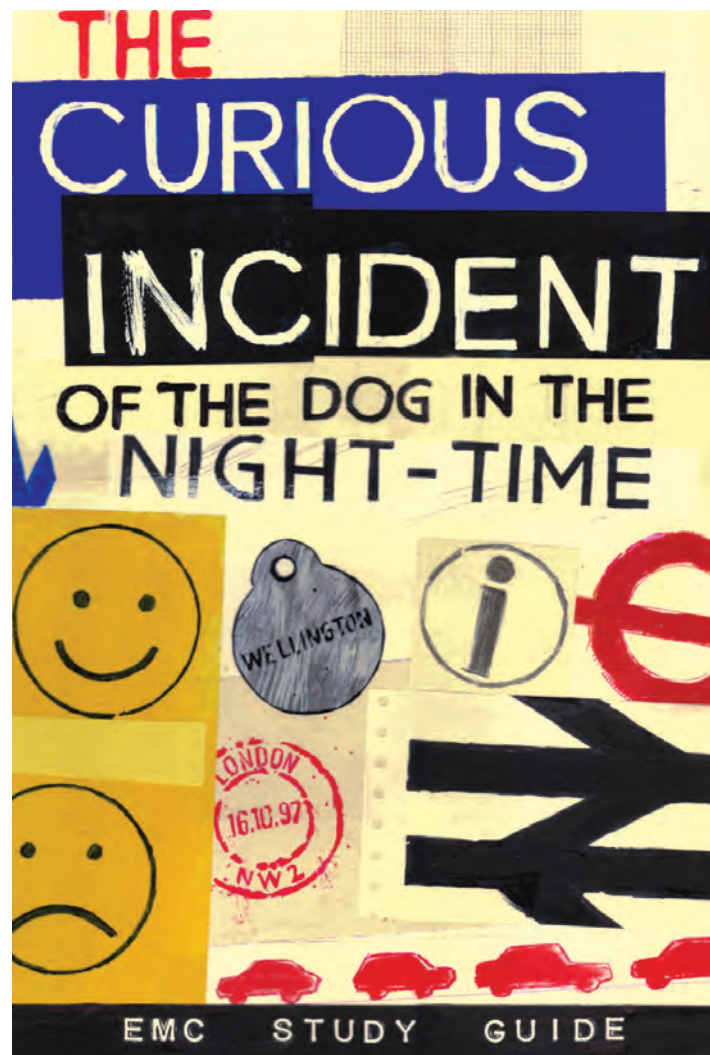


# The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time: An EMC Study Guide



This PDF download is copyright © English and Media Centre. Permission is granted only to reproduce the materials for personal and educational use within the purchasing institution (including its Virtual Learning Environments and intranet). Redistribution by any means, including electronic, will constitute an infringement of copyright.



Written and edited by Kate Oliver

Cover: Blaise Thompson

Cartoons used throughout the text: Linda Combi © 2005

Published by The English and Media Centre, 18 Compton Terrace, London, N1 2UN

© English and Media Centre, 2005

ISBN: 0 907016 88X

Thanks to Rosie Flint, Brighton College and Roisin MacEvoy, Parliament Hill School, London for piloting material.

### **A note on the text**

Please note, this is an edited version of the print publication (2007). Copyright restrictions prevent the inclusion of text extracts in the download edition. Where necessary activities have been adapted.

## **Using the study guide**

### **1. Before reading**

Pre-reading activities to give students a 'way in' to the novel.

### **2. Reading the chapters**

Activities to do on many, but not all, chapters. In order to break up the text, the chapters have been grouped into five sections: the opening (Chapters 2-53); the investigation (Chapters 59-139); the discovery (Chapters 149-173); the journey (Chapters 179-227); the ending (Chapters 229-233). At the end of each section there are activities to help students look back at the whole section.

### **3. After reading**

These activities encourage students to think about the novel as a whole with more extended writing tasks. Many of the tasks are scaffolded to support the less able. You may wish to direct more able students to work independently, without the prompts.

# Contents

Before reading	The title	5
	The cover	6
	What kind of book is this?	7
	The opening	8
	The reviews	9
	Story structures (1)	10
The opening - Chapters 2-53	Chapter 2	11
	Chapter 3	12
	Chapter 7	13
	Chapter 11	13
	Chapter 13	14
	Chapter 19	15
	Chapter 23	16
	Chapter 29	17
	Chapter 31	18
	Chapter 37	19
	Chapter 47	19
	Chapter 53	21
Looking back - Chapters 2-53	Writing task	23
	Discussing structure	23
	Discussing genre	23
	Looking at language	24
	Drama activity	25
The investigation - Chapters 59-139	Chapter 59	26
	Chapter 61	26
	Chapter 67	27
	Chapter 71	29
	Chapter 73	30
	Chapter 79	30
	Chapter 97	31
	Chapter 101	32
	Chapter 107	33
	Chapter 109	34
	Chapter 127	35

## CONTENTS

	Chapter 137	35
Looking back -	Language and style	37
	Discussing character	38
The discovery - Chapters 149-173	Chapter 149	39
	Chapter 157	41
	Chapter 167	42
Looking back - Chapters 149-173	Growing up	43
	Story structures (2)	44
	Truth and lies	44
The journey - Chapters 179-227	Ongoing activity	46
	Chapter 179	46
	Chapter 191	47
	Chapter 211	49
	Chapter 227	49
Looking back - Chapters 179-227	First person narrator	51
	Speaking and listening activities	51
	Structure	52
The ending - Chapters 229-233	Chapter 229	53
	Chapter 233	54
Looking back - Chapters 229-233	Speaking and listening activity	55
After reading	Your own writing	56
	The title of the book	57
	Character	58
	The narrator	59
	Language – Christopher’s voice (2)	60
	Genre – class discussion	62
	Writing to review	63

# Before reading

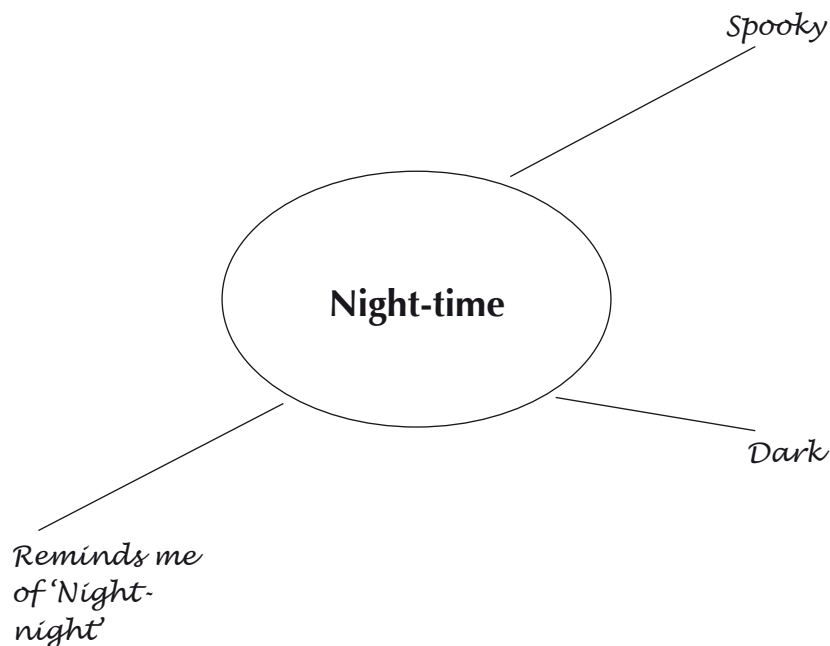
## The title

You are going to work in groups on the title of the novel. Your teacher will tell you which word to focus on.

- When you have been given your word you should brainstorm all the meanings and associations you can think of, being as imaginative as you can. The words to work on are:

- Curious
- Incident
- Dog
- Night-time

The example below shows you the sort of thing you might do.



- Listen to feedback from each group about the associations they had for their word. Now your group should look at the whole title, keeping in mind the brainstorms you did about each word. In your group try to answer the following questions listed here.

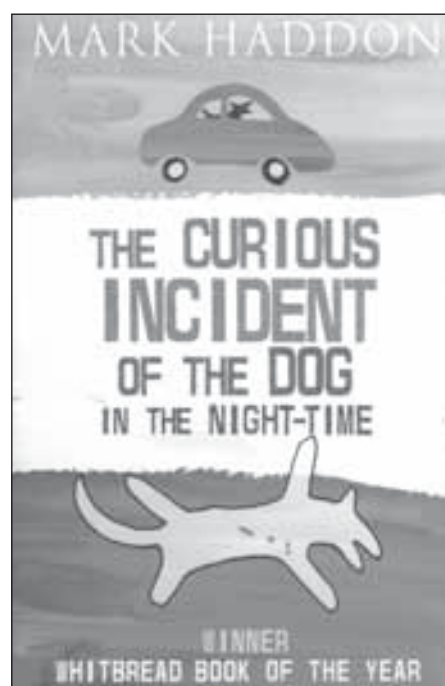
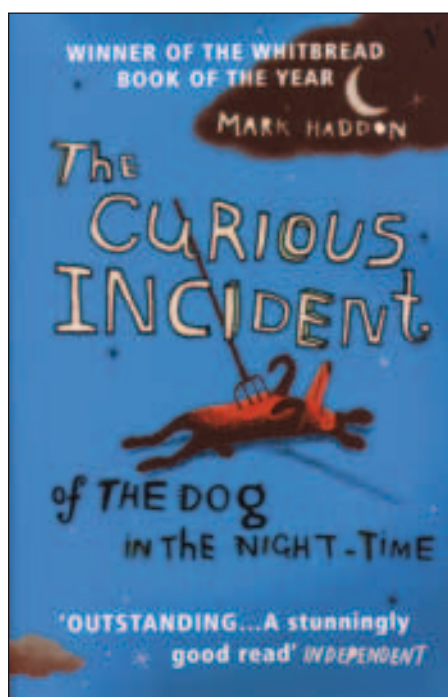
- What do you think of this title?
- Does the title make you want to read the book? Why?
- What predictions can you make about the book or about the genre? Is it easy or hard to do this? Why?

## BEFORE READING

### The cover

The novel has had several covers. It has been marketed for both teenagers and adults.

- In your groups have a look at the cover pictures below and try to answer the following questions, then feed back as a class.
  - Which cover do you think would appeal most to adults? Which to teenagers? Which do you prefer?
  - Do the cover pictures help you to add anything to your predictions about the book?

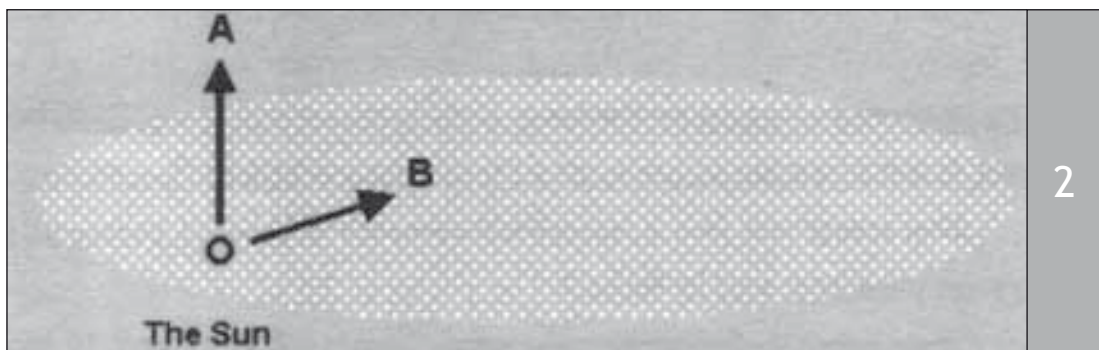


## What kind of book is this?

- Look at the extracts and illustrations from the book, below. In a small group, talk about what kind of book you think it is going to be, and what you notice that is surprising or interesting, bearing in mind that this is a fiction book.

Mr Jeavons said that I liked maths because it was safe. He said I liked maths because it meant solving problems, and these problems were difficult and interesting, but there was always a straightforward answer at the end. And what he meant was that maths wasn't like life because in life there are no straightforward answers at the end. I know he meant this because this is what he said.

1



2

... she said, 'You don't need a map to get to the train station.'  
And I said, 'I do, because I don't know where the train station is.'  
And she said 'You can see it from here.'  
And I said, 'No, I can't. And also I need to know where there is a cash machine.'

3

I like dogs. You always know what a dog is thinking. It has four moods. Happy, sad, cross and concentrating. Also, dogs are faithful and they do not tell lies because they cannot talk.

4

And when the universe has finished exploding all the stars will slow down, like a ball that has been thrown into the air, and they will come to a halt and they will all begin to fall towards the centre of the universe again.

5

## BEFORE READING

### The opening

- Read the extracts below, all of which are chapter openings from the novel. Decide which you think would make the best opening for the first chapter and be prepared to explain your choice to the class. If you did the activity on extracts from the novel (page 7 of the study guide), you could use the predictions you made from these to help you make your decision.

It was 7 minutes after midnight. The dog was lying on the grass in the middle of the lawn in front of Mrs Shears' house.

1

My name is Christopher John Francis Boone. I know all the countries of the world and their capital cities and every prime number up to 7,507.

2

This is a murder mystery novel.

3

This will not be a funny book. I cannot tell jokes because I do not understand them. Here is a joke, as an example. It is one of Father's.

4

**His face was drawn but the curtains were real.**

### Writing an opening

Some of the techniques a writer might use to create an arresting opening are listed here.

- Raising questions in the reader's mind, so that they want to read on to find out the answers.
  - Using powerful verbs.
  - Using several of the five senses.
  - Using short sentences or sentence fragments for dramatic effect and to vary the pace.
  - Creating an intriguing, dramatic or powerful situation.
  - Creating an intriguing character that the reader wants to learn more about.
- On your own, or with a partner, take the opening you chose in the last activity and continue writing to make an opening paragraph. Use some of the techniques listed above to try to make the reader want to read on. When you have finished, share your openings and talk about which were successful in making you want to continue reading.



## The reviews

- Have a look at these extracts from reviews. Talk about what they lead you to expect from the novel. You could talk about some the points below.
  - Unusual features of the novel.
  - The main character.
  - Why someone might want to read the novel.

The novel, about a teenager with Asperger's Syndrome who is as brilliant at maths as he is clueless at understanding other people, is at once a detective story, a literary triumph and a commercial success that has grown by word of mouth to beat David Beckham's autobiography, Harry Potter and the Atkins diet.

*The Sunday Times*

1

... it is a funny book, as well as a sad one. Christopher's compulsive noting of mundane facts provides comedy reminiscent of the best of Adrian Mole, especially in his dealings with the police and his special needs classmates. And Haddon's inclusion of diagrams, timetables, maps, even maths problems, extends the normal scope of novel-writing ...

*The Guardian*

2

The mere fact that this book is written in such a different way from any other book you are likely to have read is bound to keep you interested. The main character is fifteen-year-old Christopher. He has a stunning photographic memory, which recalls things in such detail that he can remember the number of cows in a field on holiday in France five years ago (and the black and white patterns on them).

**cool-reads.co.uk**

3

## Story structures (1)

- Look at some of the ingredients from the novel listed below. Decide the order in which you would expect to find them in a story and make a note of your sequence. Later on you will come back to this work (see page 44 of the study guide), so keep your notes.

A journey

A problem that sets the story going

A further complication

Climax – the highest moment of drama or tension

A resolution – some sort of solution for the problem (happy, sad, surprising etc.)

An investigation

Introducing the characters and settings

A discovery

A complication

- Compare your order with others in a small group. Try to answer the following questions.
  - What helped you to make your decisions?
  - Did you agree on an order?
  - Do you think there is a ‘right’ order for these ingredients?

# The opening - Chapters 2-53



## READ... Chapter 2

### After reading Chapter 2

#### Chapter numbers

You may have noticed that the novel does not start at Chapter 1.

- In pairs, list as many possible explanations for this as you can. As you continue reading, see if you can work out what numbering system Christopher has used.

#### The opening of the chapter

- Re-read the first two sentences. Why do you think Mark Haddon chose to begin the novel in this way? If you did the activity on page 8 of the study guide, compare your choice with Mark Haddon's.
- Remind yourself of some of the techniques a writer might use in a story opening (page 8). See how many examples of these techniques you can find in the first chapter. Are there any other ways in which the writer encourages you to read on?

#### What sort of narrator?

The novel is written in the first person, that is to say as if a character in the story is telling the story as it happened to him or her, using the word 'I'.

- Look at the sentences below. Use them to help you to talk about what impression you get of the story's narrator from the first chapter.

It was 7 minutes after midnight.

1

I decided that the dog was probably killed with the fork because I could not see any other wounds in the dog and I do not think you would stick a garden fork into a dog after it had died for some other reason, like cancer for example, or a road accident.

2

It had curly black fur, but when you got close you could see that the skin underneath the fur was a very pale yellow, like chicken.

3

I stroked Wellington and wondered who had killed him, and why.

4

- How would *you* react if you found your neighbour's dog lying dead on the lawn? How do your reactions compare with those of the narrator?



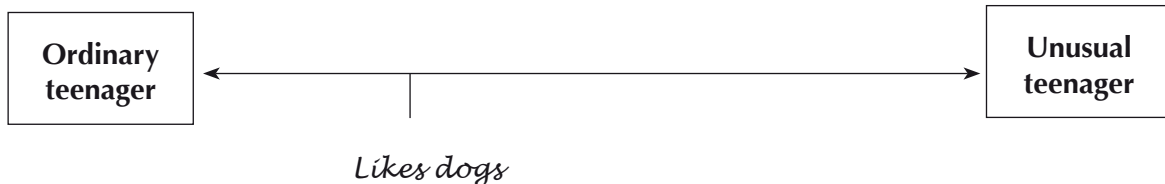
### READING ON... Chapter 3

## After reading Chapter 3

### A continuum

In Chapter 3, Christopher tells us more about himself.

- On a sheet of sugar paper, draw a continuum line for yourself like the one below. Leave plenty of room as you are going to add to it later.
- Write on the line some of the things you have found out about Christopher so far. The more you think something seems to be typical of an ordinary teenager, the nearer you should put it to that end of the continuum. On the other hand, the more unusual it seems, the nearer it should go to the 'unusual' end. An example has been done for you.
- When you have finished, compare your continuum with some others in the class and talk about any similarities or differences you notice. Did everyone agree about what is 'ordinary'? Why do you think this is?



### Mind your language

Mark Haddon originally wrote *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* with adult readers in mind, although the novel has proved very popular with teenagers. There is a lot of swearing in the novel. When he was asked about this, Mark Haddon said:

Don't grown-ups swear a lot? We just don't notice it. I hear swearing a lot during the day, although admittedly it's usually from myself ...

- When you have read more of the novel you could have a debate about whether you think it is appropriate to have swearing in a novel for teenagers.



### READING ON... Chapter 7

## After reading Chapter 7

### Genre – is it a murder mystery?

In this chapter, Christopher tells us that it is going to be a ‘murder mystery’.

- As a class, brainstorm all the elements you would expect to find in a murder mystery, including typical characters, events, objects and settings.
- Which of these ingredients can you find in the novel so far? Keep your list to refer to as you read more of the novel.

### Christopher’s comments

In Chapter 7, Christopher makes some comments about Steve, one of the boys at his school.

- With a partner, discuss how you reacted to Christopher’s comments. You could use these ideas to get you started.
  - I thought he was so rude! Siobhan should have told him off.
  - Christopher’s comments made me laugh, but then I felt guilty for finding it funny.
  - Christopher doesn’t have any understanding of other people’s feelings, so he doesn’t mean to be cruel.
  - Christopher is only saying what other people are thinking; he’s not so different from everyone else.
  - I don’t think I’d like Christopher if I met him in real life. He seems so cold-hearted.
  - I wish I could just say what I think, like Christopher does.

## Before reading Chapter 11

### Role-play

The final sentence of Chapter 11 is ‘And this is when I hit him.’

- Considering what you already know about Christopher and his situation, rehearse a short group role-play which ends in this way. Your role-play should include Christopher and two policemen, although you may want to use other characters too. Your role-play should start with a ‘freeze’, which you hold for a few seconds before starting, and end with a ‘freeze’, just before Christopher hits someone.
- Watch some of the role-plays. Talk about how different groups have presented the character of Christopher.

**READING ON... Chapter 11****After reading Chapter 11****Adding to your continuum**

- Add to your continuum line (see page 12 of the study guide) some of the events since Chapter 3. Talk about your continuum so far with a partner. Think carefully about Christopher's behaviour – you may want to put different elements of an incident on different parts of the line. For example, many people would feel confused and anxious if a policeman were firing quick questions at them. However, most people would be able to deal with this in a more socially acceptable way than by kneeling on the grass and groaning.

**READING ON... Chapter 13****After reading Chapter 13****When is a joke not a joke?**

Christopher finds it difficult to understand jokes. He explains one that he doesn't find funny but can understand. You might think that if you can explain a joke, you would find it funny.

- Choose one of the jokes below and on page 15 and read it aloud to your partner, or tell a favourite joke of your own.
- Try explaining to your partner what makes the joke funny. What happens to the humour once you explain it?

*What gets wetter as it dries?*

*A towel!*

*A bear goes into a bar and says, 'I'll have a ...um ... pint of beer, please.'*

*The barman says, 'Why the big pause?'*



*Doctor, doctor, I've got carrots growing out of my ears.  
How did that happen?  
I don't know, I planted onions.*

Christopher explains that his father's joke depends on someone being able to hold more than one meaning of a word in their head at the same time. He finds this both uncomfortable and confusing, which is why he can't laugh at the joke.

- Look again at the jokes above. Talk about which of them depend on being able to think about different meanings for the same word, or for two words that sound the same.



### **READING ON... Chapters 17 and 19**

#### **After reading Chapter 19**

In Chapter 19, Christopher explains his numbering system for the chapters.

- Talk about why Christopher likes prime numbers so much. What does it show about his character?

## Before reading Chapter 23

### Writing to describe – what's in the bag?

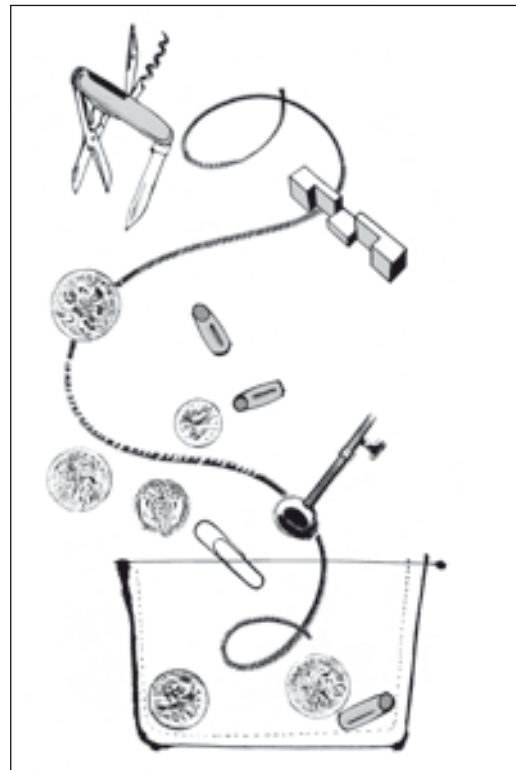
In Chapter 23 we learn about Christopher's character from what he has in his pockets.

- Think of a character of your own, and imagine what he or she is like. Imagine what they might have in their pocket or bag that would show something about them. For example, what kind of person would have in their bag the following items: a first class train ticket to Ascot, a champagne cork, a lipstick, an expensive-looking leather purse containing several credit cards and a betting slip?
- Write or draw these objects on separate pieces of paper and put them in an envelope, or, if you have more time, bring in some props in a carrier bag. Hand the 'pocket' or 'bag' to a partner.
- When your partner gives you their envelope or bag, take out the things one by one. Try to imagine what kind of person would have these things in their bag or pocket. Share your ideas with your partner.
- Choose one of the following tasks:
  - Write one or two paragraphs about the character you created, making use of some items from your 'bag' or 'pocket'.
  - Write one or two paragraphs about the character your partner created, making use of some items from their 'bag' or 'pocket'.
- Share your piece of writing with your partner.

### What's in Christopher's pockets?

In his pockets Christopher has:

- a Swiss Army Knife (a kind of penknife with lots of different tools)
  - a piece of string
  - a piece of wooden puzzle
  - 3 pellets of rat food
  - £1.47
  - a red paper clip
  - a front door key.
- Talk about what you can tell about Christopher from the contents of his pockets.

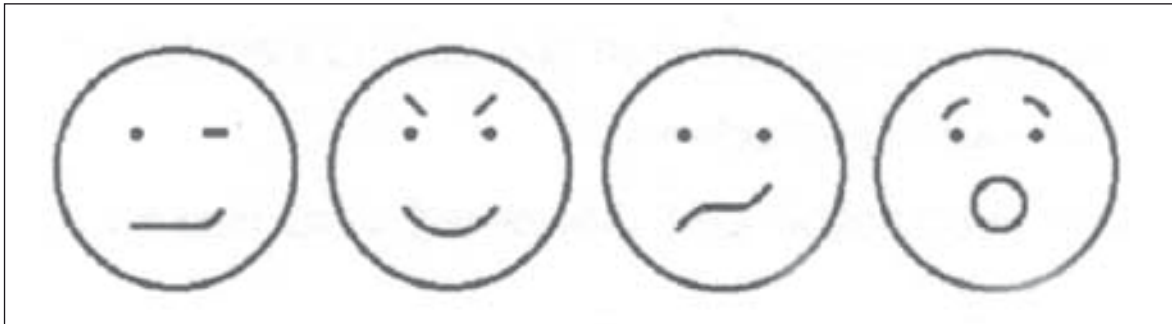


**READING ON... Chapters 23 and 29**



## After reading Chapter 29

### Describing body language



One of the reasons Christopher says he finds people confusing is that he can't read body language. Siobhan tries to explain to him the different emotions that can be expressed through closing your mouth and breathing out through your nose. She mentions that you could show boredom, anger or relaxation by doing this, at the same time as you are making a particular shape with your mouth and sitting in a particular way.

- Try expressing each of these emotions (boredom, anger, relaxation) to your partner, using only the body language clues Siobhan describes.
- See if your partner can guess which is which and then talk about how hard or easy you found the activity. What clues did you use?
- Talk about what other clues you would use to help you read someone's emotions in a real-life situation.
- Now ask your partner to repeat one of the emotions two or three times.
- Observe very closely what they do with their body language. You could think about some of the points below.
  - How quickly or noisily do they let out the air?
  - What shape is their mouth?
  - What are they doing with the rest of their posture?
- Write a careful description of your partner's body language. Give it to a new partner and see if they can guess the emotion from your description.



**READING ON... Chapter 31**

## After reading Chapter 31

### First person narrator – reading between the lines

Christopher finds it hard to ‘read’ people’s emotions and, as he is telling the story, he can only report what he sees and how he interprets it. So how does the reader work out what other people in the story are thinking or feeling?

- On your own, look at these extracts and note down how you think Christopher’s father is feeling in each one.
- Compare your notes with others in your group. Talk about how far you were able to agree.

He was shouting, ‘I want to see my son,’ and ‘Why the hell is he locked up?’ and, ‘Of course I’m bloody angry.’

1

Then I heard a policeman telling him to calm down. Then I heard nothing for a long while.

2

I held up my left hand and spread my fingers out in a fan and we made our fingers and thumbs touch each other. We do this because sometimes Father wants to give me a hug, but I do not like hugging people, so we do this instead, and it means that he loves me.

3

I said, ‘But it wasn’t an accident.’  
And Father said, ‘Christopher, please.’

4

The policeman closed his mouth and breathed out loudly through his nose ...

5

- Now think about how you came to your conclusions. Talk about the following questions.
  - Did you use clues from the chapter which you could use as evidence to back up your opinion? For example you may have used clues about body language (see page 17 of the study guide).
  - Did you use your knowledge of Christopher and his father from what you have read before this chapter?
  - Did you make guesses based on your understanding of how someone's father might feel if he had to come and collect his son from the police station?
- Talk about what might be the effect on the reader of having a narrator who only reports the facts.



---

**READING ON... Chapter 37**

---

## After reading Chapter 37

### Christopher's mother

- Look through what you have read so far and collect as many clues as you can about Christopher's mother. Keep a note of these as they will be useful later. (See page 41 of the study guide)



---

**READING ON... Chapters 41 and 43**

---

## Before reading Chapter 47

### Rituals and superstitions – quick quiz

- Do the quick quiz on page 20 of the study guide to find out how superstitious you are.



---

**READING ON... Chapter 47**

---

- While you read this chapter pay particular attention to Christopher's explanation for his car counting ritual.

## How superstitious are you?

<b>Q1:</b> Would you live in a house or a flat numbered 13?	Yes/No
<b>Q2:</b> Do you wish people 'good luck'?	Yes/No
<b>Q3:</b> When you are facing something like an exam, or an important sports match, do you have a ritual or a special item to bring luck, such as a cuddly toy 'mascot', or a pair of 'lucky' socks?	Yes/No
<b>Q4:</b> When you were younger did you have any rituals, or special things to say and do? For example, one person used to deal with a bad dream by saying, 'It's only a dream and dreams can't hurt me' three times before going back to sleep.	Yes/No
<b>Q5:</b> If a friend has something difficult to face, would you send them a card with a lucky symbol such as a black cat or a horseshoe?	Yes/No

### What did you score?

**Q1:** 3 points for yes, 0 for no

**Q2:** 1 point for yes, 0 for no

**Q3:** 4 points for yes, 0 for no

**Q4:** 2 points for yes, 0 for no

**Q5:** 1 point for yes, 0 for no

To find out what your score means, see page 23.



## What your quiz score means

**0-2:** You are not very superstitious and can't really understand why others get so worried about things that are supposed to bring bad luck.

**2-7:** You probably wouldn't say you're superstitious, but you are a little. 'Just in

case' is your attitude.

**7-11:** You're superstitious and you don't care who knows it. Of course there's such thing as luck, so why not do all you can to make sure you get the good kind?

### After reading Chapter 47

#### Why are people superstitious?

So why are people superstitious? Trevor Case, at Macquarie University (Australia), is researching superstition. He says that superstitious beliefs are found around the world in every culture, amongst a wide variety of people, including intelligent and educated people. He is finding that superstitious beliefs seem to provide comfort at times when things are uncertain, or fill a gap when we just don't have enough information to know what is going to happen, or why something happens.

- Look back at Christopher's explanation for his behaviour. Talk about why you think he has developed his ritual of counting cars. How might it help him?

#### Old habits die hard

Christopher mentions things people do out of habit, even though they are not logical. He has observed that his father always puts the same sock on first and starts climbing the stairs with the same foot.

- Discuss what this observation shows about Christopher.
- Think about whether you have any habits like this. Try to notice over the next few days. You might surprise yourself!

### Before reading Chapter 53

#### 'Mother died two weeks later' – a prediction

This chapter opens with the words 'Mother died two weeks later.'

- Talk about what you would usually expect in a chapter that started like this.
- Now predict how Christopher will react to news of his mother's death.
- Share your predictions as a class. Whose prediction do you think is the most likely? Why?



**READING ON... Chapter 53**

## After reading Chapter 53

### Discussing Christopher's reaction

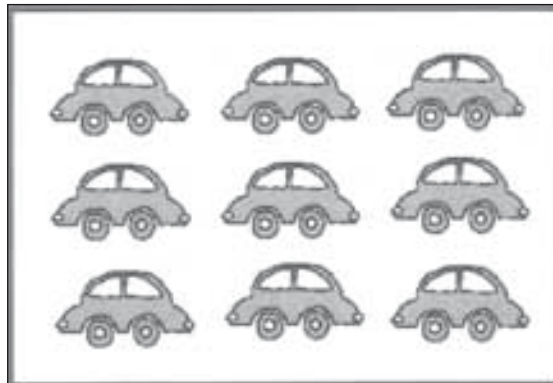
Although Christopher does not have much of an emotional reaction to the news that his mother has died, the reader probably does.

- Look at some of the extracts and the illustration below and think about what effect they had on you as you read the chapter.
- Then talk about your reactions in a small group. Did you all have the same reactions, or were there some differences?

She ... had my Get Well card on the table beside her bed. Father said that she liked it very much ... I coloured all the cars in with red paint to make it a **Super Super Good Day** for Mother.

I said, 'What kind of heart attack?' because I was surprised.

Father said, 'I'm sorry, Christopher, I'm really sorry.'  
But it wasn't his fault.



And after dinner she played Scrabble with me and I beat her 247 points to 134.

And Father was sitting down and she [Mrs Shears] stood next to him and held his head against her bosoms and said, 'Come on, Ed. We're going to get you through this.'

- Take one of the extracts and write a couple of sentences to explain the effect it had on you. If other people in your group had different responses, you could explain these too.

# Looking back - Chapters 2-53

## Writing task

### First person narrator

One of the advantages of using a first person narrator is that the reader sees the world from someone else's point of view.

- With a partner, choose an event from the novel so far and re-write it from the point of view of one of the other characters.
- Talk about what is gained and what is lost when you tell the story from this new point of view. For example, one effect of having Christopher tell the story is that we can understand some of his behaviour because he explains his reasons, such as why he starts groaning.
- As a class, talk about what sense you have so far of the way Christopher sees the world.

## Discussing structure

### Alternating chapters

You may have noticed that the chapters alternate between what is happening to Christopher in the story in the present and information about him, or memories of the past.

- Talk about what you have learnt about Christopher from the chapters that are not directly telling the story.
- Talk about why you think Mark Haddon uses this alternating structure, for example:
  - how does it create tension?
  - why is it useful to have background information about Christopher?

## Discussing genre

### What sort of novel is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*?

- With a partner, talk about what kind of story you think this is going to be. For example: crime fiction; a story about growing up; a story about an unusual boy's life; a story for children; a story for adults. Find evidence from what you have read so far to back up your views.

## Looking at language

### Metaphors

Christopher finds the way people use language confusing. One thing he finds confusing is the way people use metaphors. The metaphors he mentions in Chapter 29 are listed below.

- I laughed my socks off.
- He was the apple of her eye.
- They had a skeleton in the cupboard.
- We had a real pig of a day.
- The dog was stone dead.

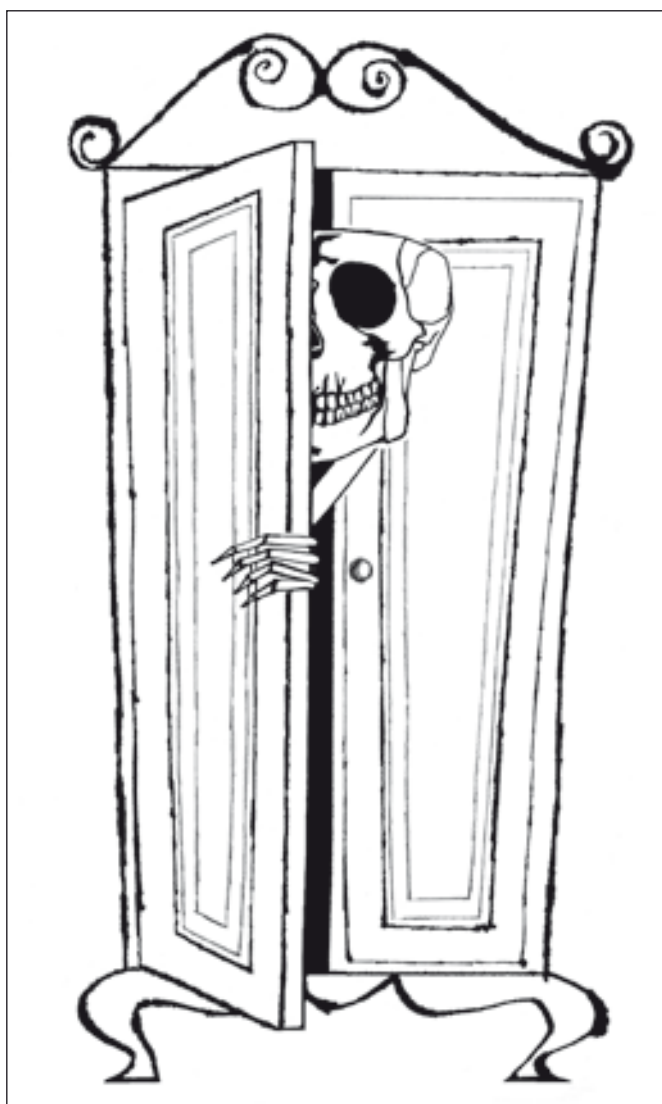
■ Think of some more metaphors people use in everyday speech.

■ Choose one metaphor. Make a drawing of what is being described (for example, a picture of a skeleton peeking out of a cupboard).

■ Imagine you are explaining the metaphor to Christopher. Try to explain how the metaphor came to mean what it does. For example, if you chose 'They had a skeleton in the cupboard', you could say this means that they had a guilty secret. Just as a murderer might hide the skeleton of the person they'd killed in a cupboard, hoping no-one would see it, so these people had kept something secret, hoping no-one would find it out.

■ Write your explanation on your drawing.

■ Write a sentence or two explaining why Christopher finds metaphors difficult to understand, using the metaphor you illustrated as an example.





## Drama activity

### The boy who cannot tell a lie

We probably all like to think of ourselves as honest people who don't lie. But the truth is that without lots of little lies we might not get on so well with friends or family. Some lies are told to make others feel better. For example, you might tell someone their new haircut looks good, even though you think it looks terrible, or that you missed them while you were on holiday, even though you were having such a good time you hardly thought about them.

There are many traditional stories about situations in which people cannot lie. You may know the story of Pinocchio, the puppet whose nose grows each time he lies. You may also have seen the film *Liar, Liar*, starring Jim Carrey, in which a little boy makes a wish that his father will be unable to lie for 24 hours, and his wish comes true.

- Find the reasons Christopher gives in Chapter 37 for not being able to lie.
- In a small group, create a short drama called 'The boy/girl who cannot tell a lie'.
  - Before you start, your group should talk about what has caused your character to be unable to lie, although you do not have to include an explanation in the final drama.
  - Your drama should include at least one situation in which your character's inability to lie causes a problem, and at least one situation in which it has a positive outcome.
  - Your drama should have three scenes and last no more than 5 minutes.

### Where do you stand?

- As a class, watch some of the dramas. Talk about your views on lying, such as whether there is such a thing as a harmless lie. You could discuss one or two of the moral dilemmas below, to get your discussion started.

**Your friend has found a new friend, but it's someone you hate. Do you pretend to like them, for the sake of a quiet life? Or do you give an honest opinion?**

1

**The teacher is threatening to keep your whole class in detention unless someone comes to them before the end of the day to say who set off the fire alarm. You know who it was. Do you tell and save the class a detention? Or do you keep quiet, in case someone finds out you're a grass?**

**You come back from a school trip. 'Did you miss me?' asks your parent/carer/friend. Actually you were having such a good time, you hardly thought about them. Do you pretend you missed them? Or do you tell the truth?**

3

# The investigation - Chapters 59-139



## READING ON... Chapter 59

### After reading Chapter 59

#### Clear instructions

Christopher says that he needs instructions to be very clear and specific.

- Ask your partner to do a simple task. They should think carefully about your instructions and tell you if anything could be misunderstood. For example, if you told your partner to stand up and sit down again, your partner might ask 'How long do I stand up for? When I sit down again, do I sit on the same chair?'
- Talk about what you think enables most people to be able to understand instructions that are a bit vague such as 'Keep off the grass'.



## READING ON... Chapter 61

### After reading Chapter 61

#### Responding to Christopher's ideas

Christopher has his own way of thinking about where his mother is now.

- Talk about what you think of his ideas. Do you find them disgusting? Comforting? Weird? Factual? How do his ideas fit with what you know about his way of thinking?

### Before reading Chapter 67

#### Doing chatting

Christopher finds it difficult to 'do chatting'. He describes chatting as 'where people say things to each other which aren't questions and answers and aren't connected.' In this chapter, one of Christopher's neighbours tries to chat to him. The things she says to Christopher are written out on page 27 of the study guide.

- Fill in some dialogue to show how *you* would reply to what she says.

**You:** Do you know anything about Wellington being killed?

**Mrs Alexander:** I'm afraid you're going to have to say that again. I'm a little deaf.

**You:** .....

.....

.....

**Mrs A:** I heard about it yesterday. Dreadful, dreadful.

**You:** .....

.....

.....

**Mrs A:** You're Christopher, aren't you?

**You:** .....

.....

.....

**Mrs A:** We haven't talked before, have we?

**You:** .....

.....

.....

**Mrs A:** I see you every day, going to school.

**You:** .....

.....

.....

**Mrs A:** It's very nice of you to come and say hello.

**You:** .....

.....

.....

**Mrs A:** I have a grandson your age.

**You:** .....

.....

.....

**Mrs A:** Do you want to come in for tea?

**You:** .....

.....

.....

**READING ON... Chapter 67**

- As you read pay particular attention to the way Christopher ‘chats’ to Mrs Alexander.

**After reading Chapter 67****Doing chatting**

- Think about any ways Christopher’s chat with Mrs Alexander was different from the dialogue you wrote, and discuss those differences with a partner.
- Talk about why you think Christopher finds ‘doing chatting’ so difficult.
- Imagine Christopher writes to a problem page asking for advice on how to chat to people. Write a reply from the agony aunt or uncle, giving advice on how to have a conversation. Remember that Christopher will need detailed and clear instructions. Your reply should show an understanding of why Christopher finds chatting difficult.

**The power of observation – a speaking and listening activity**

- How good are your observation skills? Take a few moments to look carefully round the class. Then everyone in the class should shut their eyes.
- The teacher will ask one of you to describe, in as much detail as possible, one of the other people in the room. You can repeat this several times.
- Afterwards talk about what kinds of things the people chose to describe, and what kinds of things were missing or inaccurate.
- Keep your notes to refer to when doing the activity on Christopher’s observation skills (page 29 of the study guide).

### Christopher's observation skills

Here are some of the descriptions Christopher gives us of people on his street.

She was wearing boots which looked like army boots and there were 5 bracelets made out of a silver-coloured metal on her wrist and they made a jangling noise.

1

He smelt of body odour and old biscuits and off popcorn which is what you smell of if you haven't washed for a very long time ...

2

Mrs Alexander was wearing jeans and training shoes which old people don't normally wear. And there was mud on the jeans. And the trainers were New Balance trainers. And the laces were red.

3

- Talk about what you notice about Christopher's descriptions and his observation skills. You could talk about some of the questions that follow.
  - What is included and what is left out of his descriptions of people? Why is this?
  - How many different senses are used in the descriptions? What is the effect of this on the reader?



#### READING ON... Chapter 71

### After reading Chapter 71

#### Discussion – what's in a name?

- With a partner, see if you can work out what Christopher is saying about the use of the term 'special needs' and about the way people use words like 'spaz' as insults. Do you agree with him?

The reason Christopher attends a special needs school is never directly mentioned in the novel. The explanation that best seems to fit Christopher's 'special need' is that he has Asperger Syndrome. .



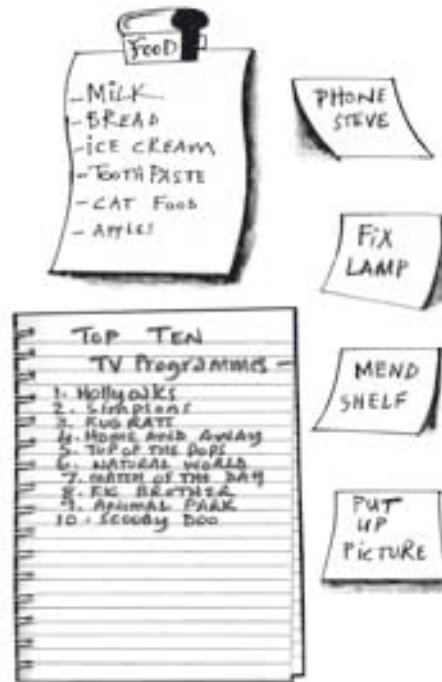
### READING ON... Chapter 73

## After reading Chapter 73

### Writing lists

Christopher's list of his 'behavioural problems' is one of many lists in the book.

- Talk about the different kinds of lists people make. What are they for?
- Look back at two more examples of Christopher's lists, in Chapters 13 and 23, and discuss what these lists tell you about the way he thinks. Why do you think Christopher makes lists?
- Write a list which would tell people something about you. You could use one of the suggestions that follow, or think of your own idea.
  - Your top ten favourite television programmes.
  - What you have in your bag.
  - Five essential points for understanding your family.



### READING ON... Chapter 79

## After reading Chapter 79

### Prediction

- Remember that Christopher:
  - takes instructions literally
  - needs instructions to be clear
  - cannot tell a lie.
- Bearing this in mind, talk about whether you think Christopher is going to stop investigating Wellington's death and explain your opinion.

**READING ON... Chapters 83, 89 and 97****After reading Chapter 97****Hotseating Mrs Alexander**

- A group of three people in the class should prepare to be 'hotseated' in role as Mrs Alexander. They should look back at Chapters 67 and 97 to research her character and to think about why she behaved as she did.
- The rest of the class should think of some questions they would like to ask Mrs Alexander. You should think particularly about what information she decides to give Christopher and why, and how she and Christopher get on.
- When you are ready, the group of three should come to the front of the class in role as Mrs Alexander and answer the class's questions as fully as they can.

**Talking about your predictions – promises, promises**

- Talk about the questions which follow.
  - How does Christopher find a way to continue his investigations without breaking his promise to his father? Is this what you predicted when he made the promise in Chapter 79?
  - How does he give himself a way out of his promise to Mrs Alexander?
  - Have you ever justified breaking a promise or telling a lie? How?

**An unexpected piece of information**

- Now that you have found out that Mr Shears was having an affair with Christopher's mother, talk about whether this makes you think differently about anything that has happened so far, for example about Mrs Shears' relationship with Christopher's father.

**READING ON... Chapter 101**

## After reading Chapter 101

### How logical are you? A puzzle

In this chapter you can see that Christopher has a very logical mind. How logical are you?

- Read the logic puzzle below. You might be able to work out the answer, but, if not, it is given at the bottom of the page.
- Once you know the answer, draw a diagram, like the one Christopher uses to explain the Monty Hall Problem, to help you to understand the answer, or to explain it to someone else. Now try explaining the problem in a few sentences of writing. If you are good at maths, you could also explain the answer using a formula.
- Take a vote in the class as to which explanation people found the easiest to understand: the written explanation, the diagram, or the mathematical formula.
- Look back at some of the other diagrams in the novel so far (Chapters 3, 17, 19 and 67). It is unusual to find diagrams in a work of fiction. What reasons can you think of for including diagrams in the novel?

A traveller stumbles across the legendary treasure house of the lost city of Tenbar, guarded by two immortals, each standing in front of a door. There is only one problem: behind one door she will find the piles of gold she has heard such incredible stories about; behind the other, poisonous snakes. She knows from the legend that one guard will always tell the truth, and one guard will always lie, but she doesn't know which is which. She can only ask one question of one guard to help her decide which door to open. What should she ask?



### READING ON... Chapters 103 and 107

(Answer: she asks, 'Is the guard who tells the truth standing in front of the door to the treasure?' If the answer is 'Yes', she opens the door behind the guard who answers. If the answer is 'No', she opens the door behind the other guard.)



## After reading Chapter 107

### Sherlock Holmes and the curious incident

Christopher loves Sherlock Holmes, one of the most famous fictional detectives. Holmes was created by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and first appeared in a short novel called *A Study in Scarlet* in 1887. The title of this book *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* comes from a Sherlock Holmes short story called 'The Silver Blaze'.

- Read the extracts below which are all taken from Sherlock Holmes stories.
- Discuss what you can tell about Sherlock Holmes from these four extracts and whether he has anything in common with Christopher. Then talk about why you think Christopher might enjoy stories about this detective.

*Sherlock Holmes explains how he was able to guess, just by looking at someone, that they had been to China:*

'The fish that you have tattooed above your right wrist could only have been done in China. I have made a small study of tattoo marks, and have even contributed to the literature on the subject. That trick of staining the fishes' scales a delicate pink is quite peculiar to China. When, in addition, I see a Chinese coin hanging from your watch chain, the matter becomes even more simple.'

*The Red-Headed League*

1

'My dear Watson,' said he [Holmes], 'I cannot agree with those who rank modesty among the virtues. To the logician all things should be seen exactly as they are, and to underestimate one's self is as much a departure from truth as to exaggerate one's own powers.'

*The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter*

2

It was not that he [Holmes] felt anything akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise, but admirably balanced mind.

*A Scandal in Bohemia*

3

Holmes, who loathed every form of society ... remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books ...

*A Scandal in Bohemia*

4

**First person narrator – Christopher’s voice (1)**

In an interview, Mark Haddon said that he wanted to write the whole book in Christopher’s voice, but that he realised that he had to find a way to do this while keeping the character of Christopher realistic. He said:

... if Christopher were real he would find it very hard, if not impossible, to write a book. The one thing he cannot do is put himself in someone else’s shoes, and the one thing you have to do if you write a book is put yourself in someone else’s shoes. The reader’s shoes. You’ve got to entertain them, and there’s no way he could have done that.

It took me a while to figure out that puzzle. The answer I came up with is having him be a fan of the Sherlock Holmes stories. That way, he doesn’t have to put himself in the mind of the reader. He just has to say, ‘I enjoy Sherlock Holmes stories and I’ll do something similar to that.’

- Talk about what you think Mark Haddon is saying about writing stories and about the difficulties of having a character like Christopher narrate a book.
- Which elements of Christopher’s character would make him a good narrator?

**READING ON... Chapter 109****After reading Chapter 109****Reading between the lines**

The novel could have been boring because we only see things from Christopher’s point of view, and he doesn’t have a very good understanding of the people around him. One of the things Mark Haddon does to get round this is to use a lot of reported speech. This means that the reader can make up their own mind about a character based on what they say.

- Look at what Siobhan says in this chapter and talk about what impression you get of her personality and what she thinks about Christopher.
- On your own, think about what clues you have used to build up this impression and find three or four quotations from the novel to back up your opinion. You could look back at Chapters 3, 7, 29, 47, 59, 71, and 89 to help you. Remember to skim and scan for the name ‘Siobhan’ to find the information you need.

**READING ON... Chapters 113 and 127****After reading Chapter 127****The argument with Father – your reactions**

- Talk about your reactions to Father's behaviour in this chapter.

**The argument – a role-play**

In Chapter 149, Siobhan asks Christopher why he has a bruise on his face.

- If you did the activity 'Reading between the lines' on Chapter 109 (page 34 of the study guide), remind yourself of your impression of Siobhan so far.
- In pairs, role-play the conversation Siobhan and Christopher might have about the events of this chapter.

**READING ON... Chapters 131 and 137****After reading 137****Definitions of 'love'**

- Talk about what 'love' means to Christopher. Do you agree with his description?
- In pairs, try to write your own definition of the kind of 'love' felt between most parents or carers and a child in their care.

**READING ON... Chapter 139**

# Looking back - Chapters 59-139

## Talking about language and style

### Connective detective

- As a class, remind yourselves what a 'connective' is.

One type of connective is the 'causal connective'. This is a word or phrase which links causes and effects. Causal connectives are usually used in sentences explaining why something happened. Examples of causal connectives are:

because	so that	as a result
it follows that	since	for
consequently	therefore	which means that

- Count how many causal connectives you can spot in Chapter 59.
- Talk about why you think Mark Haddon uses so many causal connectives when writing in the character of Christopher, using evidence from the text to back up your view. Start by talking about whether or not you agree with the following statements.

<b>The causal connectives show that Christopher thinks in a logical way, always looking for connections between causes and effects.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The use of causal connectives doesn't have anything to do with Christopher's character – it's just Mark Haddon's writing style.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>To Christopher the world is a chaotic and confusing place. His use of causal connectives shows that he has to work harder than most people to make sense of things and explain them to himself.</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Christopher doesn't have a wide vocabulary.</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Mark Haddon wants us to see things from the point of view of someone with Asperger Syndrome, so he has Christopher explain his thought processes, which are often unusual.</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Christopher is a typical teenager, always wanting to know why things happen.</b>	<b>6</b>

## Language and style

### Writing descriptions of places

- Read the extract below in which Christopher describes the noises in his garden.

Then I listened to the sounds in the garden and I could hear a bird singing and I could hear traffic noise which was like the surf on a beach and I could hear someone playing music somewhere and children shouting. And in between these noises, if I listened very carefully and stood completely still, I could hear a tiny whining noise inside my ears and the air going in and out of my nose.



Often when we describe things we rely on what we can see. However, as you can see from this description, using what you hear can be a very good way of helping the reader to imagine a place.

### Shared writing

- Sitting in silence, really listen to the sounds you can hear. Do some shared writing responding to the prompts below.
  - Concentrate on the noise you can hear furthest away from the room. What is it? What does it remind you of? Share what you can hear, and then, as a class, write one or two sentences about it.
  - The traffic reminded Christopher of the surf on a beach. Can some of you think of similes to describe any of the things you can hear from the classroom? As a class, write a sentence or two describing one of the noises.
  - Listen for something closer, perhaps noise from elsewhere in the school. As a class, write one or two sentences, really describing the sound as best you can.
  - Now listen for the closest thing you can hear. Again, write one or two sentences together, describing the sound in as much detail as you can.

### Writing on your own

- Now repeat the task, but this time work on your own and describe your favourite place, or most hated place. Try to get the atmosphere of this place across using only descriptions of sounds. Think about the sounds a person would hear in the distance, near to them and very close to them.

## Discussing character

### Father

- Look at the statements about Father below. Put them in rank order with the one you most strongly agree with at the top.

Most people would find Christopher difficult to deal with but Father copes brilliantly.	1
Father is not very good at being a parent. He should be more patient with Christopher because he knows how difficult things are for him. He should certainly never grab him, shout at him or hit him.	2
Father obviously understands his son very well.	3
Father just loses his temper sometimes because the situation is very stressful, especially after Mother leaves.	4
Father really loves Christopher.	5
Father doesn't really understand how Christopher's mind works.	6
Most parents and children lose their tempers with each other sometimes. Christopher and his father are no different from anyone else.	7
Father is generally good at dealing with Christopher but the way he lied about Mother being dead, that was really awful.	8
I understand why Father lied to Christopher and told him Mother was dead.	9
I think Christopher would be better off away from Father, in an institution, with staff who are trained to look after people like him.	10

- Write your own statement expressing your opinion of Father, or choose one of the statements above if it sums up your opinion.
- Compare your statement with those of others in the class. Is the class mainly in agreement, or are there a lot of differences of opinion? Why do you think this is?

# The discovery - Chapters 149-173



## READING ON... Chapter 149

### After reading Chapter 149

#### A conversation with Siobhan

- If you did the activity on Chapter 127 (page 35 of the study guide), remind yourselves of the role-play prediction you made about the conversation between Siobhan and Christopher when she asks him about the bruise on his face.
- Talk about how Mark Haddon chose to write the conversation. Do you agree with the way he presented the characters?

#### Building up tension – storyboard activity

- In groups, talk about which moments in the chapter you found tense and why.

One of the techniques Mark Haddon uses to build tension is to switch the focus of attention from Christopher to his father. This interrupts the action and creates suspense about what will happen next. For example:

- Christopher sees the shirt box. His book is in it. He wonders whether or not to take the book. This is interrupted by Father shutting the van door outside. (*The reader wonders whether Christopher is going to be caught and get into trouble for being in his father's room.*)
- Christopher sees an envelope addressed to him in the box. He thinks it might be addressed in Mother's handwriting. This is interrupted by Father opening the front door. (*The reader thinks, 'Come on! I want to know what's inside the envelope!'*)

This technique of switching focus to slow down the action and create suspense is often used in films or on television.

- Choose the part of the chapter that was most tense for you. You will need a section about two pages long.
- Storyboard this section of the chapter to show how you would film it, creating tension by switching between different parts of the action. For example, for the section above, your first shot might be the inside of the box as Christopher looks inside to see his book. The next shot might be outside the house with Father climbing out of the van and shutting the door. To help you set out your ideas you could use the storyboard template on page 40 of the study guide, photocopied to A3. Remember to number each shot to show what order they should go in.

On screen

Sound

On screen

Sound

On screen

Sound

On screen

Sound

What you see on screen

Sound (music, dialogue, sound effects)

On screen

Sound



**READING ON... Chapter 151****Before reading Chapter 157****The mystery of Mother – what's your theory?**

Mother has not appeared directly in the novel. Everything we know about her so far comes from Christopher's memories.

- Talk about what impression you have of Mother from the novel so far. You could refer back to your notes, if you made some, after reading Chapter 37 (page 19 of the study guide).
- Working in groups of four, take two of the following chapters each: 43, 53, 61, 73, 79, 89, 97 and 149. Look back at the two chapters you have been allocated to find clues to help you to work out the truth about Christopher's mother. Present your findings to the group. As a group come up with a theory about what has happened, backed up with evidence, and then present this to the class.

**READING ON... Chapter 157****After reading Chapter 157****Father's explanation – whole class discussion**

- Talk about your reactions to Father's explanation for why he lied to Christopher.
- Talk about what you think of Christopher's response. You could use the following statements to start your discussion if you wish.
  - Because Christopher is able to contain his feelings I think he and his father will be able to work things out.
  - Christopher is reacting so differently from the way you would expect that he must be in deep shock.
  - Father seems to handle Christopher's reaction very well.
  - Christopher's reaction makes you wonder what he might do later when the reality of what he has discovered sinks in.
  - Christopher hates lies so much I don't think he will be able to forgive his father.

## Writing about the character of Mother

- Talk about what the letters add to your impression of Christopher's mother. Write two or three sentences giving your impression of her, supporting your opinions with evidence from this chapter. You could use the following sentence patterns to help you if you wish.
  - In one of the letters Christopher's mother writes '...' which gave me the impression that ...
  - My opinion of Mother is ... because she writes '...'
  - When Mother writes '...', this makes me think ...
  - Mark Haddon includes the letters from Mother because ...



### READING ON... Chapters 163 and 167

## After reading Chapter 167

### Wellington's murder – skimming and scanning for clues

- Talk about whether you can remember any clues in the novel which could have helped you to guess who killed Wellington. You could look back through what you have read, skimming and scanning for information. Remember that when you skim you are just letting your eyes move quickly over the pages, looking for key words for example, 'Father', 'Wellington', 'dog' or 'murder'. When you find a key word or phrase, you scan (read quickly) that section to see if it is relevant.

### Is anyone listening? Understanding Father's feelings

When Father tries to explain his actions, Christopher sits on the bed, looking at his knees. You are going to think about how this might have made Father feel.

- On your own, think about what you would like to happen to you in the future. What do you hope your life will be like when you leave school? In pairs, take it in turns to explain your ideal future in as much detail as you can. Describe what you will be like, what you will see, hear or feel. While you are doing this, your partner should make no response and stare at their knees.
- When you have each had a chance to be both speaker and listener, talk about what it felt like to get no response from your partner.

Christopher's parents sometimes lose their temper with him.

- Talk about whether you think this is understandable, or whether they, as adults, should have better control.



### READING ON... Chapter 173

# Looking back - Chapters 149-173

## Growing up

### The Museum of Old Beliefs

One aspect of growing up is changing your beliefs about the world and how it works. When you were younger you may have believed, for example, that Father Christmas really existed, or that your parents were always right.

- Think about some of the things you used to believe which you now know to be false. Choose one of these for display in the 'Museum of Old Beliefs'. If you were going to put this belief in the museum, what object would you choose to represent it?

- Draw the exhibit, or, if possible, bring in the object. Make a card for the exhibit to explain:

- the old belief
- the age you were when you stopped believing it (if you can remember)
- what happened to change your mind
- what you believe now instead.

- Show your exhibit to the class.

### Christopher's exhibit

- Design an exhibit for the Museum of Old Beliefs to show what Christopher used to believe about his father, and what he believes now.



## Story structures (2)

- Remind yourself of the work you did on story structures in the 'Before reading' section (page 10 of the study guide). You sequenced this list of ingredients:
  - A journey
  - A problem that sets the story going
  - A complication
  - A resolution – some sort of solution for the problem (could be happy, sad, surprising, thought provoking and so on)
  - A further complication
  - Introducing the characters and settings
  - Climax – the highest moment of drama or tension
  - A discovery
  - An investigation
  
- Talk about the questions listed here.
  - Which of these things have already happened in the novel?
  - What order have they appeared in? Put them in sequence.
  - How does this compare with your predictions before you read the novel?
  - Does anything important seem to have been left out of the sequence? Why might this be?
  
- Predict which of the ingredients might come next in the novel and talk about the reasons for your decision.

## Truth and lies

Truth and lies are important in the novel and Christopher often mentions his thoughts about lies.

- Find some examples from what you have read so far, and record them on a chart like the one below.
  
- Do you think Father's lie would have worked with a boy who did not think and behave like Christopher? Why/why not?

Lie	Page no.	Comment on the lie

### Truth and lies – a mini-saga

- Read the example of a mini-saga below. Mini-sagas are stories that contain exactly 50 words.

#### The Truth and the Lie

‘Tell me the truth,’ she said. ‘I can take it.’ She bowed her head.

‘The truth?’ he said. ‘I lied.’

She laughed. ‘I knew you still loved me!’

‘You?’ he said. ‘The truth?’

‘I lied too.’ He paled.

‘I knew,’ he said. ‘I knew your love for me was dead.’

As mini-sagas are so short, you have to do a lot of reading between the lines.

- See if you can read between the lines of this story to work out what might have happened.
- If you did the activities on story structures in the ‘Before reading’ section (page 10 of the study guide) or in this section (page 44), remind yourself of this work. If you did not do this work, brainstorm, as a class, the essential ingredients that make a story a story.
- Talk about whether you think this mini-saga could be described as a story. How many of the ingredients you thought were essential for a story does it contain?

### Your own writing – option 1

- Write your own mini-saga with the title ‘The Lie’, or ‘The Truth’, or ‘Truth and Lies’. Your story must be exactly 50 words. Include some of the ingredients you thought were essential for a story.
- Listen to each other’s mini-sagas being read aloud. Vote for the best five to be displayed on the classroom wall.

### Your own writing – option 2

- Try writing the story of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* up to this point, in no more than fifty words, as a mini-saga.
- Compare mini-sagas to see what events or ideas different people chose to emphasise.

# The journey - Chapters 179-227

## Ongoing activity

### Looking at tension

- As you read this section, you should note down moments when the story seems particularly tense to you, and moments when things seem to relax a little. These notes should be your own ideas – others in your class may find different moments tense or calm. You will be using these notes to help you fill in a tension chart at the end of this section (page 52 of the study guide).

## Before reading Chapter 179

### What should Christopher do? Push and pull

The activity below will help you to think about what Christopher should do next and what options are open to him.

- Before you start the activity, read the summary box below to remind you of Christopher's situation at the moment.

#### Summary box

Father has admitted to Christopher that Mother is not dead. In fact she had an affair and left. He has also hinted that he had an affair, with Mrs Shears.

Father has admitted that he killed Wellington out of jealousy after an argument with Mrs Shears.

As a result of all these admissions, Christopher no longer believes his father loves him and, in fact, is frightened of him.

At the moment it is the middle of the night and Christopher is hiding in the garden, behind the shed, with his pet rat, Toby.

- Move the chairs and tables in your classroom out of the way so that you can stand in a circle. Ask one person to stand in the middle to represent Christopher.
- The people in the circle should think of as many options as they can for what Christopher should do now.

- The person playing Christopher should move near to anyone they think has a good suggestion but away from anyone they don't agree with, explaining their decision. For example, if someone suggested, 'You should stay out in the garden all night. When Father finds you in the morning, he'll realise how wrong he was and the two of you can make up.' Christopher might move away saying, 'I'm too scared of him to make it up with him.'
- Swap the person in the middle several times so that different people get a chance to play Christopher. When a new person is playing Christopher, you could repeat a suggestion to see if they agree with the way a previous Christopher reacted to it.



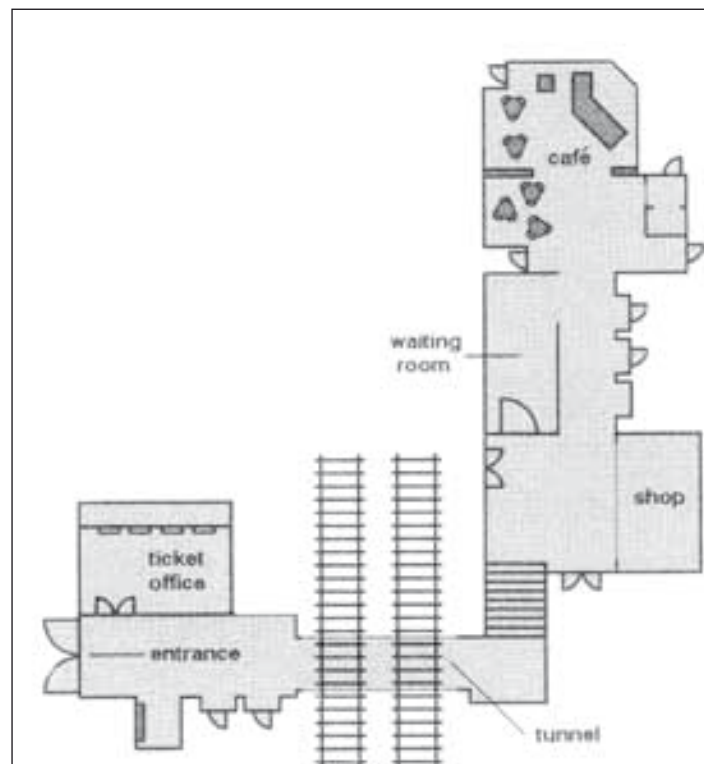
### READING ON... Chapters 179 and 181

## Before reading Chapter 191

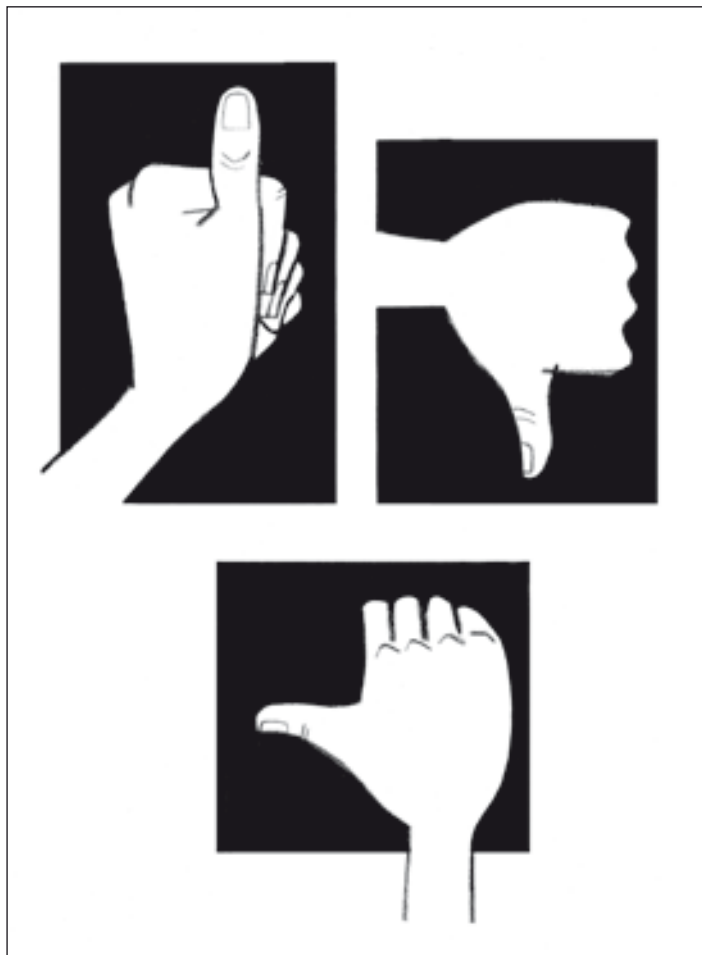
### Will Christopher get to London?

Christopher is about to face a situation that will be very difficult for him. How will he cope? Will he manage to get to London?

- Work in groups of four, split into two pairs.
- One pair should use a copy of the map of Swindon train station (below). Annotate the different areas on the map with any problems or challenges you think Christopher will face in trying to get a train to London.



- The other pair should list all the strategies they can remember Christopher using to help him to cope in difficult situations, such as groaning when there is too much information to take in. You may need to skim and scan the text to remind yourselves of some of his strategies.
- Get together as a four. Look at the potential problems and Christopher's strategies for dealing with difficult situations. Decide which strategies Christopher should use for which problems. If there doesn't seem to be a useful strategy for a particular situation, you could invent one.
- Now talk as a four about whether you think Christopher is going to be able to cope at the station. Give quick feedback to the class by showing either a thumbs up for 'Yes, he'll cope', a thumbs down for 'No, he won't cope', or a horizontal thumb for 'Not sure'.



**READING ON...** Chapters 191, 193, 197 and 199



## Before reading Chapter 211

### How well do you understand Christopher?

In the station Christopher behaves in ways that might seem odd to someone who doesn't know him. Because he is narrating the story, the reader has come to know him quite well by this point in the book. However, it is still interesting to have Christopher's own explanations for his behaviour.

- Look at the chart on page 50 of the study guide. In the first column there is a list of some of the things Christopher does. On an A3 photocopy, see how much of the second column you can fill in by coming up with some reasons why he might be behaving in this way. After this, fill in the third column by thinking how a stranger might interpret Christopher's behaviour.



### **READING ON... Chapter 211**

## After reading Chapter 211

- Fill in the final column of your chart with Christopher's own explanations of his behaviour.
- With a partner, talk about what is added to the story by having Christopher narrate it in the first person.



### **READING ON... Chapters 223 and 227**

## After reading Chapter 227

### The arrival

- Discuss how you felt about Christopher finally arriving at his mother's flat.

At the end of the chapter Mother says, 'Everything's going to be all right, I promise.'

- Talk about whether you believe her, whether you think Christopher believes her, and whether you think she believes herself.

What Christopher does	I think he does this because	A stranger might think	Christopher's explanation
Covers his ears			
Makes groaning noises			
Makes his hand into a tube and looks through it			
Laughs at the escalator			
Goes into a photobooth (but doesn't have a photo taken)			
Stands opposite the ticket machines watching lots of people buy tickets			
Barks at someone who comes close to him			

# Looking back - Chapters 179-227

## First person narrator

- Talk about how the use of the first person narrator keeps the interest of the reader in this section. You could think about the following questions.
  - Does the use of the first person make the story seem more realistic? How?
  - Does the use of the first person make you care more about what happens to Christopher? Why?
  - Does the use of the first person give you a new perspective on ordinary things, such as catching a train? How?

## Speaking and listening activities

### Should Christopher live with Mother or Father?

As a class you are going to prepare and take part in a hearing to decide whether Christopher should live with Mother or Father.

- Split the class into six groups. Each group is going to prepare a contribution to the hearing from one of the people listed in the table below.

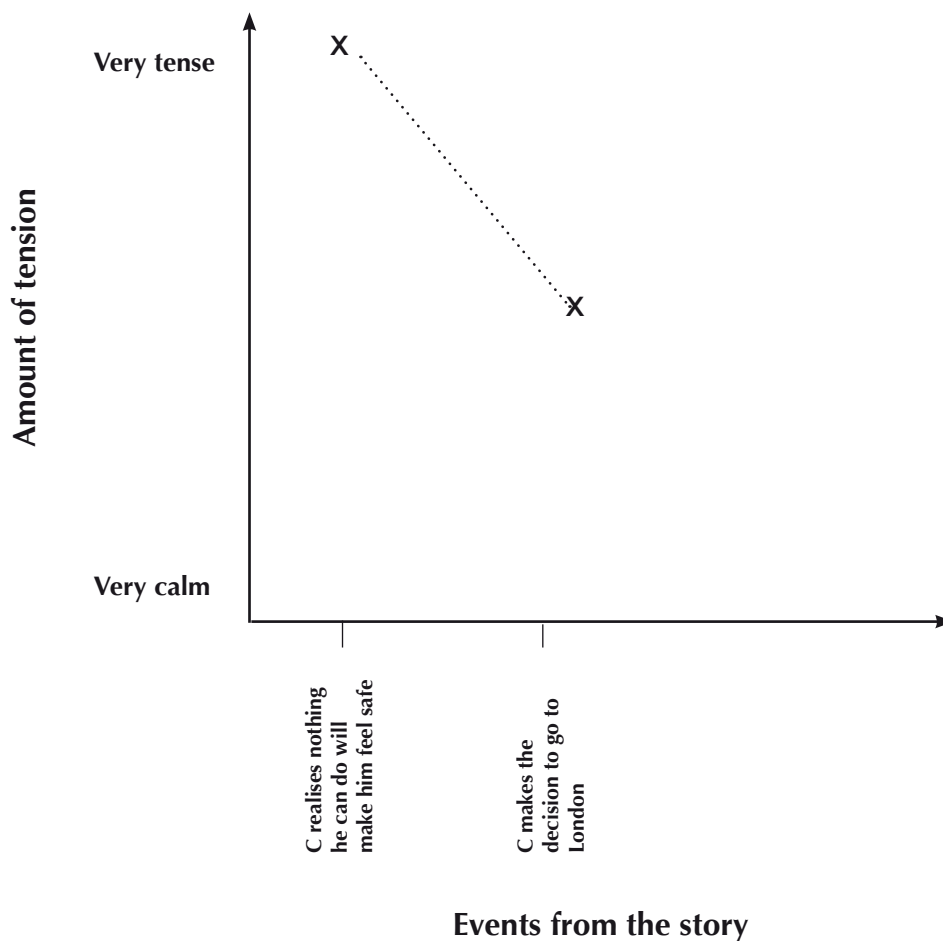
People involved	Interests
A social worker, representing Christopher	Not very interested in what is good for the parents. Christopher's needs are most important.
Siobhan, Christopher's teacher	Likely to be mainly concerned for Christopher but has seen Father do a good job in caring for his son.
Mr Jeavons, the school psychologist	Considers what would be best for Christopher's mental health. Will explain the need for a child with Asperger to have stability.
A lawyer representing Mother	Will put the case for Mother to have full custody as strongly as possible.
A lawyer representing Father	Will put the case for Father to have full custody as strongly as possible.
Mrs Alexander, a concerned neighbour	Probably the closest thing Christopher has to a friend. Hasn't had a good impression of Father.

- Each group should prepare a one-minute contribution. Support your opinions with evidence taken from the novel. You need to take into account practical considerations, such as suitable accommodation and arrangements for education, as well as emotional considerations.
- After all six contributions, take a vote on whether you think Christopher should live with his mother or his father, or whether they should have joint custody.

## Structure

### Moments of tension

- Look at your notes about moments that you thought were particularly tense in this section, or when things seemed calm. Choose up to ten of these moments and draw a tension chart like the one below. Two examples have been done to show you what to do, but you don't need to use these examples on your own chart.



- Compare your tension chart with others in your class. What's the same? What's different?
- Write two paragraphs about how Mark Haddon builds up tension in this section of the book, referring to two of the events on your chart as evidence to support your points. You could expand this into an essay when you have finished reading the whole novel.

# The ending - Chapters 229-233

## Before reading Chapter 229

### A perfect world

- Imagine that the world could be changed so that it was absolutely perfect for you personally. Imagine what you would see, hear, taste, smell and touch in your ideal world.
- Describe your perfect world to each other in groups of four and then talk about what your fantasies have in common and what is different about them.



---

### READING ON... Chapter 229

---

## After reading Chapter 229

- Talk about what your ideal worlds have in common with Christopher's, and what is different. What does Christopher's fantasy world show about his character?



---

### READING ON... Chapter 233

---

## After reading Chapter 233

### Mother – thought-tracking

A disadvantage of having Christopher narrate the story is that, because he finds it difficult to read other people's emotions, he is not able to explain them to the reader. Mark Haddon has to show how other characters are feeling and what they are thinking through what they say, how they behave and how others react to them. The reader then has to read between the lines to pick up the clues.


- Look at the section from 'And I said where are we going?' to 'I need you to be quiet for a moment.' on pages 252 to 253 of the novel.
- Add thought bubbles to show what Mother might be thinking. The example shows you the sort of thing you might write.
- Talk about what helped you to decide what Mother is thinking.

And I said, 'Where are we going?'

And she said, 'We're going home.'

And I said, 'Do you mean home in Swindon?'

And she said, 'Yes.'



*Funny I called it 'home'. I suppose London doesn't really feel like home.*

# Looking back - Chapters 229-233

## Speaking and listening activity

### Weighing up the arguments

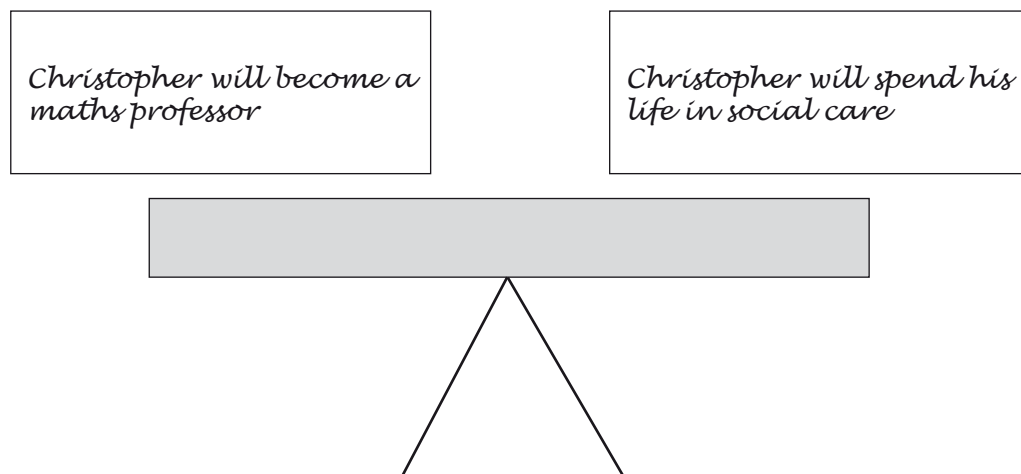
At the end of the novel Christopher says:

And I know I can do this because I went to London on my own, and because I solved the mystery of *Who Killed Wellington?* and I found my mother and I was brave and I wrote a book and that means I can do anything.

In an interview Mark Haddon said:

How readers react to Christopher's last words, 'I can do anything' depends on them. Is it self-deceit? Is he going to become a university maths professor, or is he going to spend the rest of his life in social care?

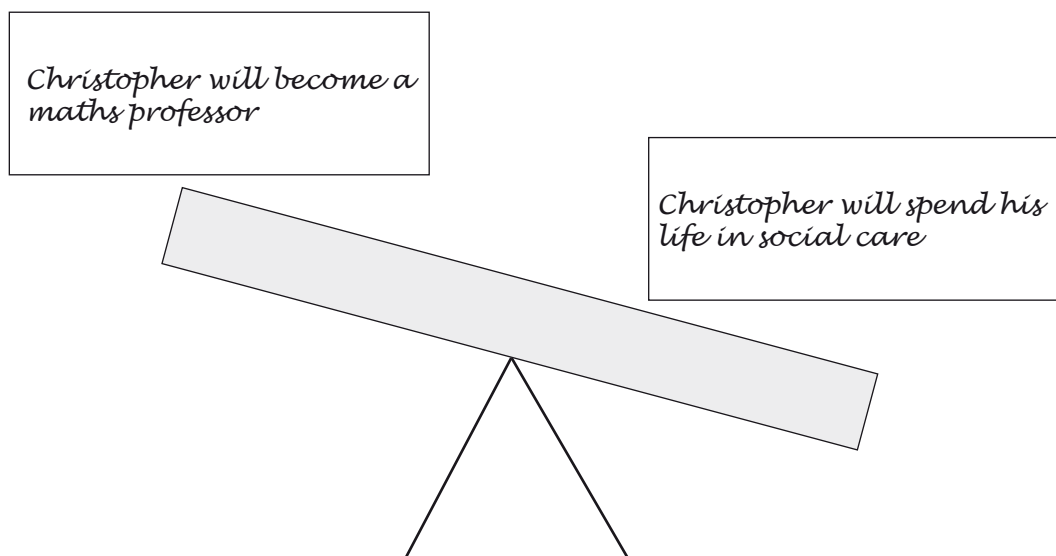
- Work in pairs. For this activity you will need a ruler and a piece of A4 paper.
- On the paper you should draw a triangle and place your ruler along the top of it, so that it represents a pair of scales. In one side of the scales you write 'Christopher will become a maths professor' and on the other 'Christopher will spend his life in social care', like the diagram below.



- Take it in turns with your partner to state an opinion about Christopher's future, backed up with evidence from the novel.

- When you have made your statement, decide how far it ‘tips the balance’ one way or the other, as shown below. The more you think the statement matters, the more you tip the balance towards that side, as in the example below.

*I think Christopher will end up in social care because he’ll never be able to go shopping - he can only just go to the sweet shop by himself. I think this tips the balance quite far towards Christopher ending up in care.*



- When you have run out of points, see which way your ‘scales’ are tipping. Draw along the edge of the ruler to record the result and then compare your result with that of other pairs.

## Your own writing

### Weighing up the arguments

- Use the points you and your partner made in discussion to write an argument piece. Use the title ‘What will happen to Christopher?’

- In your writing you can use connectives to show how the scales are tipping.

For example, if a point is a strong (or ‘heavy’) one, you could use:

More importantly...	A strong reason for thinking that...	It is obvious that...
---------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------

If a point does not tip the balance very far you could use:

It might be the case that...	It could be said that...	Some people might say...
------------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

If you are see-sawing between points you could use:

Equally...	On the one hand... on the other hand...	However...
------------	---	------------



# After reading

## The title of the book

The title, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*, is taken from a Sherlock Holmes story called 'Silver Blaze'. In this story a valuable race-horse has been stolen from its stable. The police suspect either a band of gypsies who were camping nearby, or a stranger who visited the stable the day before. Sherlock Holmes disagrees with the police inspector who asks:

'Is there any other point to which you would draw my attention?'

'To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.'

'The dog did nothing in the night-time.'

'That was the curious incident,' remarked Sherlock Holmes.

- Can you work out why this might be an important clue in the story? (Answer at the bottom of the page.)

It is typical of Sherlock Holmes that he is the only person who realises the significance of this fact. This is because, like Christopher, he is very observant, and very logical.

- Talk about why Mark Haddon might have chosen this title for the novel, and whether you think it is a good title.

## Should the title be changed?

Many people have criticised the title *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. Some people say it is too long, with one reviewer saying it was 'a mouthful'. Others say that it doesn't sound very interesting, or that they can never remember it.

- Work in pairs. One of you will role-play Mark Haddon and the other will play his literary agent (the person responsible for trying to get the book published).
- Before you start, the person role-playing Mark Haddon should think of all the reasons why he might have chosen this title for the novel. The person playing the agent should think of at least one alternative title and some of the reasons people, including publishers, booksellers and readers, might not like the original title.
- Role-play a conversation in which Mark Haddon and his agent talk about whether the title should be changed before the novel is sent off to various publishers to try to persuade them to take it on.

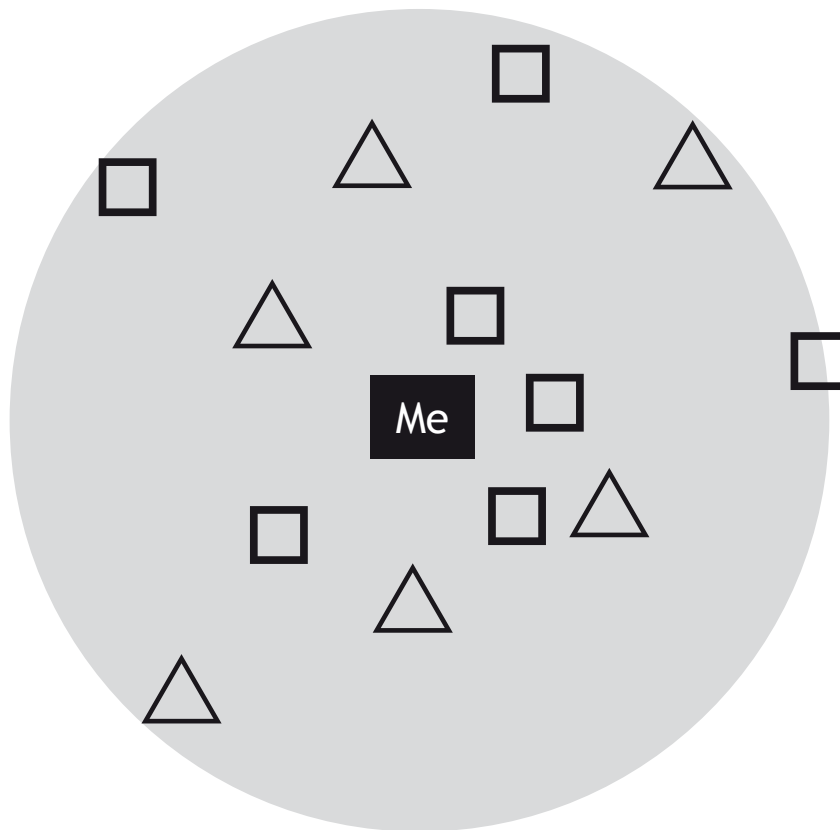
(Answer: The horse must have been taken by someone the dog knew. If a stranger had broken into the stables, the dog would have barked.)

## Character

### Circle of intimacy

- On a piece of plain paper you are going to draw a diagram to show the relationships between yourself and the people who are important in your life. In the centre, put yourself. Triangles represent girls or women and squares represent boys or men. Now place the people who are important in your life on the diagram. The closer they are to the centre, the more important they are to you. If you like, you can label your diagram with people's names, but it's probably better if you keep this information private. This is called a 'circle of intimacy'.

An example of one person's circle of intimacy is shown below.



- Now do a similar diagram for Christopher. What do you notice? How does this help you understand his character?

## The narrator

### A first person narrator – advantages and disadvantages

Some of the advantages of writing from the first person point of view are:

- the reader feels more sympathy with the character who is telling the story
- a first person narrator can make the story seem more realistic.

■ Can you think of any other advantages?

The main disadvantages of writing in the first person are:

- the narrator can only tell the reader about what he or she is aware of or has experienced
- the reader really only gets to know the narrator.

■ Can you think of any other disadvantages?

■ Talk about why you think Mark Haddon chose to write this novel from a first person point of view and how he has tried to overcome some of the possible disadvantages.

### Writing an essay

■ You could now write an essay with the title:

‘How does Mark Haddon use the first person narrator in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*?’

Your essay should be at least six paragraphs long. It should start with a short introduction which explains very simply what method of narration Haddon uses, through which character, in what kind of story. You should then write about:

- why Mark Haddon might have chosen to use the first person narrator
- the positive things about using the first person narrator, and how Mark Haddon has made the most of them
- the disadvantages of using the first person narrator, and how Mark Haddon has tried to get round some of them.

In each paragraph you need to make sure that you:

- make a point
- back up your point with evidence (a quotation or example from the novel)
- develop your point – by explaining how your evidence backs up your point, or commenting on the way the writer has used language, or explaining the effect on you, the reader.

You should then write a conclusion in which you explain your personal opinion about whether Mark Haddon has successfully used the first person narrator, or whether you think the novel would have been better written in the third person.

## Looking at language - Christopher's voice (2)

Usually when we talk about 'voice' we mean the noise that a person makes when they speak or sing. 'Voice' in a novel or a poem means the way a writer, or a character created by the writer, expresses themselves. This can include the language they use, the attitudes they have and the 'tone' (for example sarcastic or sad). The voice in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* is Christopher's voice, but of course he is not a real person. So how does Mark Haddon make us believe in Christopher's voice?

In an interview, Mark Haddon said:

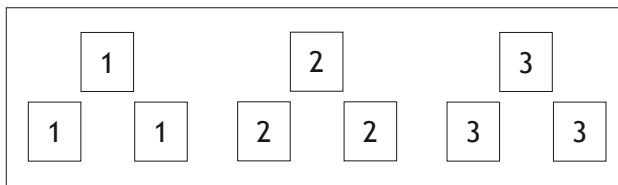
What I started with was the image of a dog with a gardening fork in it. Then I got Christopher's toneless voice.

This 'toneless voice' is typical of someone with Asperger Syndrome. In real life this means that the voice of someone with Asperger Syndrome can sound monotonous – in other words their feelings are not expressed in their voice.

### Jigsaw investigation

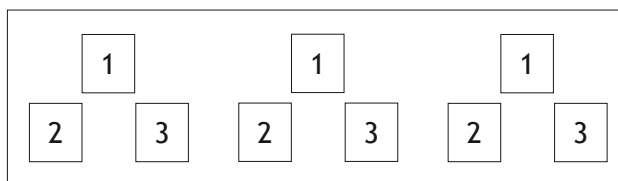
- Look again at the section from Chapter 53, when Father tells Christopher his mother has died of a heart attack (from 'Father said he didn't know what kind of heart aattack' to 'and I beat her 247 points to 134.').
- Try reading it aloud in different tones of voice, for example passionately, angrily, sadly, unemotionally. Which best suits the way it is written? Why?
- Now investigate the text more closely by following the steps below.

You are going to start in 'expert' groups of three, researching one aspect of the text (see page 61 of the study guide). When you have become an expert in this area you are going to move into new 'sharing' groups of three, joining people who have researched two other aspects. You are then going to teach the other people in this sharing group what you have learned in your expert group. If the number of people in your class doesn't divide by three, one or two of the expert groups could contain four people, with two of the people going together when feeding back to their 'sharing' group. The diagram below will help you to see how this activity will work.



#### Stage 1: Expert groups

Group members work together. Each group researches a different aspect of the text.



#### Stage 2: Sharing groups

Each person feeds back from their expert point of view so that all three aspects are covered in each group.

## Expert groups

- Start in groups of three people. This is your expert group. Each three is going to investigate one aspect of the extract. Your teacher will tell you which aspect to focus on from the following list.
  - **Connectives:** make a list of all the connectives you can spot in the extract. Talk about what you notice, for example whether there is much variety or whether you notice any repetition. Now think about how Haddon has used connectives to help create Christopher's 'voice'.
  - **Types of sentences:** there are four main types of sentences – statements, exclamations, questions and commands. Make sure you know what each of these is. Now look at the extract. Talk about whether Haddon uses a variety of sentence types for Christopher and then think about how he has used sentence types to help create Christopher's 'voice'.
  - **Attitudes and feelings:** talk about what kinds of things Christopher tells the reader, for example, facts, feelings, scientific information, memories, details about other people. Then talk about how this helps create Christopher's 'voice'.
- As you come up with ideas, make a note of them. You will all need to do this as you are going to join a new group to teach them about your aspect of the text.

## Sharing groups

- Form new groups of three containing one person who has studied each aspect of the text. Take it in turns to explain what you found out about the text.
- When you have finished, work together as a group to write a paragraph explaining how Mark Haddon gives Christopher a voice. You could use the sentence starters suggested here to help you.

The way Mark Haddon uses ... makes Christopher's voice sound ...

By using ... the writer gives the impression that ...

When Christopher ... the reader thinks ...

Another way Haddon creates a realistic voice for Christopher is by ...

The use of ... helps the reader to imagine ...

## Genre - class discussion

### Is it a funny book? Class discussion

Right at the beginning of the novel Christopher tells the reader 'This will not be a funny book' and yet there were probably lots of places that made you laugh.

- Choose your favourite funny moment from the novel. Tell your partner why this bit made you laugh.
- As a class, look at the following statement and decide whether you agree or disagree with it.

**The novel is funny because we are laughing at Christopher.**

### Is it a sad book?

Did you find the novel sad? In an interview Mark Haddon said:

People have said to me that it's a desperately sad book and they wept most of the way through it. Other people say it's charming and they kept laughing all the time. People say it has a sad ending; people say it has a happy ending. Because Christopher doesn't force the reader to think one thing or another, I get many different reactions.

- Together discuss what you think Mark Haddon is saying about why there are so many different reactions to the book, then talk about your own responses.

### A book for adults, children or both?

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* is what is known in the publishing industry as a 'crossover book'. This means that the publishers decided it would appeal to both children and adults – in this case to teenagers and adults. The book was produced in two different editions, with different covers, one of which was marketed for teenagers and one for adults. (The *Harry Potter* books were also marketed in this way, as was Philip Pullman's *Northern Lights* trilogy.)

- Talk together about the questions that follow.
  - In what ways do you think the book appeals to teenagers?
  - In what ways do you think the book appeals to adults?
  - Some people have said that the book is not very suitable for teenagers because it contains a lot of swearing and because it deals with depressing subject matter. Do you agree?

## Writing to review

You are going to write a review of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*. Before you begin writing, you are going to remind yourself of the features of this kind of writing, and look at some examples of reviews.

- As a class, brainstorm everything you remember about review writing. You should think about: the purpose and audience; the kind of language and tone used; the structure and layout; the content, and first or third person point of view.
- Look at the openings to reviews on page 64. What are these writers doing in their first few sentences?
- Then look at the endings that follow on page 64. What are the writers doing in the closing sentences of their review?

## Writing your own review

- Plan your work. You should:
  - decide who your audience will be (teenagers or adults?)
  - decide on what kind of publication (teen mag, broadsheet newspaper, school magazine, Amazon website)
  - make some notes about what you liked and disliked in the novel
  - find some evidence from the novel to back up your judgments
  - think about which parts of the story you will reveal, to get your audience interested, and which parts you will keep secret, so as not to spoil the story
  - draft two or three openings to your review until you have one which will really grab people's attention. Do the same for your ending so that you leave the reader with something to think about, or sum up your overall opinion.
- Write your review. Remember to:
  - use the first person
  - give a personal opinion
  - use a variety of adjectives to help you to express your opinions
  - think about how to get the reader interested in the novel
  - use a tone which is appropriate to your audience.