[82] of an eager and pushing disposition[83]. Now those around me were for the most part quiet, orderly, obedient citizens, family men broken by adversity, elderly youths who had failed to place themselves in life, and people who had seen better days. Mildness[84] was the prevailing[85] character; mild mirth[86] and mild **endurance.** In a word, I was not taking part in an **impetuous** and conquering sally[87], such as swept over Mexico or Siberia, but found myself, like Marmion[88], 'in the lost battle, borne down by the flying.'

Labouring mankind[89] had in the last years, and throughout Great Britain, sustained a **prolonged** and **crushing** series of defeats. I had heard vaguely of these reverses[90]; of whole streets of houses standing deserted by the Tyne[91], the cellar-doors broken and removed for firewood; of homeless men **loitering** at the street-corners of Glasgow with their chests[92] beside them; of closed factories, useless strikes, and starving girls. But I had never taken them home to me or represented these distresses livingly to my imagination.

A turn of the market[93] may be a **calamity** as disastrous as the French **retreat** from Moscow; but it hardly lends itself to lively treatment, and makes a trifling figure in the morning papers. We may struggle as we please, we are not born **economists.** The individual is more affecting[94] than the mass. It is by the

scenic[95] accidents, and the appeal to the carnal[96] eye, that for the most part we **grasp** the **significance** of **tragedies.** Thus it was only now, when I found myself involved in the rout[97], that I began to appreciate how sharp had been the battle. We were a company of the **rejected;** the drunken, the incompetent, the weak, the prodigal[98], all who had been unable to prevail[99] against circumstances in the one land, were now **fleeing** pitifully to another; and though one or two might still succeed, all had already failed. We were a shipful of failures, the broken men of England. Yet it must not be supposed that these people exhibited depression. The scene, on the contrary, was cheerful. Not a tear was shed[100] on board the vessel. All were full of hope for the future, and showed an inclination to innocent gaiety[101]. Some were heard to sing, and all began to scrape acquaintance with small jests[102] and ready laughter.

The children found each other out like dogs, and ran about the decks scraping acquaintance[103] after their fashion[104] also. 'What do you call your mither?[105]' I heard one ask. 'Mawmaw,' was the reply, indicating, I fancy, a shade of difference in the social scale. When people pass each other on the high seas of life at so early an age, the contact is but slight, and the relation more like what we may imagine to be the friendship of flies than that of men; it is so quickly joined, so easily dissolved, so open in its communications and so **devoid of** deeper human qualities. The children, I observed, were all in a band, and **as thick as thieves** at a fair, while their elders were still ceremoniously **manoeuvring** on the **outskirts** of **acquaintance.** The sea, the ship, and the seamen were soon as familiar as home to these half-conscious little ones. It was odd to hear them, throughout the voyage, employ shore words[106] to designate portions of the vessel. 'Go 'way doon to yon dyke[107],' I heard one say, probably meaning the bulwark. I often had my heart in my mouth, watching them climb into the shrouds[108] or on the rails, while the ship went swinging through the waves; and I admired and envied the courage of their mothers, who sat by in the sun and looked on with composure at these perilous[109] feats. 'He'll maybe be a sailor,' I heard one remark; 'now's the time to learn.' I had been on the point of running forward to **interfere,** but stood back at that, reproved[110]. Very few in the more delicate classes have the nerve[111] to look upon the peril of one dear to them; but the life of poorer folk[112], where necessity is so much more immediate and imperious[113], braces even a mother to this extreme of endurance. And perhaps, after all, it is better that the lad should break his neck than that you should break his spirit.

And since I am here on the chapter of the children, I must mention one little fellow, whose family belonged to Steerage No. 4 and 5, and who, wherever he went, was like a strain of music round the ship. He was an ugly, merry, unbreeched[114] child of three, his lint-white hair in a tangle[115], his face **smeared**

with suet[116] and treacle[117]; but he ran to and fro[118] with so natural a step, and fell and picked himself up again with such **grace** and good-humour, that he might fairly be called beautiful when he was in motion. To meet him, crowing with laughter and beating an accompaniment to his own mirth with a tin spoon upon a tin cup, was to meet a little triumph of the human species. Even when his mother and the rest of his family lay sick and prostrate around him, he sat upright in their midst[119] and sang aloud in the pleasant heartlessness of infancy[120].

Throughout the Friday, intimacy among us men made but a few advances. We discussed the probable **duration** of the voyage, we exchanged pieces of information, naming our trades, what we hoped to find in the new world, or what we were fleeing from in the old; and, above all, we condoled[121] together over the food and the vileness[122] of the steerage. One or two had been so near famine that you may say they had run into the ship with the devil at their heels; and to these all seemed for the best in the best of possible steamers. But the majority were hugely contented[123]. Coming as they did from a country in so low a state as Great Britain, many of them from Glasgow, which commercially speaking was as good as dead, and many having long been out of work, I was surprised to find them so dainty[124] in their notions[125]. I myself lived almost exclusively on bread, porridge, and soup, precisely as it was supplied to them, and found it, if not luxurious, at least sufficient. But these working men were loud in their outcries. It was not 'food for human beings,' it was 'only fit for pigs,' it was 'a disgrace.' Many of them lived almost entirely upon biscuit[126], others on their own private supplies, and some paid extra for better rations from the ship. This marvellously changed my notion of the degree of luxury **habitual to** the **artisan.** I was prepared to hear him grumble, for grumbling is the traveler’s pastime; but I was not prepared to find him turn away from a diet which was palatable to myself. Words I should have disregarded, or taken with a liberal allowance; but when a man prefers dry biscuit there can be no question of the sincerity of his disgust.

With one of their complaints I could most heartily sympathise. A single night of the steerage had filled them with horror. I had myself suffered, even in my decent-second-cabin berth, from the lack of air; and as the night promised to be fine and quiet, I determined to sleep on deck, and advised all who complained of their quarters to follow my example. I dare say a dozen of others agreed to do so, and I thought we should have been quite a party. Yet, when I brought up my rug[127] about seven bells[128], there was no one to be seen but the watch[129]. That chimerical[130] terror of good night-air, which makes men close their windows, list[131] their doors, and seal themselves up with their own poisonous exhalations, had sent all these healthy workmen down below. One would think we had been brought up

in a fever country; yet in England the most malarious[132] districts are in the bedchambers[133].

I felt saddened at this defection[134], and yet half-pleased to have the night so quietly to myself. The wind had hauled a little ahead on the starboard bow, and was dry but **chilly. 1** found a shelter near the fire-hole, and made myself **snug** for the **night**.

The ship moved over the uneven sea with a gentle and cradling movement. The ponderous[135], organic labours of the engine in her bowels[136] occupied the mind, and prepared it for slumber[137]. From time to time a heavier lurch would disturb me as I lay, and recall me to the obscure borders of consciousness; or I heard, as it were through a veil, the clear note of the clapper[138] on the brass and the beautiful sea-cry, 'All's well!' I know nothing, whether for poetry or music, that can surpass the effect of these two syllables in the darkness of a night at sea.

The day dawned fairly enough, and during the early part we had some pleasant hours to improve acquaintance in the open air; but towards nightfall the wind freshened, the rain began to fall, and the sea rose so high that it was difficult to keep ones footing on the deck. I have spoken of our concerts. We were indeed a musical ship's company, and cheered our way into exile with the fiddle[139], the **accordion,** and the songs of all nations. Good, bad, or indifferent - Scottish, English, Irish, Russian, German or Norse, - the songs were received with generous applause. Once or twice, a recitation[140], very spiritedly rendered[141] in a powerful Scottish accent, varied the proceedings; and once we sought[142] in vain to dance a quadrille[143], eight men of us together, to the music of the violin. The performers were all humorous, **frisky** fellows, who loved to cut capers[144] in private life; but as soon as they were arranged for the dance, they conducted themselves like so many mutes[145] at a funeral. I have never seen decorum[146] pushed so far; and as this was not expected, the quadrille was soon whistled down, and the dancers departed under a cloud. Eight Frenchmen, even eight Englishmen from another rank of society, would have dared to make some fun for themselves and the spectators; but the working man, when sober, takes an extreme and even melancholy view of personal deportment[147]. A fifth-form schoolboy is not more careful of dignity. He dares not be **comical;** his fun must escape from him unprepared, and above all, it must be unaccompanied by any physical demonstration. I like his society under most circumstances, but let me never again join with him in public gambols[148].

But the impulse to sing was strong, and triumphed over modesty and even the inclemencies[149] of sea and sky. On this rough Saturday night, we got together by the main deck-house, in a place sheltered from the wind and rain. Some clinging to a ladder which led to the hurricane deck, and the rest knitting[150] arms or taking hands, we made a ring to support the women in the violent lurching of the

ship; and when we were thus disposed, sang **to our hearts' content.** Some of the songs were appropriate to the scene; others strikingly the reverse. Bastard doggrel[151] of the music-hall[152], such as, 'Around her splendid form, I weaved the magic circle,' sounded bald, bleak, and pitifully silly. 'We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do[153],' was in some measure saved by the vigour and unanimity with which the chorus was thrown forth into the night. I observed a Platt-Deutsch mason, entirely innocent of[54] English, adding heartily to the general effect. And perhaps the German mason is but a fair example of the sincerity with which the song was rendered; for nearly all with whom I conversed upon the subject were bitterly opposed to war, and **attributed** their own misfortunes, and frequently their own taste for whisky, to the campaigns in Zululand and Afghanistan.

Every now and again, however, some song that touched the pathos of our situation was given forth[155]; and you could hear by the voices that took up the burden how the sentiment came home to each, 'The Anchor's Weighed' was true for us. We were indeed 'Rocked on the bosom of the stormy deep.' How many of us could say with the singer, 'I'm lonely to-night, love, without you,' or, 'Go, some one, and tell them from me, to write me a letter from home'! And when was there a more appropriate moment for 'Auld Lang Syne[156]' than now, when the land, the friends, and the affections of that mingled but beloved time were fading and fleeing behind us in the vessel's wake? It pointed forward to the hour when these labours should be overpast[157], to the return voyage, and to many a meeting in the sanded[158] inn, when those who had parted in the spring of youth should again drink a cup of kindness[159] in their age. Had not Burns contemplated emigration, I scarce[160] believe he would have found that note.

All Sunday the weather remained wild and cloudy; many were prostrated by sickness; only five sat down to tea in the second cabin, and two of these departed abruptly ere the meal was at an end. The Sabbath[161] was observed strictly by the majority of the emigrants. I heard an old woman express her surprise that 'the ship didna gae doon[162],' as she saw someone pass her with a chess-board on the holy day. Some sang Scottish psalms[163]. Many went to service, and in true Scottish fashion came back ill pleased[164] with their divine[165]. 'I didna think he was an experienced preacher,' said one girl to me.

It was a bleak, uncomfortable day; but at night, by six bells, although the wind had not yet moderated, the clouds were all wrecked and blown away behind the rim of the horizon, and the stars came out thickly overhead. I saw Venus burning as steadily and sweetly across this **hurly-burly** of the winds and waters as ever at home upon the summer woods. The engine pounded, the screw[166] tossed out of the water with a roar, and shook the ship from end to end; the bows[167] battled with loud reports[168] against the billows[169]: and as I stood in the lee-

scuppers[170] and looked up to where the funnel[171] leaned out, over my head, vomiting smoke, and the black and monstrous top-sails blotted[172], at each lurch, a different crop of stars, it seemed as if all this trouble were a thing of small account, and that just above the mast reigned peace unbroken and eternal.

Steerage Scenes

Our companion[173] (Steerage No. 2 and 3) was a favourite resort[174]. Down one flight of stairs there was a comparatively large open space, the centre occupied by a hatchway[175], which made a convenient seat for about twenty persons, while barrels, coils of rope, and the carpenter's bench afforded perches[176] for perhaps as many more. The canteen, or steerage bar, was on one side of the stair; on the other, a no less attractive spot, the cabin of the indefatigable[177] interpreter.

I have seen people packed into this space like herrings[178] in a barrel, and many merry evenings prolonged there until five bells, when the lights were ruthlessly extinguished and all must go to roost[179].

It had been rumoured since Friday that there was a fiddler aboard, who lay sick and unmelodious in Steerage No. 1; and on the Monday forenoon, as I came down the companion, I was saluted[180] by something in Strathspey time[181]. A white-faced Orpheus[182] was cheerily playing to an audience of white-faced women. It was as much as he could do to play, and some of his hearers were scarce able to sit; yet they had crawled from their bunks at the first experimental flourish, and found better than medicine in the music. Some of the heaviest heads began to nod in time, and a degree of animation looked from some of the palest eyes. Humanly speaking, it is a more important matter to play the fiddle, even badly, than to write huge works upon recondite[183] subjects. What could Mr Darwin[184] have done for these sick women? But this fellow scraped away; and the world was positively a better place for all who heard him. We have yet to understand the economical value of these mere accomplishments. I told the fiddler he was a happy man, carrying happiness about with him in his fiddle-case, and he seemed alive to[185] the fact.

'It is a privilege,' I said. He thought a while upon the word, turning it over in his Scots head, and then answered with conviction, 'Yes, a privilege.'

That night I was **summoned** by 'Merrily danced the Quake's wife' into the companion of Steerage No. 4 and 5. This was, properly speaking[186], but a strip across a deck-house, lit by a sickly lantern[187] which swung to and fro with the motion of the ship. Through the open slide-door we had a glimpse of a grey night sea, with patches of phosphorescent foam flying, swift as birds, into the wake[188], and the horizon rising and falling as the vessel rolled to the wind. In the centre the companion ladder plunged down sheerly[189] like an open pit. Below, on the first landing, and lighted by another lamp, lads and lasses[190] danced, not more than

three at a time for lack of space, in jigs and reels and hornpipes[191]. Above, on either side, there was a recess railed with iron, perhaps two feet wide and four long, which stood for[192] orchestra and seats of honour. In the one balcony, five slatternly[193] Irish lasses[194] sat woven in a comely[195] group. In the other was posted Orpheus, his body, which was convulsively in motion, forming an odd contrast to his somnolent[196], imperturbable Scots face. His brother, a dark man with a vehement, interested countenance[197], who made a god of the fiddler, sat by with open mouth, drinking in the general admiration and throwing out remarks to kindle[198] it.

'That's a bonny[199] hornpipe now,' he would say, 'it's a great favourite with performers; they dance the sand dance to it.' And he expounded[200] the sand dance. Then suddenly, it would be a long, 'Hush[201]!' with uplifted finger and glowing, supplicating[202] eyes, 'he's going to play "Auld Robin Gray" on one string!' And throughout this excruciating movement, - 'On one string, that's on one string!' he kept crying. I would have given something myself that it had been on none; but the hearers were much awed[203]. I called for a tune or two, and thus introduced myself to the notice of the brother, who directed his talk to me for some little while, keeping, I need hardly mention, true to his topic, like the seamen to the star. 'He's grand of it[204],' he said confidentially. 'His master was a music-hall man.' Indeed the music-hall man had left his mark, for our fiddler was ignorant of many of our best old airs[205]; 'Logie o' Buchan,' for instance, he only knew as a quick, jigging figure[206] in a set of quadrilles, and had never heard it called by name. Perhaps, after all, the brother was the more interesting performer of the two. I have spoken with him afterwards repeatedly, and found him always the same quick, fiery bit of a man, not without brains; but he never showed to such advantage as when he was thus squiring[207] the fiddler into public note. There is nothing more becoming[208] than a genuine admiration; and it shares this with love, that it does not become contemptible although misplaced.

The dancing was but feebly carried on. The space was almost impracticably small; and the Irish wenches[209] combined the extreme of bashfulness[210] about this innocent display with a surprising impudence and roughness of address[211]. Most often, either the fiddle lifted up its voice unheeded[212], or only a couple of lads would be footing it[213] and snapping fingers on the landing. And such was the eagerness of the brother to display all the acquirements[214] of his idol, and such the sleepy indifference of the performer, that the tune would as often as not be changed, and the hornpipe expire[215] into a **ballad** before the dancers had cut half a dozen shuffles[216].

In the meantime, however, the audience had been growing more and more numerous every moment; there was hardly standing-room round the top of the

companion; and the strange instinct of the race moved some of the newcomers to close both the doors, so that the atmosphere grew insupportable[217]. It was a good place, as the saying is, to leave.

The wind hauled ahead with a head sea[218]. By ten at night heavy sprays were flying and drumming over the forecastle; the companion of Steerage No. 1 had to be closed, and the door of communication through the second cabin thrown open. Either from the convenience of the opportunity, or because we had already a number of acquaintances in that part of the ship, Mr Jones and I paid it a late visit. Steerage No. 1 is shaped like an isosceles triangle[219], the sides opposite the equal angles bulging outward with the contour of the ship. It is lined with eight pens[220] of sixteen bunks[221] apiece, four bunks below and four above on either side. At night the place is lit with two lanterns, one to each table. As the steamer beat on her way among the rough billows, the light passed through violent phases of change, and was thrown to and fro and up and down with startling swiftness. You were tempted to wonder, as you looked, how so thin a glimmer could control and disperse such solid blackness. When Jones and I entered we found a little company of our acquaintances seated together at the triangular foremost table. A more **forlorn** party, in more dismal circumstances, it would be hard to imagine. The motion here in the ship's nose was very violent; the uproar of the sea often overpoweringly loud. The yellow flicker of the lantern spun round and round and tossed the shadows in masses. The air was hot, but it struck a chill from its foetor[222].

From all round in the dark bunks, the scarcely human noises of the sick joined into a kind of farmyard chorus. In the midst, these five friends of mine were keeping up what heart they could in company. Singing was their refuge from discomfortable[223] thoughts and sensations. One piped, in feeble tones, 'Oh why left I my hame[224]?' which seemed a pertinent question in the circumstances. Another, from the invisible horrors of a pen where he lay dog-sick[225] upon the upper-shelf, found courage, in a blink of his sufferings, to give us several verses of the 'Death of Nelson'; and it was odd and eerie to hear the chorus breathe feebly from all sorts of dark corners, and 'this day has done his dooty[226]' rise and fall and be taken up again in this dim inferno, to an accompaniment of plunging, hollow-sounding bows and the rattling spray-showers overhead.

All seemed unfit for conversation; a certain dizziness had interrupted the activity of their minds; and except to sing they were **tongue-tied.** There was present, however, one tall, powerful fellow of doubtful nationality, being neither quite Scotsman nor altogether Irish, but of surprising clearness of conviction on the highest problems. He had gone nearly **beside himself** on the Sunday, because of a general backwardness to indorse[227] his definition of mind as 'a living, thinking substance which cannot be felt, heard, or seen' - nor, I presume, although he failed

to mention it, smelt. Now he came forward in a pause with another contribution to our culture.

'Just by way of change,' said he, 'I'll ask you a Scripture[228] riddle. There's profit in them too,' he added ungrammatically.

This was the riddle —

C and P
Did agree
To cut down C;
But C and P
Could not agree
Without the leave of G;
All the people cried to see
The crueltie[129] of C and P.

Harsh are the words of Mercury[230] after the songs of Apollo[231]! We were a long while over the problem, shaking our heads and gloomily wondering how a man could be such a fool; but at length he put us out of suspense and divulged the fact that C and P stood for Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate[232].

I think it must have been the riddle that settled[233] us; but the motion and the close air likewise hurried our departure. We had not been gone long, we heard next morning, ere two or even three out of the five fell sick. We thought it little wonder[234] on the whole, for the sea kept contrary[235] all night. I now made my bed upon the second cabin floor, where, although I ran the risk of being stepped upon, I had a free current of air, more or less vitiated[236] indeed, and running only from steerage to steerage, but at least not stagnant; and from this couch[237], as well as the usual sounds of a rough night at sea, the hateful coughing and retching of the sick and the sobs of children, I heard a man run wild with terror beseeching[238] his friend for encouragement. 'The ship's going down!' he cried with a thrill of agony. 'The ship's going down!' he repeated, now in a blank whisper, now with his voice rising towards a sob; and his friend might reassure him, reason with him, joke at him - all was in vain, and the old cry came back, 'The ship's going down!' There was something panicky and catching in the emotion of his tones; and I saw in a clear flash what an involved and hideous tragedy was a disaster to an emigrant ship. If this whole parishful[239] of people came no more to land, into how many houses would the newspaper carry woe[240], and what a great part of the web of our corporate[241] human life would be rent[242] across for ever!

The next morning when I came on deck I found a new world indeed. The wind was fair; the sun mounted into a cloudless heaven; through great dark blue seas the ship cut a swath of curded foam. The horizon was dotted all day with companionable sails, and the sun shone pleasantly on the long, heaving deck.

We had many fine-weather diversions to beguile[243] the time. There was a single chess-board and a single pack of cards. Sometimes as many as twenty of us would be playing dominoes[244] for love. Feats of dexterity, puzzles for the intelligence, some arithmetical, some of the same order as the old problem of the fox and goose and cabbage[245], were always welcome; and the latter, I observed, more popular as well as more conspicuously well done than the former. We had a regular daily competition to guess the vessel's progress; and twelve o'clock, when the result was published in the wheel-house[246], came to be a moment of considerable interest. But the interest was unmixed. Not a bet was laid upon our guesses. From the Clyde to Sandy I look I never heard a wager[247] offered or taken. We had, besides, romps in plenty. Puss in the Corner[248], which we had rebaptized[249], in more manly style, Devil and four Corners, was my own favourite game; but there were many who preferred another, the humour of which was to box a person's ears[250] until he found out who had cuffed[251] him.

This Tuesday morning we were all delighted with the change of weather, and in the highest possible spirits. We got in a **cluster** like bees, sitting between each other's feet under lee of the deck-houses. Stories and laughter went around. The children climbed about the shrouds. White faces appeared for the first time, and began to take on colour from the wind. I was kept hard at work making cigarettes for one amateur after another, and my less than moderate skill was heartily admired. Lastly, down sat the fiddler in our midst and began to discourse[252] his reels, and jigs, and ballads, with now and then a voice or two to take up the air and throw in the interest of human speech.

Through this merry and good-hearted scene there came three cabin passengers, a gentleman and two young ladies, picking their way with little gracious titters[253] of indulgence, and a Lady-Bountiful[254] air about nothing, which galled me to the quick[255]. I have little of the **radical** in social questions, and have always nourished an idea that one person was as good as another. But I began to be troubled by this episode. It was astonishing what **insults** these people managed to convey by their presence. They seemed to throw their clothes in our faces. Their eyes searched us all over for tatters[256] and incongruities[257]. A laugh was ready at their lips; but they were too well-mannered to indulge it in our hearing. Wait a bit, till they were all back in the saloon, and then hear how wittily they would depict the manners of the steerage. We were in truth very innocently, cheerfully, and sensibly engaged, and there was no shadow of excuse for the swaying elegant superiority with which these damsels[258] passed among us, or for the stiff and waggish[259] glances of their squire[260]. Not a word was said; only when they were gone Mackay **sullenly** damned their impudence[261] under his breath; but we were all conscious of an icy influence and a dead break in the course of our enjoyment.

1 *formal:* got to know someone
2 *formal:* were the most important
3 running away from the police
4 a wall that is built as a defence
5 thick poles that support the sails of a boat
6 full of people
7 *literary:* to take somewhere
8 *formal:* have a conversation
9 *old-fashioned:* punishment
10 here, he refers to himself, a passenger in the second cabin, which is better than steerage, having bedding, dishes, a table and better food
11 *formal:* in case
12 *formal:* repeat
13 *formal:* a difference between things
14 a taste of tobacco in the form of powder that you take in through your nose
15 a thick soup made from meat, potatoes, onions and other root vegetables
16 a food made from meat or fish cut into very small pieces, pressed into a Rat, round shape or a ball and cooked in oil
17 corned beef
18 a type of cake
19 *formal:* here, they looked like they must be scrapings
20 here, started to eat with enthusiasm
21 *formal:* the type of food that is available, especially in a restaurant or cafe
22 to an acceptable level or standard
23 *old-fashioned:* found by chance
24 a small piece of shiny yellow metal with information on it
25 *formal:* only
26 a unit of money or a gold coin used in Britain in the past
27 *old-fashioned:* here, attractive or special items of food
28 where the first class passengers stay
29 people from Norway
30 *old-fashioned:* amused, entertained
31 here, avoiding answering a question
32 *old-fashioned:* used to describe someone with a mental disability
33 *old-fashioned:* a stupid or annoying person
34 old-fashioned: close
35 *literary:* a place or situation where everyone is happy and there are no problem
36 *mainly literary:* extremely angry
37 *literary:* a young man, especially a young man who is in love
38 *unusual:* standing with legs astride, or apart
39 old-fashioned
40 made holy or blessed
41 *unusual:* ghostly or unreal
42 an old, formal word meaning food
43 *formal:* an effort to do something, especially something that is new or difficult
44 unwarranted, not fair or necessary
45 *formal:* extremely upset or ill
46 *unusual:* written in stone, unchangeable
47 found by looking in a determined way
48 *mainly literary:* making a long, difficult search for something
49 laughed until they couldn't laugh any more
50 *unusual:* reveal the truth to someone
51 strong walls built from the land into the sea to protect the land from the waves
52 small boats used on the Nile and formerly more widely in the Mediterranean region
53 the way that someone's voice sounds when they speak through their nose as well as their mouth
54 someone born in the East End of London, especially a working-class person
55 *informal:* the captain of a small ship or fishing boat
56 to speak in a careless way, especially dropping the first letter from words beginning in 'h'
57 the front part of a ship
58 indecipherable; impossible to read or understand
59 twenty
60 *mainly literary:* not worried by something bad that has happened
61 putting things right, fixing tilings

62 someone who goes from one place to another selling things
63 an old word for someone whose job was to prepare and sell medicines
64 before noon (12 o'clock) in the morning
65 a number of things or people that arrive or are dealt with at the same time
66 *literary:* the sea
67 *very formal:* the importance or meaning of something
68 in a way that makes you feel unhappy and without hope or enthusiasm
69 *literary:* to believe or imagine that something is true
70 not willing to accept something, looking down on something
71 *literary:* to come out of a place or thing
72 only, nothing more than
73 disabled, put out of use
74 a large powerful gun used in the past that shot large, solid metal balls
75 more commonly bosun or boatswain; an officer on a shop whose |ob is to look aftel the ship's equipment
76 the idea (of emigrants) in theory
77 wanting to describe something in a poetic way
78 quite old
79 imaginings
80 direct, bold
81 a hawk is a large bird with sharp eyes and a large beak
82 literary.- a particular type of person or thing
83 the way that someone normally thinks and behaves, that shows what type of person they are
84 a mild person is gentle and does not often become angry
85 the most common
86 *mainly literary:* happy laughter
87 *literary:* a journey, especially one with a definite purpose
88 an epic poem by the Scottish poet and novelist Walter Scott (1771-1832)
89 the working classes
90 times of bad luck
91 a river in the north-east of England
92 large, strong, heavy boxes used for moving or storing things
93 a change in the economic system
94 *formal:* making you feel a strong emotion such as sympathy, sadness, etc
95 seen
96 *mainly literary:* relating to the body
97 disorganized retreat of defeated soldiers
98 wasting a lot of money or supplies
99 to defeat in a game, competition, argument, etc
100 *mainly literary:* to cry, or to feel very sad
101 *old-fashioned:* a feeling or state of happiness and fun
102 *old-fashioned:* jokes
103 to get to know someone little by little and with some difficulty
104 here, as children do
105 *old-fashioned, Scottish:* mother
106 use words they would normally use on land
107 Go away down to that dyke (wall)
108 ropes
109 *mainly literary:* very dangerous
110 *formal:* criticized or blamed for doing something wrong or bad
111 the ability to control your fear when something dangerous is happening
112 *informal:* people
113 behaving in a proud and confident way that shows you expect to be obeyed
114 *old-fashioned:* not wearing trousers
115 the untidy shape that things make when they are twisted round each other or round something else
116 hard fat from around an animal's kidneys that is used for cooking

117 a thick sweet black liquid used in cooking
118 in one direction and then back again
119 *formal:* inside the group
120 the time when you are a baby or a very young child
121 *obsolete:* showed sympathy to each other
122 *formal:* extreme unpleasantness
123 very pleased
124 particular or demanding
125 *old-fashioned:* ideas, opinions
126 ship's biscuit was a hard biscuit made of flour and water that was formerly taken on sea voyages
127 a cloth made of wool that you use to keep yourself warm
128 on a ship, seven o'clock
129 *old-fashioned:* the person who keeps watch, or guards, something
130 a chimera is a frightening, imaginary creature in old stories
131 put something to keep out the draught
132 malaria is a serious illness caused by a mosquito bite, usually in hot countries
133 an old word meaning bedrooms
134 leaving or betrayal
135 *mainly literary:* moving slowly because of being big and heavy
136 in the deepest inner part of something
137 *literary:* sleep
138 the small metal object inside a bell that hits against the bell to make it ring
139 violin
140 a performance in which you recite a poem or a story
141 *formal:* expressed, performed
142 tried
143 a slow formal dance done by several people who form a square
144 *old-fashioned:* dance about in a lively way
145 *old-fashioned:* a professional attendant at a funeral
146 *formal:* polite behavior
147 *formal:* the way in which you walk or stand
148 *literary: usually a verb* to run, jump and play like a young child or animal
149 *formal:* inclement weather is had
150 putting your arm through another person's arm
151 doggerel is had poetry; *offensive:* 'bastard' literally means 'without a father and mother' — it is used as a more general insult
152 a type of entertainment of the late 19th and early 20.h centuries that consisted of a series of short performances by singers, dancers and comedians
153 from a British music-hall song of 1878
154 without
155 given out, expressed through singing
156 a poem by the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) often sung in different countries on New Year's Eve. It is written in Scottish dialect and the title means 'times gone by' or 'a long time ago'
157 over, finished
158 with sand on the floor
159 a phrase from 'Auld Lang Syne'
160 scarcely, hardly
161 Sunday, when some Christians go to church
162 didn't go down
163 songs or poems that praise God
164 *old-fashioned:* phrase for 'displeased' or unhappy
165 priest or preacher
166 the ship's propeller, that moves the ship forward
167 the front end of the ship
168 a sudden loud noise caused by a gun or an explosion

169 *literary:* large waves in the sea
170 holes in the ship's side to allow water to run away from the deck
171 a tube that lets out smoke and steam from the ship's engine
172 hidden, covered
173 a staircase of ladder from one deck to another
174 meeting place
175 an opening in a floor or wall
176 provided somewhere to sit (a perch is usually used by a bird)
177 *formal:* never showing signs of getting tired
178 long, thin, silver sea fish
179 when birds roost, they go somewhere to rest or sleep
180 greeted, welcomed
181 to the rhythms of a Scottish tune; Strathspey is a place in the central Highlands of Scotland
182 a figure in Greek mythology who was a wonderful musician
183 not easily understood
184 Charles Darwin (1809-1882), English naturalist who developed the Theory of Evolution
185 aware of
186 really, correctly
187 a light inside a transparent container; the light is 'sickly' or not very strong
188 the track that appears in the water behind a moving boat
189 steeply
190 *informal:* young men and women
191 lively dances
192 took the role of
193 *old-fashioned:* untidy or dirty
194 Scottish, plural: girls or young women
195 old-fashioned: attractive
196 *literary:* feeling ready to sleep
197 literary: your face or expression
198 *literary:* encourage or develop
199 Scottish: very pleasant or attractive
200 wry formal: to explain something, or express your opinion about something, in detail
201 used for telling someone to be quiet
202 asking for something
203 full of admiration
204 *old-fashioned, Irish:* he's good at it
205 tunes
206 *obsolete:* a dancing tune
207 accompanying, escorting
208 *old-fashioned:* making you look attractive
209 an old word meaning young women
210 feeling easily embarrassed when you are with other people
211 *old-fashioned:* the way you speak to someone
212 ignored
213 dancing
214 talents, skills
215 *literary:* die or end
216 slow, noisy movements of the feet
217 *formal:* impossible to accept or deal with
218 with the sea moving the opposite way to the ship
219 a triangle in which two sides are the same length
220 small areas with fences round them, used for keeping animals in
221 narrow beds, often fixed to the wall
222 *obsolete:* unpleasant smell
223 *obsolete:* uncomfortable

224 *old-fashioned, Scottish:* home
225 the modern expression is 'sick as a dog', very ill indeed
226 duty
227 endorse, support
228 the Bible
229 old-fashioned *spelling:* cruelty
230 god of commerce
231 Greek and Roman god of music and poetry
232 in the Bible, the high priest and Roman governor who tried Jesus and sentenced him to death
233 decided
234 not surprising
235 continued to be rough
236 *very formal:* made less effective
237 bed on board ship or train
238 *literary:* asking someone for something in an urgent and sincere way
239 a parish is a small area or district
240 *literary:* a strong feeling of sadness
241 *formal:* shared by or including all the members of a group
242 torn, broken
243 *formal:* to charm, persuade or trick someone, especially by saying nice things to them
244 a game that uses small flat pieces of wood or plastic with dots on them
245 a problem-solving game where a man has to work out how to transport a fox, goose and cabbage across a river
246 a small room on a boat where the wheel and other controls are
247 an agreement to win or lose an amount of money depending on the result of a competition
248 a traditional children's game
249 given the new name of
250 *informal, old-fashioned:* to hit someone on the side of the head, as a punishment
251 hit someone with your open hand
252 play
253 quiet laughter that shows you are nervous or embarrassed
254 a woman who gives money generously hut makes sure that people see her generosity; the name comes from a character in an 18th century English play
255 *old-fashioned:* very upset or angry
256 old torn pieces of clothing
257 strange things
258 an old word for young women
259 behaving in a humorous way or saying humorous things
260 here, a young, well-to-do man who accompanies the ladies
261 *impolite:* criticized their lack of respect

Post-reading activities

Understanding the extract

Use these questions to help you check that you have understood the extract.

The Second Cabin

1 Where does Stevenson first meet the other passengers? How do the English-speaking passengers behave towards each other at first?
2 Where do the passengers first see the ship that is taking them to the USA?
3 Why did Stevenson want to travel as a steerage passenger? Why does he change his mind and how does he feel about it?
4 What are the main differences between second cabin and steerage?
5 How does Stevenson know the difference between coffee and tea on board ship?
6 What is the difference in the food between second cabin and steerage?
7 How does Stevenson learn that he is classed as a 'gentleman' and not just a 'male'?
8 How much are the different fares? How do steerage passengers supplement their diet?
9 Why is 'Johnny' popular with the other passengers? Which two young men behave badly? What do they do?
10 How did the devoted married couple first meet?
11 What is the old lady's obsession? Why does she say 'Gravy!'?
12 Why is it difficult for Stevenson to guess where Mr Jones is from? What is Golden Oil?
13 What do Stevenson and Mr Jones enjoy doing? Why does Jones laugh?

Early Impressions

14 Where does the ship go after leaving Scotland? Why?
15 How long is the voyage to the USA?
16 What did Stevenson think emigrants were like before he joined the ship?
17 What are most of the passengers like, according to Stevenson?
18 What has happened in Great Britain in recent years to make life difficult?
19 What is the attitude of most of the passengers to the future?
20 What does Stevenson admire about the children on board? What does he admire about their mothers?
21 Who is 'a little triumph of the human species'? Why?
22 What do the male passengers talk about most?

23 What surprises Stevenson about the men's attitude to the food on board?
24 Why does Stevenson decide to sleep on deck? Why is he alone*!*
25 How do the passengers react to all the different songs they hear?
26 Why is the quadrille a failure?
27 What kind of songs do the passengers sing?
28 What do most of the passengers do on Sunday?

Steerage Scenes

29 When must the passengers stop singing and dancing? Why?
30 What effect does the fiddler's music have on the sick passengers?
31 Why does Stevenson go to Steerage 4 and 5 ?
32 What are the young men and women doing?
33 How does the fiddler's brother treat him?
34 Why does Stevenson finally leave the concert?
35 Where is Steerage 1? Why do Jones and Stevenson go there?
36 What are conditions like in Steerage 1?
37 How do the men at the table try to forget their situation?
38 What is Stevenson's reaction to the Scripture riddle?
39 Where does Stevenson sleep that night? Why?
40 Why are the passengers happier the next day? What do they do to pass the time?
41 Why is Stevenson disturbed by the visit of the three cabin passengers?

Language study

Vocabulary

Words and expressions with heart

There are many words and expressions which include the word heart. Look at these examples from the extract.

> *I often **had my heart in my mouth**, watching them [the children] climb into the shrouds.*
> *He sang aloud with the pleasant **heartlessness** of infancy.*
> *In the midst, these five friends of mine were **keeping up what heart they could** in company.*
> *With one of their complaints I could most **heartily** sympathise.*
> *[It was] a merry and **good-hearted** scene.*
> *We sang **to our hearts' content**.*

1 Which of the expressions with heart mean the following?

1 good humour and courage
2 in an enthusiastic way
3 felt afraid or anxious
4 a lack of feeling
5 as much as you want
6 kind or making you feel happy

2 Complete the sentences with one of the words or expressions with heart.

1 When I get some free time, I'm going to sleep.....
2 You're right! I.....agree with you.
3 When the aeroplane made a strange noise I.....
4 The landlord showed great.....in throwing them out of their house.
5 Take.....! We'll soon be home again.
6 He's very.....and always volunteers to help out.

Words and expressions with spirit and spirits

The word spirit(s) is often used by Stevenson, either as an individual word or as part of an expression. Look at these examples from the extract.

1 We descended the Clyde ***in no familiar spirit.***
2 With a few biscuits and some whisky and water.. .1 kept my body going and *my* ***spirits up to the mark.***
3 When I felt ***out of spirits*** *I* could go down and look and refresh myself with a look of that brass plate.
4 Her husband, I thought, should be a man ***of saintly spirit*** and phantasmal bodily presence.
5 …dissecting our neighbours ***in a spirit*** that was too purely scientific to be called unkind
6 Perhaps it is better...that the lad should break his neck than that you should ***break his spirit.***
7 …a recitation very ***spiritedly*** rendered in a powerful Scottish accent
8 This Tuesday morning, we were all delighted with the change in weather and ***in the highest possible spirits.***

Spirit or spirits, in these sentences, can refer to:

a) your character
b) your attitude to life or other people
c) the attitude of people in a group
d) your general mood
e) doing something (with) enthusiasm or determination.

3 Look at the examples again. Which of the definitions (a-e) applies in each case? For example:

1 We descended the Clyde in no familiar ***spirit.***

This use of the word spirit refers to the **general mood** of the individuals.

4 Look at the examples again. Match each phrase with one of the following four categories:

a) in a really good mood
b) put a stop to someone's enthusiasm
c) depressed
d) in such away

Grammar

Conditional tenses

Look at these examples of the second conditional from the extract.

> *If this whole parishful of people came no more to land, into how many houses would the newspaper carry woe!*
> *If the sky were to fall tomorrow I should look to see Jones, the day following, perched on a step ladder and getting things to rights.*

The tenses used in the first example are more usual. However, the second example could be expressed differently in more modern English:

> *If the sky **fell** tomorrow I **would** look to see Jones, the day following, perched on a ladder and getting things to rights.*

Now look at these examples of the third conditional.

> *Had they given me porridge again in the evening I should have been perfectly contented with the fare.*

Had not Burns contemplated emigration 1 scarce believe he would have found that note.

In more modern English, these sentences could be expressed in the following way.

*If they **had given** me porridge again in the evening I **would have been** perfectly happy with the food.*
*If Burns **had not contemplated** emigration I can hardly believe he **would have found** that note.*

5 Write these examples of conditionals in a more conventional way.

1 If you were to tell me the story twenty times, I shouldn't believe you.
If you told me the story twenty times, I wouldn't believe you.

2 If it were to rain tomorrow, we should have the meal indoors.

3 He could study something different if he were to fail the exam.

4 What would you do if the train were to arrive late?

5 Were he to dance all night, I shouldn't be surprised.

6 Had she realized how bad the food was, she wouldn't have gone.

7 He was so ill that had the sky fallen he wouldn't have noticed.

8 Had you spoken to me politely, I might have answered you.

9 What would they have done had the shop been closed?

10 I should have preferred it had he not continued to play the violin.

Participle clauses with *-ing* and *having* + past participle

We can use an *–ing* form of a verb in a clause which has an adverbial meaning. A clause like this gives the reader additional information, usually about the subject of the clause. Look at these examples from the extract.

*There she lay, her sea signal **flying.***

*We descended the Clyde….**looking** askance on each other as on possible enemies.*
*Everywhere else I was incognito, **moving** among my inferiors with simplicity.*
*I had heard vaguely.. .of homeless men **loitering** at the street corners.*

We can also use *having* + past participle in adverbial clauses.

*Coming as they did from a country in so low a state as Great Britain... and many **having** long **been** out of work...*

Sometimes, the past participle clause refers to an action that goes before another.

Having closed the door behind me, I sat down at my desk.

6 Write these pairs of sentences as one sentence using a present participle or *having* + past participle.

1 I have seen passengers. Some still doubted whether they had drunk tea or coffee.

I have seen some passengers still doubting whether they had drunk tea or coffee.

2 We walked around the deck for ages. We dissected the characters of our fellow passengers.

3 I heard stories about people. They were asking for money on the streets.

4 She said goodbye. Then she put down the phone.

5 I recalled a story. It was about two small children who fought with each other.

6 They went on board ship. They ran to the rails.

7 He talked continuously. He worked as he talked.

8 I finished work. I decided to go home.

9 He was a young man. He was looking for a wife.

10 The child was delightful. He ran around the ship and laughed all the time.

Literary analysis

Events

1 Look at the following quotes from different sections of the extract.

a) At *breakfast we had a choice between tea and coffee.*
b) *She was in quest of two o'clock; and when she learned it was already seven on the shores of Clyde, she lifted up her voice and cried 'Gravy!'*
c) *The ideal emigrant should certainly be young.*
d) *The starboard forward gallery is the* second *cabin.*
e) I *heard a man run wild with terror.*
f) *Below, on the first landing, lads and lasses danced.*
g) We *may struggle as we please, we are not born economists.*
h) *When people pass each other on the high seas of life at so early an age, the contact is but slight.*
i) It *is lined with eight pens of sixteen bunks apiece, four bunks below and four above on either side.*
j) I *have little of the radical in social questions, and have always nourished an idea that one person was as good as another.*

Now look at the categories below. Which category does each quote belong to? We have done one for you as an example.

- things that happen on board
- a description of the ship or conditions on board
- personal reflections of the author *The ideal emigrant should certainly be young.*

2 Which does Stevenson describe more: specific events or general conditions?
3 Why do you think Stevenson includes so much personal reflection?
4 Is there a good balance in the extract between factual description and personal reflection?
5 What would you like to know about the remainder of the voyage?

People

6 Is Stevenson interested in his fellow passengers? How do you know?
7 What examples are there of Stevenson generalizing about human behaviour?
8 Which individuals does Stevenson describe in detail? Why?
9 Which individuals does Stevenson name? Why?
10 Which things surprise Stevenson about his fellow passengers? What things does he admire about them?

11 Does Stevenson like his fellow passengers? How do you know?
12 Do we know what the other passengers think of Stevenson?
13 Which details tell you that Stevenson is from a different social class to most of the passengers in steerage?
14 Is Stevenson a sociable person? How do you know?
15 Why is Stevenson so friendly with Mr Jones?

Sense of place

16 What is your impression of travel in steerage? Would you like to experience it?
17 Do you think that Stevenson was wise to travel in second cabin? Why?
18 Find the passage *(Steerage Scenes)* where Stevenson visits Steerage 1 with Mr Jones. How does this make you feel?
19 Find the passage (*Steerage Scenes)* where Stevenson describes the fine day on deck. How does he convey the relief and happiness of the passengers?
20 What are the most important factors on a voyage like this? What makes the journey more bearable or pleasant?
21 How would a journey by ship be different today? How would it be the same?

The author's voice

22 Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in Scotland. He often refers to Scotland and the Scots in the extract. Find some examples of this.
23 Stevenson writes that he was 'anxious to see the worst of emigrant life'. What does this tell us about him?
24 Look at the passage *(Early Impressions)* where Stevenson discovers that he is classed as a 'gentleman'? How would you describe the tone of this passage?
25 What examples of humour are there in the extract?
26 When does Stevenson show compassion in the extract?
27 What is your impression of Stevenson? How would you describe

Glossary

The definitions in the glossary refer to the meanings of the words and phrases as they are used in the extracts in this collection. Some words and phrases may also have other meanings which are not given here. The definitions are arranged in the extract in which they appear, and in alphabetical order.

The Lawless Roads

abandon (v) to leave something in a place, especially because you are in a hurry or are trying to escape
absurd (adj) completely stupid, unreasonable or impossible to believe
adaptable (adj) able to change your behaviour or ideas easily in order to deal with new situations
alert (adj) able to think in a clear and intelligent way
alligator (n) a large reptile with a long tail, four short legs, a long pointed mouth and sharp teeth. It is related to the crocodile
ant (n) a small insect that lives under the ground in large organized groups called colonies
appalling (adj) very unpleasant and shocking
automaton (n) someone who behaves like a machine and shows no feelings
barn (n) a large building on a farm where animals, crops or machines art-kept
beam (n) a long thick piece of wood, metal or concrete that supports a tool
beat (v) to hit something again and again
bizarre (adj) strange and difficult to explain
bless (v) say a prayer to protect someone or something
bolt (n) a metal bar that you slide across a door or window in order to lock it
bump (n) a hit or knock against something solid
bundle (n) a group of things that have been tied together, especially so that you can carry them easily
cling (v) to hold on to something or someone tightly with your arms or hands, eg because you are afraid
complacent (adj) too confident and relaxed because you think you can deal with something easily, though this may not be true
compulsion (n) a very strong feeling of wanting to do something, especially a feeling that you cannot control
creak (v) if something creaks, especially something wooden, it makes a high noise when it moves or when you put weight on it
desolation (n) the state of a place that is completely empty, or a place where everything has been destroyed
dim (adj) faint, not very well remembered
dislodge (v) to force something out ot its position or out of the position where it is fixed
drift (v) to be pushed along very slowly by the movement of air or water
earthquake (n) a sudden shaking movement of the ground
emerge (v) to come out of something or from behind something
envy (n) the unhappy feeling that you have when you want very much to do something that someone else does or have something that they have

exposed (adj) not covered or hidden and therefore able to be seen; not protected from the weather
fade (v) to gradually disappear
fate (n) the things that happen to someone, especially unpleasant things
ferry (n) a boat that makes short regular journeys between two or more places
fist (n) your hand when your fingers are closed tightly
flesh (n) the soft part of people's or animals' bodies that consists mostly of muscle and fat
flutter (v) to move through the air with short, quick, light movements
gassy (adj) containing or creating a lot of gas
gaze (v) to look at someone or something for a long time, eg because they are attractive or interesting, or because you are thinking of something else
gnarled (adj) old and twisted and covered in lines
hammock (n) a bed consisting of a long piece of cloth or net tied at each end to posts or trees
helmet (n) a hat that you wear to protect your head
immense (adj) extremely large
inquisitive (adj) asking a lot of questions about things, especially things that people do not want to talk about
leopard (n) a large wild animal from Africa and Southern Asia that has golden fur with black spots
limb (n) an arm or a leg
lodging (n) a place that you pay to live in temporarily, eg when you are visiting an area
miracle (n) an event that cannot be explained according to the laws of nature and is considered to be an act of God
mongrel (n) a dog that is a mixture of different breeds
nerves (n) the groups of fibres in your body that carry messages to your brain
novice (n) someone who is just beginning to learn a skill or a subject
obscurity (n) a state in which a person or thing is not well known or is not remembered
overtake (v) to go past another vehicle that is travelling in the same direction
partition (n) a wall, screen or piece of glass used to separate one area from another in a room or vehicle
patronizing (adj) behaving or speaking in a way that shows that you think you are more intelligent or important than someone
pebble (n) a small stone, especially one that has been made smooth by water
peer (v) to look very carefully, especially because something is difficult to see
plump (adj) slightly fat or overweight
pore (n) one of the very small holes in your skin dial swear can pass through
practically (adv) almost, nearly
precaution (n) something done to protect people or things against possible harm or Trouble
prestige (n) the high reputation and respect that someone or something has earned, based on their impressive achievements, quality etc
relic (n) an object from the past that has been kept
rhythm (n) a regular pattern of sounds or movements
ridge (n) the long narrow top of a mountain or group of mountains
rot (v) to decay by a gradual natural process
rucksack (n) a bag that you carry on your back, used when you are walking long distances or travelling to several

different places
scrub (n) small bushes and trees especially those that grow in areas without much rain
shelter (n) a place to live, considered as a basic human need
site (n) an area of land where something is being built or could be built
skeleton (n) the set of bones that supports a human or animal body
snatch (v) to pull or take something quickly
sparkle (v) to shine with small points of reflected light
spine (n) the row of bones down or along the middle of a human's or animal's back
spot (n) a particular place
spring (n) water that flows up from under the ground and forms a small stream or pool
stalactite (n) a long pointed piece of rock that hangs down from the roof of a cave formed by chemicals in water drops that have fallen over many years
stubborn (adj) not willing to change ideas or consider anyone else's reasons or arguments
stuff (n) used for talking about a substance or material when you do not know the correct name
suck (v) to pull liquid into your mouth by using the muscles in your cheeks
tiger (n) a large Asian wild animal that has yellowish fur with black lines and is a member of the cat family
tonic (adj) making you feel happier or healthier
trap (n) a trick that is designed to catch someone or to make them do or say something that they did not want to do or say
troubled (adj) worried about the problems that you have
tumble (v) to do gymnastic movements in which you roll your body over the floor
turkey (n) a large bird similar to a chicken that has no feathers on its head
twig (n) a very small thin branch from a tree or bush
uneven (adj) not regular
ventilation (n) the movement of fresh air around a room or building
vulture (n) a large bird that eats the bodies of dead animals
wail (v) to shout or cry with a long high sound to show that you are in pain or are very sad

Himalaya

at someone's expense PHRASE if someone has a joke or enjoys themselves al your expense, they enjoy laughing at you
barracks (n) a group of buildings where members of the armed forces live and work
beam (n) a long thick piece of wood, metal of concrete that supports a roof
beckon (v) if something beckons to you, it is very attractive and you feel you have to do something about it
boulder (n) a very large rock or piece of stone
bounce (v) if a person or vehicle bounces or is bounced, they move up and down as if they are on springs
chanting (n) the singing of a piece of religious music using a very limited range of notes
checkpoint (n) a place where traffic can be stopped by soldiers or police
churn (n) a container in which milk is mixed to make butter
cliff (n) the steep side of an area of highland
code (n) a system of words, numbers, or signs used for sending secret messages.
To put a message into code is to encode it, and to translate it back from code is to decode it
collision (n) an accident in which a person or vehicle that is moving crashes into something
dampen (v) to make something such as a feeling or hope less strong
daunt (v) if something daunts you, it makes you worried because you think that it will be very difficult or dangerous to do
eradicate (v) to get rid of something completely, especially something bad
exhilaration (n) a feeling of extreme happiness, excitement and energy
ferocity (n) violence or extreme force
flutter (v) to move up and down or from side to side with short, quick, light
movements, or to make something move in this way
force 8 gale (n) a gale is a very strong wind; force X (1-10) is a way of describing the strength of the gale
forecast (v) to make a statement about what is likely to happen, usually relating
to the weather, business or the economy
four-wheel drive (n) a vehicle which uses a system that provides power to all
four wheels
frontier (n) a border between two countries, especially one with official points where people or vehicles cross
ginger beer (n) a sweet drink made with fermented ginger, a spice from South East Asia
ignore (v) to not consider something or to not let it influence you
joy (n) a feeling of great happiness
mask (n) something that you wear to cover part or all of your face in order to protect it from something harmful such as poisonous gas, bacteria or smoke
milestone (n) an event or achievement that marks an important stage in a process
minder (n) someone whose job is to protect someone else

nocturnal (adj) *formal:* happening all night; nocturnal animals are active all night rather than during the day
panorama (n) a view of a large area of land or sea
pitch dark / pitch black PHRASE completely dark or black
pyramid (n) a monumental stone structure with a square or rectangular base and sloping sides that meet in a point at the top
quintessential (adj) perfect as an example of a particular type or thing
redeeming (adj) something which improves something that is not very good
resume (v) to Stan something again after slopping temporarily
sash (n) a long wide piece of cloth that you wrap around your waist like a bell
setback (n) a problem that delays or that slops progress or makes a situation worse
shed (n) a small building, usually made of wood, in which you store things
soar (v) to rise quickly
sodden (adj) completely wet
spin (something) out PHRASE to make something last for a long time, usually longer than is good or necessary
strewn with PHRASE to be covered with things that ate spread around in a careless or untidy way
toss (v) to throw something somewhere gently, or in a slightly careless way
trek (n) a long journey on foot
undulate (v) to move gently up and down like the shape of waves on the sea
up to date (adj) modern, and using the latest ideas or technology; including the most recent news or information
warlord (n) a military leader

The Land of the Camels

astrologer (n) someone who practices astrology, the study of the movement of the stars and planets and how they influence people's characters and lives
awe-inspiring (adj) making you feel great respect and admiration, and sometimes fear
bash (v) to hit someone or something hard and violently
camel (n) a large animal with a long neck and one or two humps (= large round raised parts) on its back. It is often used in deserts for carrying people or things
canvas (n) strong, heavy cotton used for making tents, shoes and sails
clout (n) the authority to make decisions or the power to influence events
crocodile (n) a large reptile that lives in water in hot countries. It has a long body and a long mouth with many sharp teeth
curse (n) a bad situation or event caused by someone's deliberate use of their magic powers
dazzling (adj) extremely impressive; a dazzling light is so bright that it makes you unable to see for a short period of time
dormitory (n) a large room where a lot of people sleep, eg in a school or army camp

draw (n) a game that ends with both teams or players having the same number of points
dump (n) a place where large amounts of waste are taken, usually outside a town
dustbin (n) a container that you keep outside and use for putting rubbish in
encamp (n) a large group of tents or temporary shelters
exceed (v) *formal:* to be greater than a number or amount; to go above an official limit
excruciating (adj) used for emphasizing how bad something is
float (v) to rest or move slowly on the surface of a liquid (or air) and not sink or drop
fodder (n) food for animals
goose (n) a large white or grey bird with a long neck and beak
groan (v) to make a long low sound, eg because you are in pain or unhappy
grunt (v) to make a short low sound in your nose and throat at the same time
hideous (adj) very unpleasant
insupportable (adj) impossible to accept or deal with
monotonous (adj) a monotonous sound or voice is boring and unpleasant because it does not change in loudness or become higher or lower
monsoon (n) a period of heavy rain in India and South East Asia
on the wane PHRASE getting smaller, weaker or less important
partridge (n) a fat brown bird that is hunted for sport and food
pavilion (n) a building in a park or large garden for people to sit in
peacock (n) a large, brightly coloured male bird with long, blue-green tail feathers
pierce (v) to make a hole in something by pushing a sharp object into it
plough (v) to turn over the soil before putting seeds into it
prune (v) to remove parts of a tree or plant, eg to make it grow better
ramp (n) *British:* a place where the level changes in a road surface
ripple (n) something that looks like a wave
saline (adj) containing salt
sane (adj) someone who is sane is able to think and speak in a reasonable way and behave normally
spike (n) something sharp and pointed, especially a piece of metal or wood
spooky (adj) frightening in a way that makes you nervous because it involves things that do not seem natural and cannot be explained by science
squash (v) to damage something by pressing or crushing it and making it lose its normal shape
stand-in (n) someone or something that takes the place of another person or thing for a short time, especially in order to do their job while they are not available
succulent (adj) succulent plants have thick stems or leaves that store a lot of water

tame (adj) a tame animal has been trained to stay calm when people are near it, because it is used to being with them
tent (n) a shelter made of cloth and supported with poles and ropes
tractor (n) a vehicle used on farms, eg to pull machines
valuables (n) plural, small possessions that are worth a lot of money, eg jewellery **wrap up warm/well** phrase wear warm clothes

Hammerfest

artificial (adj) made by people and used instead of something natural
at intervals phrase with spaces of a regular length
beg (v) to ask for help, an opportunity etc, in a way that shows you want it very much
boom (n) a deep loud sound that continues for some time, eg the noise of thunder or an explosion
charred (adj) black and burnt
deprive (v) if you deprive someone of something, you take it away from them to prevent them from having it
drift (n) a large pile of snow or sand formed by the wind
eccentric (n) someone who often behaves in slightly strange or unusual ways
engrossing (adj) extremely interesting
evacuate (v) to make people leave their homes because of a dangerous situation such as war
firework (n) an object that explodes when you light it and produces coloured lights and loud noises
frostbite (n) a medical condition in which cold weather seriously damages your fingers, toes or nose
funeral parlour(n) a place where the body of a dead person is prepared and kept before the funeral, and where the relatives may go and see it
gasp (v) to breathe in suddenly, eg because you are surprised, shocked or in pain
go up in flames phrase to catch fire, to be destroyed by fire
groan (v) to make a long low sound, eg because you ate in pain or unhappy
hang around phrasal verb *informal:* spend time waiting or doing nothing
hint (v) to say what you are thinking or feeling in an indirect way
host (n) the person who introduces and talks to the people taking part in a TV or radio programme
incompetence (n) lack of skill or ability to do something correctly or well
inscription (n) a piece of writing written or cut on or in something, especially as a record of an achievement or in order to honour someone
investigate (v) to try to find out the facts about something in order to learn the truth about it; to explore
monitor (v) to regularly check something or watch someone in order to find out what is happening
numb (adj) without feeling
overboard (adv) off a boat or ship and into the water
pleasantries (n, *usually plural)* a pleasant remark that you make to be polite, usually used in the context of meeting someone and 'exchanging pleasantries'

pointless (adj) lacking any purpose or use
potter about (v) to do things in a slow and enjoyable way
projector (n) a piece of equipment used for showing films or slides on a screen
scale new heights PHRASE to achieve a high level of success at a particular activity
scratch (n) a thin mark on a surface
search (v) to try to find someone or something by looking carefully
startled (adj) suddenly frightened or surprised by something
strut (v) to walk in an especially confident and proud way
sway (v) to move or swing gently from side to side
tease (v) to annoy someone in order to have fun
trailer (n) advertisements for film or television programmes which show a short part of those programmes or films
trudge (v) to walk somewhere with slow heavy steps
undertaker (n) someone whose job is to make arrangements for funerals
unrelenting (adj) used about bad or extreme things that continue to happen or exist without ever becoming easier to deal with
urge (n) a strong feeling of wanting or needing to do something
vapour trail (n) the long white line seen in the sky behind a plane
waft (v) to float through the air in a gentle way
weep (v) to cry because you feel unhappy, or have some other strong emotion

The Amateur Emigrant

accordion (n) a musical instrument played by moving the ends of a box in and out while pressing keys and buttons
acquaintance (n) *formal:* knowledge or experience of a person or subject
after a fashion (adv) PHRASE not very well or effectively
angler (n) people who catch fish for sport
artisan (n) a worker who has special skill and training, especially one who makes things
as thick as thieves phrase describes people who are very friendly with each other and spend a lot of time together talking about private things
attribute (v) to believe that something is the result of a particular situation, event or person's actions
ballad (n) a popular love song
(to be) beside yourself phrase unable to think clearly because you are very angry, upset or excited
blacksmith (n) someone whose job is to make things out of metal
boil (v) if water boils, it becomes so hot that there are bubbles in it and it starts to become a gas
calamity (n) an event that causes serious damage, or causes a lot of people to suffer, for example a flood or a fire
cellar (n) a room usually under a building, used for storing things
chilly (adj) cold enough to be unpleasant
cluster (n) a small group of people or things that are very close to each other
comical (adj) something comical makes you laugh because it is so strange and silly **condemnation** (n) a public statement in which someone criticizes someone or something severely
conduct (n) *formal:* the way someone behaves, especially in relation to particular rules or accepted ways of behaving
contented (adj) happy and satisfied with your life
crockery (n) plates, cups, etc used for serving food
crushing (adj) complete or very severe
devoid of phrase lacking something, especially a good quality
dialect (n) a way of speaking a language that is used only in a particular area or by a particular group
disgrace (v) to do or be something that is bad and which you should be ashamed about
dissect (v) to think about or discuss the details of something in order to understand it completely
distress (n) a feeling that you have when you are very unhappy, worried, or upset
duration (n) the period of time during which something continues to happen or exist
economist (n) an expert in economics, the study of the way goods and services are produced and the way money is managed
embellishment (n) a detail added to a story to make it more interesting, especially one that is not completely true
encumber (v) to make it more difficult for someone to do something or for something to develop
endurance (n) the ability to continue doing something physically difficult or continue dealing with an unpleasant situation for a long time

expletive (n) *formal:* a rude word that you use when you are angry, annoyed or upset that might offend some people
flake (n) a small flat piece of something
flee (v) to escape from a difficult or embarrassing situation very quickly
forge (n) a place where metal is heated until it is soft, then hit with a hammer or poured into a mould lo form different shapes
forlorn (adj) appearing lonely and sad
frisky (adj) feeling lively and full of fun
gloom (n) the feeling of having no hope
good-will / goodwill (n) a feeling of wanting to be friendly and helpful to someone
grace (n) a smooth and beautiful way of moving
grasp (v) to understand something
gravy (n) a sauce made from the juices of cooked meat with flour
habitual (adj) usually or often done by someone
hover (v) to stay somewhere because you are waiting to do something or because you cannot decide what to do
hurly-burly (n) a lot of noisy activity, usually involving lots of people
impetuous (adj) if someone is this, they do things quickly, without thinking what will happen as a result
insult (n) showing a lack of respect for something or someone
interfere (v) to deliberately become involved in a situation and try to influence the way that it develops, although you have no right to do this
intimate (adj) friendly or acquainted with; an intimate friend is someone who you know very well and like very much
label (v) to fasten a piece of paper or material to an object that gives information about it
last but not least phrase used when you mention the final thing or person in a list, in order to say that they are equally important
likewise (adv) in the same way, or in a similar way
loiter (v) to stand or wait in a public place for no particular reason
manoeuvre(n) to move someone or something in a situation that needs care or skill
melancholy (adj) feeling or looking sad and without hope, or making you feel sad and without hope
nondescript (adj) very ordinary and not interesting or attractive
oasis (n) a place or situation that is much more pleasant or peaceful than the places or situations around it
outskirts (n) the place furthest away from the centre
palate (n) the ability to taste and judge the flavours in food and drinks
plead (v) to ask for something In an urgent or emotional way
porridge (n) a hot food made from oatmeal and milk or water, usually served at breakfast
privilege (n) something nice that you feel lucky to have
prolonged (adj) continuing for a longtime
radical (n) someone who believes that important political or social changes are necessary
rattle (n) a short sharp knocking sound made when something moves or shakes
reject (v) to behave in an unkind way to someone who wants kindness or love from you
retreat (n) movement away from a

dangerous or unpleasant situation
riddle (n) someone or something that is mysterious or confusing
right-hand man (n) the person who you regularly depend on to help you
rigorous (adj) strict, or severe; **rigorously** (adv)
romp (n) an occasion on which children or animals play or move around in a lively and often noisy way
run errands phrase to do a small job that involves going to collect or deliver something
scoop (v) to dig something out or pick it up using something such as a spoon or your curved hand
scrutinize (v) to examine something very carefully
significance (n) the meaning of something
sip (v) a small amount of liquid taken into your mouth
smack (n) a hit with your flat hand or with a flat object
smear (v) to spread a soft or liquid substance on a surface in an untidy way
snug (adj) warm, comfortable and safe
steward (n) a man whose job it is to look after the passengers on a train, plane or ship, especially serving them with food or drink
sullen (adj) showing that you are in an unhappy mood and don't want to talk
summon (v) to ask or order someone to come to you
survey (n) an examination of something
swagger (v) a proud and confident way of walking
swarm (v) to go somewhere as part of a large crowd
to your heart's content phrase as much or as often as you like
tongue-tied (adj) unable to speak because you are nervous or embarrassed
trade (n) a job or type of work that someone is trained to do
tragedy (n) a very sad event that causes people to suffer or die; *literature* a play in which people suffer or die, especially one in which the main character dies
trait (n) a particular quality in someone's character

Literature