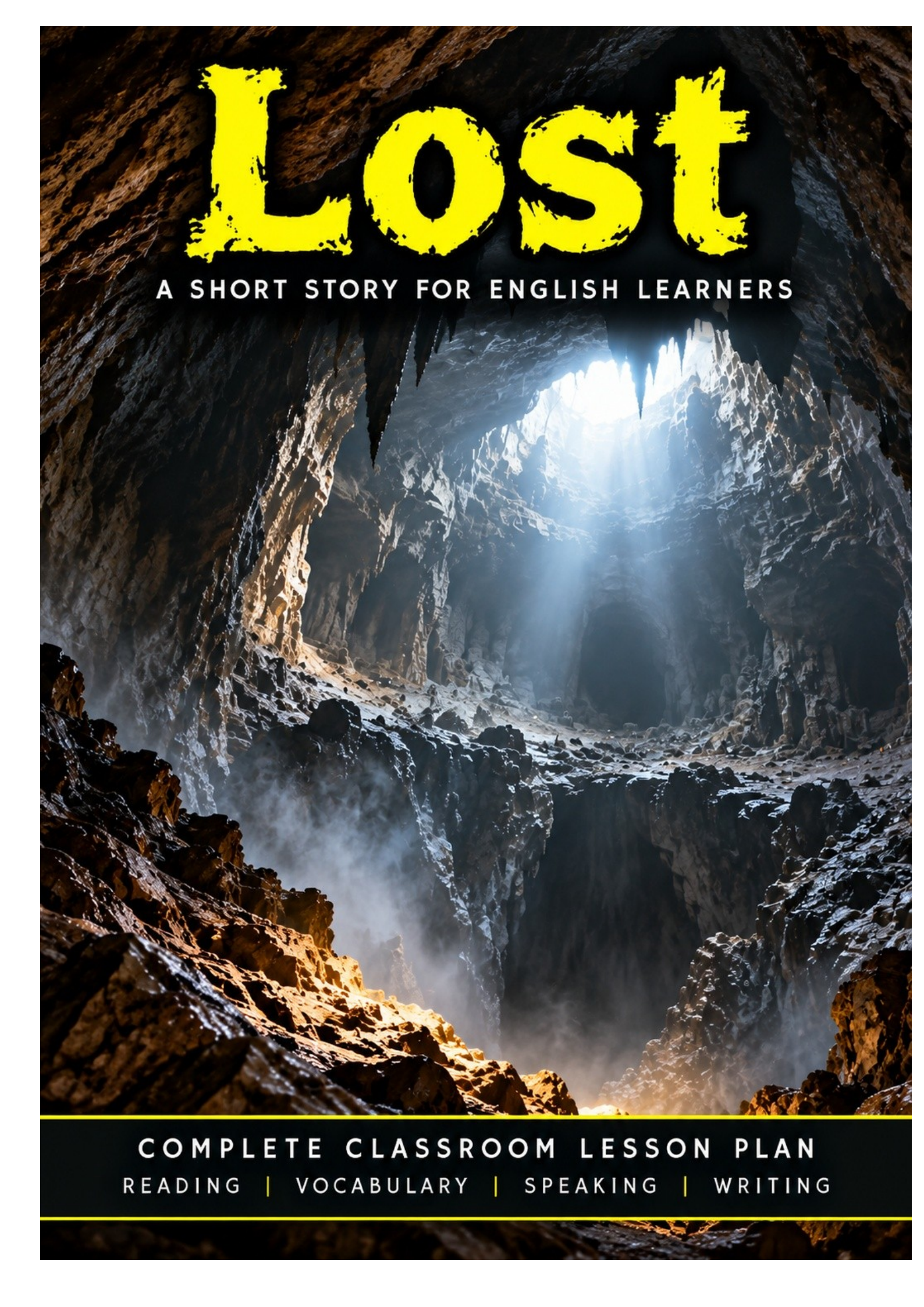




Lost

A SHORT STORY FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

COMPLETE CLASSROOM LESSON PLAN
READING | VOCABULARY | SPEAKING | WRITING

Lost — ManWrites Fantastic Tales

Lost — Full Lesson Plan

A Fantastic Tales short story and classroom lesson plan, courtesy of ManWrites.

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Introductory Questions

1. What might the title Lost suggest about the characters or setting?
2. Have you ever visited a cave, mine or other underground place? What did it feel like?
3. Why might someone enter a place they know is dangerous?
4. If a friend wanted to keep exploring but you wanted to leave, what would you say?
5. What should you take with you before exploring an unfamiliar place?

Lost

“I can’t see nothing.”

Carl felt in front of his body with his hands. He had never experienced dark like this before.

There was not one fragment of light anywhere. It made him open his eyes wider, as if that would access some hidden source of light and a beam of it would shine in front of him.

“Hang on, I’ve got the flashlight working again.”

Dan was the only one of them with a torch.

Carl had cursed himself for not bringing one from when they first broke into the mineshaft an hour ago. Since then, Dan had held on to the only source of light and the way out.

“Well, turn the stupid thing on then,” he said.

He stayed stock still, his sense of hearing ultra sharp but no sound at all apart from Dan fiddling with the torch in his hands.

Then a brilliant beam of light lit the space up.

Around them, the misshapen rock walls of the mine. A tunnel leading further into the darkness.

“It feels like there’s no air down here,” said Carl. “I can’t get my breath.”

“There is less air,” said Dan. “We’re quite a way down.”

He turned and walked forward. The tunnel was barely big enough for one person to walk. The top of the tunnel had sharp protruding rocks. Carl had already whacked his head on one or two of them.

“How much further?” he asked Dan.

“I don’t know,” said Dan. “But it can’t be too far.”

Carl had long regretted coming down the mine with his friend Dan.

I’ve found a way in, said Dan. We should go this Sunday.

At first, it sounded like a great idea. Going into some place that was forbidden.

But he now realised that he was more interested in the adulation he would receive in school, telling people about going to the mine, rather than the actual act itself.

They had been traipsing around this place for ages now and it had just turned into hard work.

Dan stopped just in front of Carl, and Carl bumped into the back of him.

It was the hundredth time he had done this. No warning of stopping.

Carl gritted his teeth to prevent himself from swearing out loud.

“Let’s go back,” he said. “I’m sick of this now.”

“We can’t go back,” said Dan. “We’ve come this far. We have to get to the end.”

“But that could be miles away. These mines go on and on for ages.”

He looked behind him but just saw pitch black.

Why had he agreed to come down here with Dan?

No other kids at school liked Dan. He was the odd one out.

The kid that all the other kids didn't seem to like. He wasn't bullied by anyone.

But the other kids didn't let him in their inner circles.

Dan shuffled ahead.

“Come on, let’s keep going.”

Carl followed, hoping that they would come to a dead end and have to turn back.

They moved forward for what felt like an hour or more. But in reality, just a few minutes.

Carl's body was covered in sweat and his back ached from walking hunched over along the tight funnel.

Then Dan let out a gasp.

“We’re here.”

The space opened up into a huge cavern.

Dan shone the light against the walls and above.

It was like being inside a huge cathedral. A vast space.

“What is this place?” said Carl. His voice echoed off the walls and reverberated back and forth.

“This is what I was talking about,” said Dan. “The miners found this big cave as they were digging years ago. I think some of them died.”

“What is it, though? Just a big hole in the ground?” said Carl.

“It’s a sinkhole.” Dan beamed the light around the huge space. “It fills with water every few weeks. Then it drains off somewhere.”

“Shine the light to the top,” said Carl.

Dan raised the beam to the top. But the torch was not bright enough to reach. It petered out into a greyish fog.

“When the miners found this, they hacked away at the wall and it filled the mine shaft with water. Everyone drowned, and they closed the mine.”

The other kids were right about Dan. He was weird.

Carl wondered what he did in his spare time.

He had told Carl that he liked to read about local history and especially about the mines.

“Let’s go down there,” said Dan. He shone the light down a ledge that led to a large crevice in the rock.

“It looks too dangerous,” said Carl. “We should go back.”

But Dan had already started moving forward.

Carl stayed put. He crouched down and found a piece of rock to sit on. It jabbed into his backside, but it was much more comfortable than walking through the tunnel.

He tried not to think of the long walk back.

He could just make out Dan scrambling down the ledge, the light bouncing off the walls of the huge cave, and the sound of small rocks and pebbles reverberating off the sides.

Carl saw the light beam as Dan shone it down the crevice of the rock.

“You should come down here,” he called back to Carl. He sounded like he was miles away. “This goes a long way down.”

“I don’t think you should go near there,” said Carl. “It could be dangerous.”

Dan shone the light from under his chin and made a ghost sound.

Oooooo-oooo....

Carl tried to laugh, but he just wanted to get out of this place now.

“I’m just going to get down this bit here,” said Dan.

“Dan. Come on. Let’s go back.” Carl tried to keep the tension out of his voice.

“Just a couple more minutes,” said Dan.

Carl watched as the light disappeared as Dan went lower down.

Then he heard a scuffling sound and a short cry, followed by the sound of small rocks and stones sliding down.

The light disappeared completely.

“Dan!” he called out.

The huge cave was pitch black.

“Dan, where are you?”

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Who are the two boys in the story?
2. Where are Carl and Dan?
3. What is their only source of light?
4. What happens to the torch at the beginning?
5. Why does Carl wish he had brought a torch?
6. How does Carl feel about the air and the narrow tunnel?
7. Why did Carl agree to go into the mine with Dan?
8. What does Carl want to do when they are still in the tunnel?
9. How do the other children at school treat Dan?
10. What do the boys find at the end of the tunnel?
11. What does Dan say the cavern is, and what happens there regularly?
12. What does Dan say happened when miners found the cavern?
13. Why does Dan know about the mine?
14. Where does Dan want to go after reaching the cavern?
15. Why does Carl stay on the ledge instead of following him?
16. What does Carl see as Dan climbs down?
17. What sounds does Carl hear just before the light disappears?

18. What happens to the light at the end of the story?

Lost — Story and Reading Comprehension Questions

Use this version to read the story in five sections. Discuss the questions after each section. The complete story appears earlier in this lesson plan.

Section 1

“I can’t see nothing.”

Carl felt in front of his body with his hands. He had never experienced dark like this before.

There was not one fragment of light anywhere. It made him open his eyes wider, as if that would access some hidden source of light and a beam of it would shine in front of him.

“Hang on, I’ve got the flashlight working again.”

Dan was the only one of them with a torch.

Carl had cursed himself for not bringing one from when they first broke into the mineshaft an hour ago. Since then, Dan had held on to the only source of light and the way out.

“Well, turn the stupid thing on then,” he said.

He stayed stock still, his sense of hearing ultra sharp but no sound at all apart from Dan fiddling with the torch in his hands.

Then a brilliant beam of light lit the space up.

Around them, the misshapen rock walls of the mine. A tunnel leading further into the darkness.

“It feels like there’s no air down here,” said Carl. “I can’t get my breath.”

“There is less air,” said Dan. “We’re quite a way down.”

He turned and walked forward. The tunnel was barely big enough for one person to walk. The top of the tunnel had sharp protruding rocks. Carl had already whacked his head on one or two of them.

“How much further?” he asked Dan.

“I don’t know,” said Dan. “But it can’t be too far.”

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Who are the two boys in the story?
2. Where are Carl and Dan?
3. What is their only source of light?
4. What happens to the torch at the beginning?

Section 2

Carl had long regretted coming down the mine with his friend Dan.

I've found a way in, said Dan. We should go this Sunday.

At first, it sounded like a great idea. Going into some place that was forbidden.

But he now realised that he was more interested in the adulation he would receive in school, telling people about going to the mine, rather than the actual act itself.

They had been traipsing around this place for ages now and it had just turned into hard work.

Dan stopped just in front of Carl, and Carl bumped into the back of him.

It was the hundredth time he had done this. No warning of stopping.

Carl gritted his teeth to prevent himself from swearing out loud.

"Let's go back," he said. "I'm sick of this now."

“We can’t go back,” said Dan. “We’ve come this far. We have to get to the end.”

“But that could be miles away. These mines go on and on for ages.”

He looked behind him but just saw pitch black.

Why had he agreed to come down here with Dan?

No other kids at school liked Dan. He was the odd one out.

Reading Comprehension Questions

5. Why does Carl wish he had brought a torch?
6. How does Carl feel about the air and the narrow tunnel?
7. Why did Carl agree to go into the mine with Dan?
8. What does Carl want to do when they are still in the tunnel?

Section 3

The kid that all the other kids didn't seem to like. He wasn't bullied by anyone.

But the other kids didn't let him in their inner circles.

Dan shuffled ahead.

“Come on, let’s keep going.”

Carl followed, hoping that they would come to a dead end and have to turn back.

They moved forward for what felt like an hour or more. But in reality, just a few minutes.

Carl's body was covered in sweat and his back ached from walking hunched over along the tight funnel.

Then Dan let out a gasp.

“We’re here.”

The space opened up into a huge cavern.

Dan shone the light against the walls and above.

It was like being inside a huge cathedral. A vast space.

“What is this place?” said Carl. His voice echoed off the walls and reverberated back and forth.

“This is what I was talking about,” said Dan. “The miners found this big cave as they were digging years ago. I think some of them died.”

Reading Comprehension Questions

9. How do the other children at school treat Dan?

10. What do the boys find at the end of the tunnel?

11. What does Dan say the cavern is, and what happens there regularly?

12. What does Dan say happened when miners found the cavern?

Section 4

“What is it, though? Just a big hole in the ground?” said Carl.

“It’s a sinkhole.” Dan beamed the light around the huge space.

“It fills with water every few weeks. Then it drains off somewhere.”

“Shine the light to the top,” said Carl.

Dan raised the beam to the top. But the torch was not bright enough to reach. It petered out into a greyish fog.

“When the miners found this, they hacked away at the wall and it filled the mine shaft with water. Everyone drowned, and they closed the mine.”

The other kids were right about Dan. He was weird.

Carl wondered what he did in his spare time.

He had told Carl that he liked to read about local history and especially about the mines.

“Let’s go down there,” said Dan. He shone the light down a ledge that led to a large crevice in the rock.

“It looks too dangerous,” said Carl. “We should go back.”

But Dan had already started moving forward.

Carl stayed put. He crouched down and found a piece of rock to sit on. It jabbed into his backside, but it was much more comfortable than walking through the tunnel.

He tried not to think of the long walk back.

He could just make out Dan scrambling down the ledge, the light bouncing off the walls of the huge cave, and the sound of small rocks and pebbles reverberating off the sides.

Carl saw the light beam as Dan shone it down the crevice of the rock.

Reading Comprehension Questions

13. Why does Dan know about the mine?

14. Where does Dan want to go after reaching the cavern?

15. Why does Carl stay on the ledge instead of following him?

Section 5

“You should come down here,” he called back to Carl. He sounded like he was miles away. “This goes a long way down.”

“I don’t think you should go near there,” said Carl. “It could be dangerous.”

Dan shone the light from under his chin and made a ghost sound.

Oooooo-oooo....

Carl tried to laugh, but he just wanted to get out of this place now.

“I’m just going to get down this bit here,” said Dan.

“Dan. Come on. Let’s go back.” Carl tried to keep the tension out of his voice.

“Just a couple more minutes,” said Dan.

Carl watched as the light disappeared as Dan went lower down.

Then he heard a scuffling sound and a short cry, followed by the sound of small rocks and stones sliding down.

The light disappeared completely.

“Dan!” he called out.

The huge cave was pitch black.

“Dan, where are you?”

Reading Comprehension Questions

16. What does Carl see as Dan climbs down?

17. What sounds does Carl hear just before the light disappears?

18. What happens to the light at the end of the story?

Essential Vocabulary

These 45 words and phrases help students understand and discuss the story. Ask them to check meanings in context, then use selected items in their own sentences.

fragment	beam of light	flashlight
torch	mineshaft	stock still
fiddle with	misshapen	tunnel
protruding	whack	regret
forbidden	adulation	traipse
grit your teeth	pitch black	odd one out
inner circle	shuffle	dead end
hunched over	gasp	cavern
cathedral	vast	echo
reverberate	miner	sinkhole
drain	peter out	hack away at
drown	ledge	crevice
crouch down	jab	scramble
tension	scuffling	curse yourself
make out	barely	shone

Vocabulary notebook

Follow the steps below to help you learn and remember new words and phrases more effectively:

1. Write each new word or phrase in your vocabulary notebook.
2. Look up the meaning of each word in your dictionary. Write a clear and simple definition next to the word.
3. Create your own sentence using the word or phrase correctly. Try to make the sentence meaningful and connected to your own life or experiences.

Examples

Cavern – *a large natural space underground.*

Example sentence: *We followed the guide into a vast cavern beneath the hillside.*

Crevice – *a narrow opening or crack in rock.*

Example sentence: *A small plant was growing in a crevice in the rock.*

Why do this?

Doing this regularly will help you improve all areas of your English — reading, writing, speaking, and listening. By writing definitions and making your own examples, you are actively using the language, which helps it stick in your memory.

Vocabulary Practice Exercise

Match each word or phrase (1–10) with its meaning (a–j).

1. mineshaft _____
2. pitch black _____
3. adulation _____
4. traipse _____
5. cavern _____
6. sinkhole _____
7. ledge _____
8. crevice _____
9. peter out _____
10. scramble _____

- a. a narrow opening or crack in rock
- b. a large natural space underground
- c. praise and admiration
- d. move quickly and awkwardly, often while climbing
- e. a deep vertical passage into a mine
- f. become weaker and gradually disappear
- g. completely dark

h. a narrow shelf of rock

i. a hole in the ground formed when the surface collapses

j. walk a long way slowly and wearily

True or False

Write True or False. Correct every false statement using details from the story.

1. Carl brings the only torch.
2. The boys have entered the mine without permission.
3. Carl hopes to impress other children at school.
4. Dan is popular with the other children.
5. The tunnel leads to a huge cavern.
6. Dan says the sinkhole sometimes fills with water.
7. Carl climbs down the ledge with Dan.
8. Dan uses the torch to make a ghost sound.
9. Carl sees Dan fall into the crevice.
10. The story ends with Carl calling for Dan in darkness.

What is the Correct Synonym?

Circle the word closest in meaning to the bold word or phrase.

1. fragment: a) piece b) wall c) shadow d) tunnel
2. stock still: a) careless b) motionless c) excited d) hidden
3. forbidden: a) forgotten b) popular c) not allowed d) distant
4. adulation: a) punishment b) silence c) suspicion d) admiration
5. vast: a) enormous b) narrow c) shallow d) ordinary
6. reverberated: a) vanished b) echoed c) shone d) broke
7. crevice: a) ladder b) roof c) crack d) path
8. scrambling: a) walking calmly b) falling asleep c) swimming d) climbing awkwardly
9. barely: a) only just b) frequently c) completely d) loudly
10. scuffling: a) singing b) shuffling or struggling c) shining d) laughing

What is the Correct Antonym?

Circle the word with the opposite meaning.

1. brilliant: a) dim b) bright c) clear d) strong
2. narrow: a) tight b) wide c) small d) low
3. forbidden: a) hidden b) dangerous c) permitted d) distant
4. regretted: a) remembered b) avoided c) feared d) welcomed
5. vast: a) tiny b) huge c) open d) deep
6. comfortable: a) relaxed b) uncomfortable c) safe d) soft
7. dangerous: a) steep b) dark c) safe d) unfamiliar
8. lower: a) deeper b) further c) closer d) higher
9. disappeared: a) appeared b) faded c) fell d) echoed
10. silent: a) empty b) noisy c) dim d) still

Words and Meanings

Explain these expressions in the context of the story. Then discuss which ones you could use in another situation.

1. I can't see nothing
2. held on to the only source of light
3. stock still
4. gritted his teeth
5. the odd one out
6. come to a dead end
7. petered out
8. stayed put
9. make out Dan
10. keep the tension out of his voice

Gap Fill Exercise

Use each word once. The word bank is jumbled.

Word bank: *crevice, adulation, torch, cavern, mineshaft, ledge, pitch black, reverberated, sinkhole, scuffling*

1. Dan carries the only _____.
2. The boys enter the old _____.
3. Carl hopes for _____ from the children at school.
4. Without the light, the tunnel is _____.
5. The tunnel opens into a huge _____.
6. Dan says the underground space is a _____.
7. Carl sits on a rock near the _____.
8. Dan shines the light into a deep _____.
9. Their voices _____ around the large space.
10. Carl hears _____ before the light goes out.

Discussion Questions

1. What does Carl want from the visit, and how does that change once he is inside?
2. What do we learn about Dan from his actions and his interest in local history?
3. Why does Carl think of Dan as the odd one out? Is his judgement fair?
4. At what point should the boys have turned back? Explain your choice.
5. What might have happened to Dan at the end? What evidence supports your idea?
6. What could Carl do next without putting himself in greater danger?
7. How does the darkness affect the mood of the story? Give two examples.
8. Which is more dangerous here: the mine itself or the boys' decisions?
9. Should a local authority block access to a dangerous historical site? Why?
10. Write a different final sentence. How does it change the reader's expectations?

Role Play — At the Mine Entrance

In pairs, act out a conversation before Carl and Dan enter the mine. One student plays Dan; the other plays Carl. Aim for two to three minutes.

Dan: You have discovered a way in and want to see the cavern. Explain what you know about it, why it interests you and what you think you need to take.

Carl: You like the idea of telling classmates about the trip, but you are worried about the darkness and the risk of getting lost. Ask practical questions and decide whether to go.

Prepare: Agree where the entrance is, what each boy has brought and what would make them turn back. Use at least three expressions from the vocabulary list. End with a clear decision. After acting, switch roles and try a different outcome.

Debate — Should Dangerous Sites Be Closed?

A local council has discovered that young people can enter an abandoned mine. Should it close every entrance or allow guided visits?

Team A — Close it: Prepare arguments about falls, flooding, rescue risks and the council's duty to protect visitors. Suggest how to enforce the closure.

Team B — Guided access: Prepare arguments about local history, education and supervised exploration. Explain the safety rules and who would pay for them.

Give teams five minutes to prepare. Each team presents an opening statement, responds to the other side and gives a short closing statement. A chairperson keeps time and invites questions. For a smaller class, discuss the two options in pairs before voting.

Writing — The Next Scene

Write 250–350 words continuing the story from Carl’s final call to Dan. Keep the same close third-person viewpoint and the tense used in the story.

Plan what Carl can hear, whether the torch returns, what he decides to do and how he tries to find help. Make the geography of the cavern clear. You may leave Dan’s fate uncertain, but give the scene a satisfying final image or sound.

After writing, check that the sequence of actions is easy to follow. Read the scene aloud and revise any sentence that sounds unnatural.

Reading Comprehension Questions —

Answers

1. Carl and Dan are the two boys.
2. They are inside an old mine, deep underground.
3. Dan has the only torch or flashlight.
4. It stops working briefly, leaving them in complete darkness, before Dan gets it working again.
5. Carl knows that Dan controls their only light and regrets not bringing his own.
6. He feels short of breath and finds the cramped, rocky tunnel uncomfortable.
7. He wanted to gain admiration at school by saying he had visited the forbidden mine.
8. He wants to turn back, but Dan insists on continuing.
9. They leave Dan out of their social groups, although the story says they do not bully him.
10. They reach an enormous cavern that Carl compares to a cathedral.
11. Dan calls it a sinkhole and says it fills with water every few weeks before draining away.
12. Dan says the miners broke through to the space, water flooded the mine and everyone drowned. This is Dan's account, not independently confirmed by the story.

13. He reads about local history, especially the mines.
14. He wants to go down the ledge towards a crevice.
15. Carl thinks it is too dangerous and stays where he is.
16. He sees Dan climbing down and the light moving across the cave walls.
17. He hears scuffling, a short cry and stones sliding down.
18. The light vanishes, and Carl is left calling for Dan in complete darkness.

Vocabulary Practice Exercise — Answers

1. e — a deep vertical passage into a mine
2. g — completely dark
3. c — praise and admiration
4. j — walk a long way slowly and wearily
5. b — a large natural space underground
6. i — a hole in the ground formed when the surface collapses
7. h — a narrow shelf of rock
8. a — a narrow opening or crack in rock
9. f — become weaker and gradually disappear
10. d — move quickly and awkwardly, often while climbing

True or False — Answers

1. False. Dan brings the only torch.
2. True. They break into the mineshaft.
3. True. Carl expects admiration at school.
4. False. The other children leave Dan out of their groups.
5. True. The tunnel opens into a huge cavern.
6. True. Dan says it fills with water every few weeks.
7. False. Carl stays above while Dan climbs down.
8. True. He shines the torch under his chin and makes a ghost sound.
9. False. Carl hears a cry and stones sliding but does not see exactly what happens to Dan.
10. True. Carl calls for Dan after the light vanishes.

What is the Correct Synonym? — Answers

1. fragment = piece (a)
2. stock still = motionless (b)
3. forbidden = not allowed (c)
4. adulation = admiration (d)
5. vast = enormous (a)
6. reverberated = echoed (b)
7. crevice = crack (c)
8. scrambling = climbing awkwardly (d)
9. barely = only just (a)
10. scuffling = shuffling or struggling (b)

What is the Correct Antonym? — Answers

1. brilliant ↔ dim (a)
2. narrow ↔ wide (b)
3. forbidden ↔ permitted (c)
4. regretted ↔ welcomed (d)
5. vast ↔ tiny (a)
6. comfortable ↔ uncomfortable (b)
7. dangerous ↔ safe (c)
8. lower ↔ higher (d)
9. disappeared ↔ appeared (a)
10. silent ↔ noisy (b)

Words and Meanings — Answers

1. Carl means that he cannot see anything. The double negative is part of his spoken voice.
2. Dan keeps possession of the only light they have.
3. Carl stands without moving.
4. Carl presses his teeth together, trying not to swear.
5. Dan is excluded or different from the other children.
6. They might reach a place where the tunnel cannot continue.
7. The light grows weaker and fades before reaching the top.
8. Carl remains where he is.
9. Carl can see Dan only with difficulty.
10. Carl tries not to let worry show in his voice.

Gap Fill Exercise — Answers

1. torch
2. mineshaft
3. adulation
4. pitch black
5. cavern
6. sinkhole
7. ledge
8. crevice
9. reverberated
10. scuffling

Credits

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