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# SHARED READING

## Extract 1

- In this extract from Chapter 1, Mole strikes up a friendship with Rat and starts to learn about river life.
- Read the first sentence aloud. Circle 'bijou' and define it as a small and elegant home. Circle 'dreamily'. Ask: *What does it confirm?* (Mole is imagining a home; he can only see a small hole.)
- Investigate the hole owner's gradual appearance by underlining 'something bright and small seemed to twinkle'; 'twinkled once more'; 'winked at him'; 'a small face began gradually to grow up round it'; 'A brown little face, with whiskers'; 'Small neat ears and thick silky hair'.
- Circle 'cautiously'. Ask: *What does this confirm?* (This is their first meeting.) Circle 'pettishly' for the children to supply a synonym. Ask: *Why is Mole reacting sulkily to Rat's invitation? Does he realise that the river can be crossed easily?*
- Circle 'talk'. Ask: *What is noticeable?* (It is in italic font.) Invite the children to read Mole's answer aloud. *What is the effect of the italic font?* (The word is emphasised.)
- Underline Rat's actions around the boat: 'stooped', 'unfastened a rope', 'hauled' and 'lightly stepped'. Ask: *What do they all reveal about him?* (boating competence and confidence)
- Underline 'whole heart went out to it' and 'rapture'. Ask: *How does Mole feel about boats?* (He is enthralled.)

## Extract 2

- This extract is from Chapter 6, when Toad is tried and sentenced for stealing and driving off in a car.
- Ask the children to scan the text. Ask: *What is noticeable about the form?* (It is dialogue.) *Who are the speakers?* (people, not animals) *What is surprising about the usually talkative Toad?* (He says nothing.)
- Circle 'cheerfully'. Ask: *Why is this inappropriate for the Chairman?* (He should be serious and unbiased.) Underline 'incorrigible rogue and hardened ruffian'. Ask: *What do the words imply?* (an unprofessional dislike of Toad) *Which other words in the first paragraph show a closed mind about Toad's guilt?* Underline 'clearest evidence' and 'there isn't any'.
- Investigate the Clerk's advice on sentencing. Underline 'Supposing you were to say', 'I never believe more myself' and 'make it a round twenty years and be on the safe side'. Ask: *What is unacceptable?* (The Clerk offers personal views and imprecise numbers.)
- Underline 'An excellent suggestion!' Ask: *Is this a likely remark from a Chairman? What mood does the writer create?* (farical) Read aloud the rest of the final paragraph. Ask: *Who is being spoken to?* Circle 'Prisoner!' and identify him as Toad. Underline 'Pull yourself together and try and stand up straight.' Ask: *What does this suggest about Toad's physical and emotional condition?* (collapsed and distraught)
- Underline: 'if you appear before us again... we shall have to deal with you very seriously!' Ask: *What is strange about this threat? Has Toad already been given a serious sentence? Do these words add humour to the text?*



## Extract 1

As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a bijou riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust. As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

A brown little face, with whiskers.

A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice.

Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

It was the Water Rat!

Then the two animals stood and regarded each other cautiously.

"Hullo, Mole!" said the Water Rat.

"Hullo, Rat!" said the Mole.

"Would you like to come over?" enquired the Rat presently.

"Oh, it's all very well to *talk*," said the Mole, rather pettishly, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

The Rat said nothing, but stooped and unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then lightly stepped into a little boat which the Mole had not observed. It was painted blue outside and white within, and was just the size for two animals; and the Mole's whole heart went out to it at once, even though he did not yet fully understand its uses.



# GET WRITING

## 1. Talkative Otter

### Objective

To précis longer passages.

### What you need

Copies of *The Wind in the Willows*.

### What to do

- Do this activity after reading Chapter 4.
- Comment that Otter is not a main character, but is often an important source of information with a surprising amount to say. Point out his news about river activity in Chapter 1 and his explanation for his appearance at Badger's house in Chapter 4.
- Suggest that the editor asks the author to shorten Chapter 4. Grahame identifies Otter's speech beginning 'Thought I should...', which is about 475 words long, as suitable for précis. Explain that a précis is a shorter version of a passage; it includes essential information, perhaps in different words, and omits unnecessary details.
- Examine Otter's speech. Ask: *What important information does it provide?* Identify concern on the river bank about Mole and Rat's disappearance; Otter's decision to visit Badger; Otter's journey through the Wild Wood; the news from a rabbit that Mole is lost in the Wild Wood. Ask: *Which details seem unnecessary?* Identify details about the robin and geese and exactly what Otter said and did to the rabbit.
- Ask the children to reduce Otter's speech to no more than 325 words. Suggest they make notes on what to include, before using a computer to type, check word count, edit and print a final version.

### Differentiation

**Support:** Let partners work together on a draft version before writing independently.

**Extension:** Expect children to recognise the need to retain Otter's voice.

## 2. Toad's song

### Objective

To perform their own compositions.

### What you need

Copies of *The Wind in the Willows*, photocopiable page 41 'Toad's song'.

### What to do

- Do this activity after reading Chapter 10.
- Ask: *What goes wrong for Toad at the end of this chapter?* (He runs 'straight into the river'.) *What fault does he admit to?* (being conceited) Point out Toad's promise to himself not to 'sing another conceited song'.
- Direct the children to Toad's song in Chapter 10 and read it aloud together. Point out the extra verse later in the chapter. Ask: *Who are all the verses about?* (Toad) *What do they always emphasise?* (Toad's cleverness) Identify the rhyme pattern at the ends of the second and fourth lines, and the regular verse length.
- Suggest that when Toad has recovered he will sing another conceited song about this adventure, but with a more flattering ending than him struggling in the river. Ask: *What will the content be?* Share ideas.
- Give out photocopiable page 41 'Toad's song' for the children to complete. Ask them to do a rough draft first, encouraging them to read their phrases, lines and verses aloud, either to themselves or a partner, as they work on the song.
- Afterwards, invite them to perform their compositions to one another.

### Differentiation

**Support:** Suggest children limit their song to two verses.

**Extension:** Let children work independently, without the constraints of the words on the photocopiable sheet.



# Toad's song

- Complete Toad's song and then read your new lines aloud to your partner.

Poop-poop! Poop-poop! Off he raced.

Toad drove like the king of the road.

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Poop-poop! Poop-poop! On he went.

Toad steered over the grass freshly mowed.

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Poop-poop! Poop-poop! Water ahead!

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No river could stop clever Toad!

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