

SHARED READING

Extract 1

- Read Extract 1 and ask the class: *What do we learn about Bradley's behaviour in class?* (He spends all his time messing about; he was the only one to fail the language test.)
- Ask: *What do the contents of his desk suggest?* (That he always spends his time fiddling with them rather than learning.)
- Circle the repeated word 'scribbled' and explain what effect this repetition has (it emphasises how he continues to do it throughout the lesson).
- Can the children suggest why Bradley tapes stuff together and cuts up his test paper? (Boredom? A way of feeling in control of *something*?)
- Circle any unfamiliar words ('gobs', 'wads', 'distorted') and ask the children to explain their meaning. Can they identify any words that tell us the story is set in America ('recess', 'wait up', 'the White House', 'dollar') and suggest British-English equivalents for them?
- Focus on the phrase 'that same distorted smile'. Recall the description of Bradley's smile: 'He stretched his mouth so wide, it was hard to tell whether it was a smile or a frown.' Ask: *What does this reveal about Bradley?* (You can never tell from his outward behaviour what he is really feeling.)
- Ask the class: *Why do you think Bradley has to think for a moment before he answers Jeff?* (He is so taken aback by Jeff's friendly words that he doesn't know how to react, so he reverts to being a bully.)

Extract 2

- Read Extract 2 and ask: *Where is Bradley and what is happening? What kind of mood is he in, and why?* (He is feeling impatient and frustrated because he doesn't want his hair cut and because if he doesn't get back to school in time, he won't see Carla.) *Which adverb tells us Bradley is not keen to go in?* ('reluctantly')
- Focus on the description of the barber's shop. Ask: *What does Bradley see that looks run-down or dirty?* (The couch is torn and the mirror is filmy.) *Which other sense does the description focus on?* (the awful smell of the place)
- Invite the children to find examples of similes ('smelled...like hair', 'like some kind of horrible dungeon'). Ask: *What is Bradley's 'torture'?* (Having to wait and get his hair cut.) *What does the barber do that reinforces the idea of torture?* (He almost chokes him with the apron.)
- Together, find words that describe the barber's shop ('smelly', 'oily', 'ugly', 'filmy'). Circle any adjectives and adverbs. Point out that this is one of the most descriptive passages of writing in the story. Encourage the children to recall other descriptive passages (for example, the description of the girls' toilets and how Bradley imagined they would be in his mind). Suggest that the slower, descriptive pace here helps to convey Bradley's frustration and impatience as he waits for the haircut to be over. Underline the idiomatic phrase: 'gritted his teeth'. Can the children explain what it means? (He forced himself to endure it.)