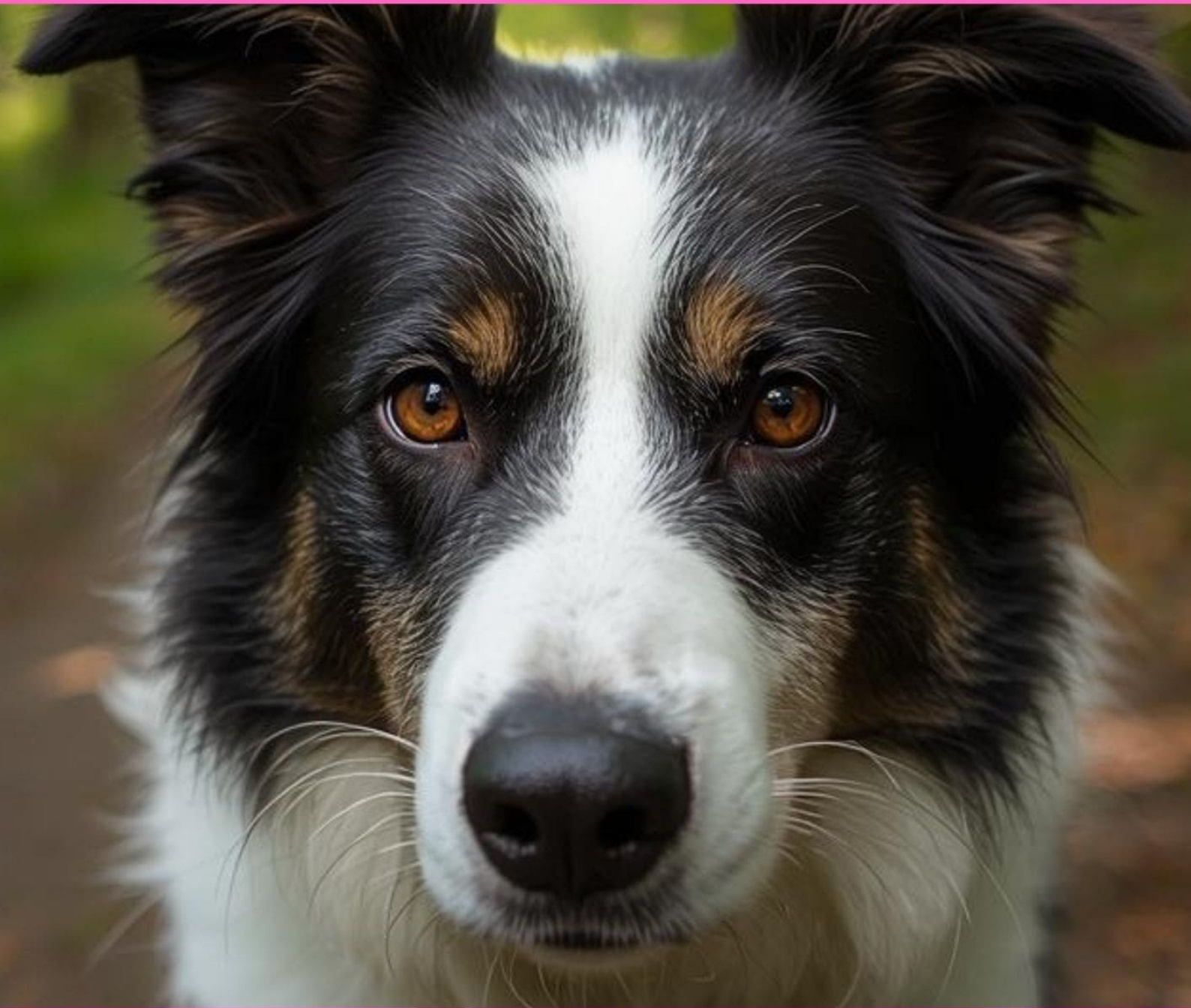


# Hey Boy!



**a short story for English  
reading and speaking**

# Hey Boy!

**Level:** B2–C1 (Upper-Intermediate to Advanced)

**Skills:** Reading · Vocabulary · Speaking · Writing

**Story word count:** ≈640 words

## What's inside

- Full short story: *Hey Boy!*
- Story & Questions by Section (**5 sections · 12 questions**)
- Reading Comprehension — Full Question Bank (with model answers)
- Essential Vocabulary pack (12 key items) + notebook routine
- 5 Vocabulary Exercises (synonyms, antonyms, gap-fill, usage prompts, word–meaning) with answer key
- Discussion Questions (10)
- Role Play
- Creative Writing Prompts (5)

**Author/Publisher:** ManWrites

**Licence:** Single-teacher classroom use

© 2025 ManWrites · [www.manwrites.com](http://www.manwrites.com)

## Table of Contents

Hey Boy!.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Hey Boy! – full story.....	5
Hey Boy! – Story and Reading Comprehension Questions.....	9
Reading Comprehension Questions – full list.....	14
Essential Vocabulary.....	16
Vocabulary Practice Routine (Notebook).....	16
Vocabulary Exercises.....	17
Exercise 1 — Match the Synonym.....	18
Exercise 2 — Match the Antonym.....	20
Exercise 3 — Gap-Fill Sentences.....	22
Exercise 4 — Discussion with Vocabulary Prompts.....	23
Exercise 5 — Match the Word with Its Meaning.....	24
Discussion Questions.....	26
Role Play.....	27
Creative Writing.....	32
Reading Comprehension Questions – model answers.....	33
Vocabulary Exercises — Answers.....	36
Credits.....	37

# Introduction

In this stage, go around the class and take turns asking and answering the questions. Encourage students to share their ideas in full sentences, and follow up with additional questions to deepen the discussion.

1. Do you like dogs? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever met a dog (or another animal) that seemed very clever? What happened?
3. In stories and films, animals sometimes talk. Can you think of an example? What do they say?
4. Do you prefer funny animal stories or scary ones? Why?

# Hey Boy! – full story

*In this stage, the story is read aloud by the students. Each student should read a short section in turn. After each section, pause to check comprehension and ask simple follow-up questions to ensure understanding.*

Jaron skidded to a halt on his bike.

Right in front of him a dog — black and white with a bright, friendly face — came running full-tilt towards him.

Jaron braced himself, unsure what the dog might do. He had never owned a dog. His mum often said she'd get one, but his dad always shook his head and said no.

The dog darted right up to Jaron's bike, swerved at the last second, scooted round him, and carried on down the path.

Jaron twisted round to see where the dog had gone. But then — there it was again, racing back towards him.

The dog was playing!

"Hey, boy!" Jaron called.

He didn't know if the dog was male or female, but he guessed most dogs were probably boys. And this one looked like a boy. He even acted like a boy.

The dog rushed past him again and Jaron let out a squeal of laughter.

“Come on, boy!”

The dog barked back. Then, strangely, another sound came out — almost like the word hey.

Jaron blinked. Had the dog... spoken?

The dog slowed down this time, jumped up, and raised his paws as if he wanted Jaron to reach out. So Jaron did just that, touching the dog’s head. The fur was soft and warm.

“Hey, boy,” said Jaron. “What you doing?”

“Hey, yourself,” said the dog.

Jaron pulled his hand back in shock. He toppled off his bike and landed on the ground.

The dog sat and tilted his head.

“Be careful,” he said.

Jaron gasped. The dog had spoken.

He scrambled to his feet and ran straight into the woods.

Branches whipped at his face. But to his side, the dog bounded easily beside him.

“Wait!” the dog barked. “Stop! I want to talk to you!”

“Dogs don’t talk!” Jaron cried, swerving — and slamming hard into a tree.

The fall knocked the breath out of him. He lay stunned on the ground. The dog padded up and licked his face.

“That must have hurt,” the dog said gently.

Jaron stared, wide-eyed.

“This... this isn’t real.”

“I think it is,” said the dog. He sat calmly at Jaron’s side, panting. “I’ve seen you here before, riding down the path. Today I finally found the courage to speak.”

Against all reason, Jaron began to talk back. And to his surprise, it felt like the first real conversation he’d ever had.

“So your mum likes dogs?” asked the dog.

“She said I could have one,” Jaron admitted. “But my dad — he’s different. He says no to everything.”

The dog tilted his head. “Everything?”

“Yeah,” Jaron sighed. “He doesn’t like dogs, he doesn’t like me riding too far on my bike, he doesn’t even like it when I play music in my room.”

The dog let out a panting laugh.

“Sounds like he doesn’t like much at all.”

Jaron nodded. “Not really.”

There was a pause. The dog’s eyes narrowed slightly.

“And that bothers you, doesn’t it?”

Jaron shrugged. “Sometimes.”

The dog leaned closer. “Maybe you wish things were... different.”

“I guess so.”

“Maybe,” the dog continued softly, “your father needs to be reminded he can’t control everything. Maybe he needs to be taught a lesson.”

Jaron frowned. “What do you mean?”

The dog’s voice grew lower, almost a growl.

“You said he hates dogs. He hates your music. He hates your freedom. Maybe it’s time someone showed him he can’t keep

you down.”

Jaron felt his chest tighten. “That’s not possible. He’ll never change.”

The dog pressed one paw onto Jaron’s chest, holding him there.

His once-friendly eyes seemed darker now, shadowed.

“Then perhaps we don’t change his mind,” he whispered.

“Perhaps... we change him.”

Jaron tried to shift away, but the weight of the paw held him still.

The woods seemed to close in around them.

“Jaron,” said the dog. “Are you with me?”



# Hey Boy! – Story and Reading Comprehension Questions

The story is divided into shorter sections for easier classroom use. After a student reads a section, ask the accompanying comprehension questions. Invite different students to respond and encourage them to explain their answers.

**Model answers are provided at the end of the lesson plan.**

## Section 1

Jaron skidded to a halt on his bike.

Right in front of him a dog — black and white with a bright, friendly face — came running full-tilt towards him.

Jaron braced himself, unsure what the dog might do. He had never owned a dog. His mum often said she'd get one, but his dad always shook his head and said no.

The dog darted right up to Jaron's bike, swerved at the last second, scooted round him, and carried on down the path.

Jaron twisted round to see where the dog had gone. But then — there it was again, racing back towards him.

The dog was playing!

## Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Where was Jaron when he first met the dog?

2.Which details show the dog is playful rather than aggressive?

3.What do we learn about Jaron’s family and pets?

## **Section 2**

“Hey, boy!” Jaron called.

He didn’t know if the dog was male or female, but he guessed most dogs were probably boys. And this one looked like a boy. He even acted like a boy.

The dog rushed past him again and Jaron let out a squeal of laughter.

“Come on, boy!”

The dog barked back. Then, strangely, another sound came out — almost like the word hey.

Jaron blinked. Had the dog... spoken?

The dog slowed down this time, jumped up, and raised his paws as if he wanted Jaron to reach out. So Jaron did just that, touching the dog’s head. The fur was soft and warm.

“Hey, boy,” said Jaron. “What you doing?”

“Hey, yourself,” said the dog.

Jaron pulled his hand back in shock. He toppled off his bike and landed on the ground.

The dog sat and tilted his head.

“Be careful,” he said.

Jaron gasped. The dog had spoken.

## **Reading Comprehension Questions**

4) What surprising thing happens after Jaron touches the dog’s

head?

5) How does Jaron react physically and emotionally?

### **Section 3**

He scrambled to his feet and ran straight into the woods.

Branches whipped at his face. But to his side, the dog bounded easily beside him.

“Wait!” the dog barked. “Stop! I want to talk to you!”

“Dogs don’t talk!” Jaron cried, swerving — and slamming hard into a tree.

The fall knocked the breath out of him. He lay stunned on the ground. The dog padded up and licked his face.

“That must have hurt,” the dog said gently.

Jaron stared, wide-eyed.

“This... this isn’t real.”

“I think it is,” said the dog. He sat calmly at Jaron’s side, panting.

“I’ve seen you here before, riding down the path. Today I finally found the courage to speak.”

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

6) What events lead to Jaron getting hurt?

7) How does the dog comfort or respond after the fall?

8) Why does the dog say he spoke “today” and not before?

### **Section 4**

Against all reason, Jaron began to talk back. And to his surprise, it felt like the first real conversation he’d ever had.

“So your mum likes dogs?” asked the dog.

“She said I could have one,” Jaron admitted. “But my dad — he’s different. He says no to everything.”

The dog tilted his head. “Everything?”

“Yeah,” Jaron sighed. “He doesn’t like dogs, he doesn’t like me riding too far on my bike, he doesn’t even like it when I play music in my room.”

The dog let out a panting laugh.

“Sounds like he doesn’t like much at all.”

Jaron nodded. “Not really.”

There was a pause. The dog’s eyes narrowed slightly.

“And that bothers you, doesn’t it?”

Jaron shrugged. “Sometimes.”

The dog leaned closer. “Maybe you wish things were... different.”

“I guess so.”

“Maybe,” the dog continued softly, “your father needs to be reminded he can’t control everything. Maybe he needs to be taught a lesson.”

Jaron frowned. “What do you mean?”

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

9) How does the dog use Jaron’s feelings about his father?

10) Why does the dog suggest Jaron’s father “needs to be taught a lesson”?

### **Section 5**

The dog’s voice grew lower, almost a growl.

“You said he hates dogs. He hates your music. He hates your freedom. Maybe it’s time someone showed him he can’t keep you down.”

Jaron felt his chest tighten. “That’s not possible. He’ll never change.”

The dog pressed one paw onto Jaron’s chest, holding him there. His once-friendly eyes seemed darker now, shadowed.

“Then perhaps we don’t change his mind,” he whispered.

“Perhaps... we change him.”

Jaron tried to shift away, but the weight of the paw held him still.

The woods seemed to close in around them.

“Jaron,” said the dog. “Are you with me?”

### **Reading Comprehension Questions**

11) What change does Jaron notice in the dog’s eyes — and why is it significant?

12) What question does the dog ask Jaron in the final line, and how might Jaron feel at that moment?

# Reading Comprehension Questions – full list

Read carefully and answer in your own words, using the story as evidence. **You can check the model answers at the back of the lesson plan.**

1. Where was Jaron when he first met the dog?
2. Which details show the dog is playful rather than aggressive?
3. What do we learn about Jaron's family and pets?
4. What surprising thing happens after Jaron touches the dog's head?
5. How does Jaron react physically and emotionally?
6. What events lead to Jaron getting hurt?
7. How does the dog comfort or respond after the fall?
8. Why does the dog say he spoke "today" and not before?
9. How does the dog use Jaron's feelings about his father?
10. Why does the dog suggest Jaron's father "needs to be taught a lesson"?
11. What change does Jaron notice in the dog's eyes — and why is it significant?

12. What question does the dog ask Jaron in the final line, and how might Jaron feel at that moment?

# Essential Vocabulary

Use these vocabulary items from the story throughout the tasks.

**skidded (to a halt) · full-tilt · braced (himself) · darted · scooted · squeal (of laughter) · gasped · toppled · stunned · panting · plucked up the courage · growl**

## Vocabulary Practice Routine (Notebook)

1. Write each new word/phrase.
2. Look up a clear definition.
3. Write your own sentence connected to your life.

### *Examples*

- **skidded** — stopped suddenly by sliding. *Example:* My bike skidded on the wet leaves.
- **growl** — a low, threatening sound. *Example:* The dog's growl made me step back.



# Vocabulary Exercises

## Introduction

In this section, you'll practise key words from the story. **Do all five exercises** in order, then check your work with the **answer key at the end**.

1. **Match the Synonym** — pair each word with its closest one-word synonym.
2. **Match the Antonym** — pair each word with its opposite.
3. **Gap-Fill Sentences** — complete sentences using words from the box.
4. **Discussion with Vocabulary Prompts** — answer questions using the target words.
5. **Match the Word with Its Meaning** — connect each word to its definition (full sentences).

# Exercise 1 — Match the Synonym

*Match each word to its closest synonym. Write the letter.*

## Words

- 1.skidded
- 2.full-tilt
- 3.braced
- 4.darted
- 5.squeal
- 6.gasped
- 7.toppled
- 8.stunned
- 9.panting
- 10.growl

## Synonym options (jumbled)

- a. slid
- b. headlong
- c. steeled

- d. dashed
- e. shriek
- f. inhaled
- g. fell
- h. dazed
- i. breathless
- j. snarl

## Exercise 2 — Match the Antonym

*Match each word to its opposite. Write the letter.*

### Words

- 1.braced
- 2.darted
- 3.full-tilt
- 4.panting
- 5.skidded
- 6.squeal
- 7.gasped
- 8.toppled
- 9.stunned
- 10.growl

### Antonym options (jumbled)

- a. relaxed
- b. loitered
- c. slowly

- d. calm
- e. glided
- f. silence
- g. exhaled
- h. steadied
- i. alert
- j. purr

## Exercise 3 — Gap-Fill Sentences

*Use words from the box. Change form if needed.*

**Word Bank:** scooted · braced · panting · skidded · growl · plucked  
up the courage

1. He \_\_\_\_\_ just in time before the ball hit him.
2. The puppy \_\_\_\_\_ round the table and disappeared under a chair.
3. After the sprint they were \_\_\_\_\_ and laughing.
4. The tyres \_\_\_\_\_ when the bike hit a patch of gravel.
5. She finally \_\_\_\_\_ to tell her dad what really happened.
6. A low \_\_\_\_\_ in the dark made everyone stop talking.

## Exercise 4 — Discussion with Vocabulary Prompts

*Answer in full sentences using the bold word.*

1. When did you last move **full-tilt** to get somewhere on time?
2. Describe a moment you felt **stunned** by unexpected news.
3. What kind of joke makes you let out a **squeal** of laughter?
4. Have you ever **gasp**ed from surprise or fear? What happened?
5. When did you **brace** yourself for a difficult conversation?
6. What situations can make someone **growl** metaphorically (in a low, angry voice)?

## Exercise 5 — Match the Word with Its Meaning

*Match each word to the correct meaning. Write the letter.*

### Words

- 1.braced (himself)
- 2.skidded
- 3.panting
- 4.toppled
- 5.squeal (of laughter)
- 6.full-tilt
- 7.darted
- 8.plucked up the courage
- 9.gasped
- 10.growl

### Meanings (jumbled)

- a. This means you stopped suddenly while sliding along a surface.
- b. This describes breathing quickly after effort or running.



- c. This means you prepared yourself for something difficult or painful.
- d. This describes a high, sharp sound made when laughing or reacting.
- e. This means you moved very fast, without slowing down.
- f. This means you fell over or lost your balance.
- g. This means you moved suddenly and quickly from one place to another.
- h. This means you finally found the bravery to do something challenging.
- i. This means you took a sudden breath in from shock or surprise.
- j. This refers to a low, threatening sound made to warn or intimidate.

# Discussion Questions

This set invites broader interpretation. There are no single correct answers—justify your ideas with evidence from the story.

- 1.What would you do if you met an animal that could talk?
- 2.Do you think Jaron really heard the dog speak, or was he imagining it? Why?
- 3.The dog starts friendly but becomes threatening. How does the writer show this change?
- 4.Why might Jaron’s father dislike dogs, music, or “freedom”? Any fair reasons?
- 5.Have you wanted something your family didn’t allow? How did you handle it?
- 6.Should Jaron trust the dog or keep his distance? Explain.
- 7.What does the ending suggest about the dog’s true character?
- 8.How would you change the ending to make it less scary?
- 9.What lessons can we learn about trust, boundaries, and persuasion?
- 10.If the story continued, what might happen next?

# Role Play

This is a role play activity.

## Role Play — Conversations from *Hey Boy!*

### Introduction

You're going to act out a **family negotiation at dinner**.

Jaron wants to bring home the dog he met near the woods. He **cannot** say the dog talks; instead, he must make a **sensible, honest case** for getting a dog **safely and responsibly**.

The aim is to practise **persuasion, listening, and setting healthy boundaries**, while keeping every step realistic (shelter checks, trial period, costs, care).

### Instructions

1. **Choose roles:** Jaron, Mum, Dad. (Swap roles and try again with a different approach.)

2. **Plan quickly:** Jot down a goal, 2–3 key points, likely objections, and a respectful opening line.
3. **Use the phrases:** Speak naturally (don't read).
4. **Ask follow-ups:** "What makes you say that?" "Could we try a trial?" "What would feel safe?"
5. **Close clearly:** Summarise any agreement and next step (e.g., "We'll visit the shelter on Saturday.")

## Role Play Situation

**Set-up:** Jaron is eating dinner with his parents. After meeting a friendly dog near the woods, he wants permission to **begin a responsible process** to bring a dog into the family (e.g., check lost reports/microchip, meet at a shelter, consider a foster trial).

He **must not** bring an unknown animal home secretly or skip safety steps.

### Important constraints for Jaron (in-character):

- Do **not** mention that the dog talks.
- Do **not** propose secret plans or risky behaviour.
- Do **propose** safe, ethical steps (shelter, vet check, foster trial, responsibility chart).

## Characters

**Roles:** Jaron, Mum, Dad

**Aim:** Jaron asks for a dog; Dad shares concerns; Mum mediates towards a practical compromise.

**Target language:** persuasion, hedging, compromise

**Follow-ups:** “What would change your mind?” · “What if we try a foster trial?” · “What worries you most?”

## Useful Phrases

- **Openings**

- “Can I explain why this matters to me?”
- “I know you’ve said no before—could we revisit it with a plan?”

- **Persuasion & evidence**

- “Here’s my feeding/walk schedule and a cost breakdown.”
- “I’ll handle mornings; I’ve set alarms and a checklist.”
- “We’ll check for a microchip and lost-dog reports first.”

- **Hedging & politeness**

- “I might be wrong, but from my point of view this is manageable.”
- “If it doesn’t work, we’ll stop—no pressure.”

- **Compromise**

- “What if we **foster** for one month through a registered shelter?”
- “Could we agree clear rules: no couch, homework before walks, weekly check-in?”
- **Closing**
  - “So our next step is: visit the shelter on Saturday and speak to a vet.”

## Prompts To Enrich The Scene

- **Dad’s concerns:** cost, time, allergies, training, safety, landlord/lease rules.
- **Jaron’s proposals:** responsibility contract, walking rota, savings plan, pet insurance quote, obedience class, vet/shelter pathway.
- **Mum’s mediation:** reframe extremes, suggest trial terms, summarise agreements and exit criteria.

## Red-Flag Redirects (for realism & safety)

If Jaron hints at secret or risky behaviour (e.g., “I could just bring him in my room”), parents should **redirect**:

- “No secret plans. If we do this, it’s through a shelter with health checks.”

- “If you felt pressured by the dog or anything felt off, we keep our distance and tell an adult.”
- “Stray animals can be lost or unwell—first step is always **safety and identification.**”

Now take time to prepare your role play for the class.

Each group should take turns in showing their role play. After each role play, the other students should try to give feedback and ask questions.

### **Teacher notes:**

- Avoid glorifying risky behaviour or supernatural coercion; keep the “talking dog” element **out of the scene** per the brief.
- If teaching younger learners, emphasise the **foster-trial** and **responsibility chart**; remove darker implications.
- Remind learners never to approach or bring home unknown animals without an adult and proper checks.

# Creative Writing

**This is a creative writing exercise.**

Try to write around 300 words using one of the prompts below. When you have finished writing your story, you can read it out loud in front of the class. Or you can hand it in to your teacher and ask for a review.

1. **The Night the Dog Spoke** — The same dog returns, but only you can hear him.
2. **The Lesson** — You plan a harmless way to prove to your dad you're responsible. It goes wrong.
3. **Forest Deal** — A voice in the trees offers help... for a price.
4. **Mute** — The dog can't speak today, but he can write in the dirt. What message appears?
5. **Switch** — You wake up with a dog's senses for one hour. What do you learn?



# Reading Comprehension Questions – model answers

The following are model answers to the comprehension questions. Students' responses may not always be identical to these examples, and that is perfectly acceptable.

**As long as the meaning is accurate and close to the intended idea in the story, their answers should be considered correct.**

**1) Where was Jaron when he first met the dog?**

*On a path near the woods, riding his bike.*

**2) Which details show the dog is playful rather than aggressive?**

*It darts and swerves around him, circles back, races past repeatedly, and makes him laugh.*

**3) What do we learn about Jaron's family and pets?**

*He's never owned a dog; his mum would like one, but his dad always says no.*

**4) What surprising thing happens after Jaron touches the dog's head?**

*The dog speaks, saying, "Hey, yourself."*

**5) How does Jaron react physically and emotionally?**

*He gasps in shock, pulls his hand back, topples off his bike, and feels frightened.*

**6) What events lead to Jaron getting hurt?**

*He runs into the woods in panic, swerves, and slams into a tree, which knocks the breath out of him.*

**7) How does the dog comfort or respond after the fall?**

*It pads up, licks his face, and gently says, "That must have hurt," then sits calmly, panting.*

**8) Why does the dog say he spoke "today" and not before?**

*He's seen Jaron before on the path, and today he finally found the courage to speak.*

**9) How does the dog use Jaron's feelings about his father?**

*He exploits Jaron's frustration, suggesting the father needs to be reminded he can't control everything.*

**10) Why does the dog suggest Jaron's father "needs to be taught a lesson"?**

*Because the father says "no" to many things (dogs, riding far, music), and the dog wants to challenge that control.*

**11) What change does Jaron notice in the dog's eyes — and why is it significant?**

*They look darker and shadowed, no longer friendly—signalling a threatening shift in the dog's nature.*

**12) What question does the dog ask Jaron in the final line, and how might Jaron feel?**

*“Are you with me?” — Jaron likely feels trapped, scared, and conflicted.*

# Vocabulary Exercises — Answers

These are the correct answers to all the vocabulary exercises.  
Please check against your own answers.

- **Exercise 1 (Synonyms):** 1-a, 2-b, 3-c, 4-d, 5-e, 6-f, 7-g, 8-h, 9-i, 10-j
- **Exercise 2 (Antonyms):** 1-a, 2-b, 3-c, 4-d, 5-e, 6-f, 7-g, 8-h, 9-i, 10-j
- **Exercise 3 (Gap-Fill):** 1 braced, 2 scooted, 3 panting, 4 skidded, 5 plucked up the courage, 6 growl
- **Exercise 4:** answers will vary
- **Exercise 5 (Word–Meaning):** 1-c, 2-a, 3-b, 4-f, 5-d, 6-e, 7-g, 8-h, 9-i, 10-j

## Credits

This lesson plan is courtesy of **ManWrites**.

This content is copyright © 2025 **ManWrites**

For more information, visit: [www.manwrites.com](http://www.manwrites.com)

Or join my mailing list below — I'll send you more ESL teaching ideas straight to your inbox.

**[ManWrites Mailing List](#)**