

The background image is a high-contrast photograph of a cave interior. In the upper left, a bright light from an opening at the end of the cave illuminates the rocky walls and floor, creating a strong silhouette effect. The cave floor is uneven and rocky. In the foreground, a deep, dark chasm or pit is visible, with its edges covered in moss and thick, hanging roots that dangle down into the darkness. The overall atmosphere is mysterious and somewhat ominous.

The Hole

A Short Story Lesson Plan

The Hole — Full Lesson Plan

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

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Introductory Questions

1. Are there any caves near where you live? Have you visited them?
2. What might make a cave exciting or frightening?
3. Have you ever felt pressured to do something you did not want to do?
4. Is refusing a dangerous dare a sign of courage? Why or why not?

The Hole

“It looks really deep.”

Billy kept his hands on the wall of the cave behind him. Jake peered over the edge of the hole.

It spread from one side of the cave to the other. The opening of the black hole like an inky lake before them.

From where Billy stood, he could not see the bottom of it.

The sides of the hole disappeared into the darkness. Vines crept down the sides of the cave and into the hole. Slithering over and between each other like black snakes.

“Kevin Anderson said it’s really deep,” said Billy. “Him and his brother —”

“Kevin Anderson says a lot of things,” said Jake.

And that was the end of that conversation.

The two boys stared into the hole. Billy stayed in his safe vantage point, careful not to get too close.

But Jake stood right near the edge.

The vines glistened with dew and looked slippery.

One wrong foot on one of the vines and Billy imagined Jake tumbling into the deep black abyss.

And what was at the bottom?

Not even Kevin Anderson could answer that question.

Kevin was the first to discover the big hole. Inside a cave, underneath a high ridge in Blake's Wood.

By lunchtime, the big black hole was the major topic of conversation in the entire school.

Jake got down on his hands and knees and peered over the edge of the hole.

"What're you doing?" said Billy.

"Just getting a better look," said Jake.

Billy stared back towards the entrance of the cave. A small triangle of light appeared too far away.

"Maybe we should get going —"

"I think I can see something down there," said Jake.

Billy turned to see what his friend could see. Jake was now lying on the ground of the long corridor. His head over the edge of the hole, facing down.

"Jake, let's get out of here," said Billy.

“In a bit. Look at this.”

Billy clung to the rock of the cave walls. There was a strange feeling about the hole. Like a magnet pulling at his body.

Jake turned his head to face Billy.

“Get down here and take a look. There’s something down there.”

Billy wanted to yell out no. He wanted to just turn and walk away. Run out of the dirty old cave. Out into the warmth of the day and hear birds chirping in the trees.

Some other kids were down by the river. Enjoying the first days of summer and outside in the sun.

Jake’s eyes stayed on Billy.

Billy knew that if he chickened out, if he said no, the word would be all over school by lunchtime on Monday. It was the universal law of the playground. And no one broke it.

He crouched down on all fours and spread his feet back behind him, making sure not to get too close over the edge of the dark space in front of him.

“Look,” said Jake in a whisper.

Billy focused his eyes on the great expanse of blackness that fell below. He couldn't see anything. Just a great shimmering black surface in front of him.

Then something — he wasn't sure what.

A flicker. Like a tiny fragment of light reflecting off something.

"See it?" gasped Jake. He nudged Billy with his elbow, which made Billy jump.

"No," said Billy, lying. "I didn't see anything."

He glanced at Jake and saw a look in his eyes, a smile of mesmerised glee on his face.

Billy edged slightly away from Jake.

A smell rose up from the hole. An unearthly smell. Something that smelled like it was buried deep underground. Something forgotten years ago. Something that had not seen the light of day for a very long time.

Not an altogether unpleasant smell, but not something Billy wanted in his face for too long.

Jake's eyes stared unblinking into the dark mass below them.

His lips parted slightly and his breath shallow.

He stared into the hole, transfixed by it.

This didn't seem like just a dare to Jake anymore. It seemed like something much more.

Their initial plan had been simple...

Go down to Blake's Wood, sneak into the cave underneath the ridge, take a look at the big hole.

Now Jake had a look on his face that said he wanted much more than that.

"Let's go down and have a look," he said.

Billy heard every word. Clear like crystal. There were just the two of them there.

But he blinked and stared back at Jake like he had understood nothing he said.

Jake turned to face him. His eyes looked menacing now. Like something had a grip on him.

"Okay?"

Billy shook his head and swallowed away the dryness in his throat.

"No," he said.

"No?"

Billy shuffled further away from Jake.

“I’m not going down there,” he said. “It’s too dangerous. And no one knows we’re here. If we get trapped down there —” Jake curled his top lip in disgust and turned away.

“Well, I’m going down there,” he said.

He pushed himself into an upright position and swivelled his legs around. Both his feet hung over the dark hole.

Jake eased himself closer to the edge of the hole and leaned over. He cleared his throat and spat down into the darkness.

“It can’t be that deep,” he said. “Just a few metres.”

“Jake, let’s get out of here,” said Billy. “We can come back another time. With a rope. Or a ladder.”

Jake glanced over at Billy.

“Yeah, why not Billy? We’ll bring your dad’s ladder. And maybe your mum can pack us some sandwiches. We can have a picnic at the bottom.”

He let out a single laugh at Billy.

Billy no longer cared about being ridiculed at school on Monday. It no longer seemed important to follow the rules anymore.

This was stupid. This was dangerous.

“Well, looks like it’s just me,” said Jake.

He pulled himself closer to the very edge of the hole.

Billy reached out a hand. “Jake, stop it. Let’s get out of here. I don’t want you to do this.”

“What you want and what I want are two different things,” said Jake.

And without another sound, he pulled his weight off the edge of the hole and leapt into the blackness.

Billy jerked his hand back. He watched as Jake’s body disappeared from view into the darkness.

Watched as the top of his head, his crop of short blonde hair just cut out of view like he ceased to exist.

“Jake,” said Billy in a loud whisper. “Jake. Are you okay?”

He couldn’t hear a sound.

“Jake!”

He edged forward and stared down into the hole.

Not a single sound came up from the abyss. Not one fragment of light.

It was like Jake had never existed at all.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Who are the two boys in the cave?
2. Where does Billy keep his hands at the beginning?
3. How wide is the opening of the hole?
4. Can Billy see the bottom of the hole?
5. What makes the vines look slippery?
6. Who says that the hole is really deep?
7. Who first discovered the big hole?
8. Where is the cave located?
9. How quickly does news of the hole spread through the school?
10. What does Jake do to get a better look?
11. What can Billy see at the cave entrance?
12. Which boy says he can see something in the hole?
13. What strange feeling does Billy have near the hole?
14. What does Jake ask Billy to do?
15. What does Billy want to do instead?
16. Where are some of the other children spending the day?
17. Why is Billy afraid to refuse Jake?

18. How does Billy position himself near the hole?
19. What does Billy briefly see in the darkness?
20. What makes Billy jump?
21. Does Billy admit seeing the flicker?
22. What expression does Billy see on Jake's face?
23. What does the smell from the hole remind Billy of?
24. Does Billy describe the smell as completely unpleasant?
25. How are Jake's eyes and breathing described?
26. Does Billy still think this is just a dare to Jake?
27. What was the boys' original plan?
28. What does Jake now suggest?
29. How do Jake's eyes look when he turns towards Billy?
30. What answer does Billy give Jake?
31. What reasons does Billy give for refusing?
32. What does Jake do with his legs?
33. How deep does Jake claim the hole is?
34. What does Billy suggest they bring if they return?
35. How does Jake respond to Billy's suggestion?
36. Does Billy still care about being ridiculed at school?
37. How does Billy try to stop Jake?

- 38. What does Jake say about their different wishes?
- 39. What does Jake do next?
- 40. What happens to Jake's body as Billy watches?
- 41. What does Billy call out to Jake?
- 42. What can Billy hear from the hole?
- 43. What can Billy see when he looks down again?

The Hole — Story and Reading Comprehension Questions

This version of the story is divided into shorter sections, with reading comprehension questions provided after each one. It may be more suitable for certain class types or learner levels, depending on their reading ability and pace.

Teachers: *Model answers for all questions are provided at the end of the lesson plan for your reference.*

Section 1

“It looks really deep.”

Billy kept his hands on the wall of the cave behind him. Jake peered over the edge of the hole.

It spread from one side of the cave to the other. The opening of the black hole like an inky lake before them.

From where Billy stood, he could not see the bottom of it. The sides of the hole disappeared into the darkness. Vines crept down the sides of the cave and into the hole. Slithering over and between each other like black snakes.

“Kevin Anderson said it’s really deep,” said Billy. “Him and his brother —”

“Kevin Anderson says a lot of things,” said Jake.

And that was the end of that conversation.

The two boys stared into the hole. Billy stayed in his safe vantage point, careful not to get too close.

But Jake stood right near the edge.

The vines glistened with dew and looked slippery.

One wrong foot on one of the vines and Billy imagined Jake tumbling into the deep black abyss.

And what was at the bottom?

Not even Kevin Anderson could answer that question.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Who are the two boys in the cave?
2. Where does Billy keep his hands at the beginning?
3. How wide is the opening of the hole?
4. Can Billy see the bottom of the hole?
5. What makes the vines look slippery?
6. Who says that the hole is really deep?

Section 2

Kevin was the first to discover the big hole. Inside a cave, underneath a high ridge in Blake's Wood.

By lunchtime, the big black hole was the major topic of conversation in the entire school.

Jake got down on his hands and knees and peered over the edge of the hole.

"What're you doing?" said Billy.

"Just getting a better look," said Jake.

Billy stared back towards the entrance of the cave. A small triangle of light appeared too far away.

"Maybe we should get going —"

"I think I can see something down there," said Jake.

Billy turned to see what his friend could see. Jake was now lying on the ground of the long corridor. His head over the edge of the hole, facing down.

“Jake, let’s get out of here,” said Billy.

“In a bit. Look at this.”

Reading Comprehension Questions

7. Who first discovered the big hole?
8. Where is the cave located?
9. How quickly does news of the hole spread through the school?
10. What does Jake do to get a better look?
11. What can Billy see at the cave entrance?
12. Which boy says he can see something in the hole?

Section 3

Billy clung to the rock of the cave walls. There was a strange feeling about the hole. Like a magnet pulling at his body.

Jake turned his head to face Billy.

“Get down here and take a look. There’s something down there.”

Billy wanted to yell out no. He wanted to just turn and walk away. Run out of the dirty old cave. Out into the warmth of the day and hear birds chirping in the trees.

Some other kids were down by the river. Enjoying the first days of summer and outside in the sun.

Jake’s eyes stayed on Billy.

Billy knew that if he chickened out, if he said no, the word would be all over school by lunchtime on Monday. It was the universal law of the playground. And no one broke it.

Reading Comprehension Questions

13. What strange feeling does Billy have near the hole?
14. What does Jake ask Billy to do?
15. What does Billy want to do instead?
16. Where are some of the other children spending the day?
17. Why is Billy afraid to refuse Jake?

Section 4

He crouched down on all fours and spread his feet back behind him, making sure not to get too close over the edge of the dark space in front of him.

“Look,” said Jake in a whisper.

Billy focused his eyes on the great expanse of blackness that fell below. He couldn’t see anything. Just a great shimmering black surface in front of him.

Then something — he wasn’t sure what.

A flicker. Like a tiny fragment of light reflecting off something.

“See it?” gasped Jake. He nudged Billy with his elbow, which made Billy jump.

“No,” said Billy, lying. “I didn’t see anything.”

He glanced at Jake and saw a look in his eyes, a smile of mesmerised glee on his face.

Billy edged slightly away from Jake.

Reading Comprehension Questions

18. How does Billy position himself near the hole?

19. What does Billy briefly see in the darkness?

20. What makes Billy jump?

21. Does Billy admit seeing the flicker?

22. What expression does Billy see on Jake's face?

Section 5

A smell rose up from the hole. An unearthly smell. Something that smelled like it was buried deep underground. Something forgotten years ago. Something that had not seen the light of day for a very long time.

Not an altogether unpleasant smell, but not something Billy wanted in his face for too long.

Jake's eyes stared unblinking into the dark mass below them.

His lips parted slightly and his breath shallow.

He stared into the hole, transfixed by it.

This didn't seem like just a dare to Jake anymore. It seemed like something much more.

Reading Comprehension Questions

- 23. What does the smell from the hole remind Billy of?
- 24. Does Billy describe the smell as completely unpleasant?
- 25. How are Jake's eyes and breathing described?
- 26. Does Billy still think this is just a dare to Jake?

Section 6

Their initial plan had been simple...

Go down to Blake's Wood, sneak into the cave underneath the ridge, take a look at the big hole.

Now Jake had a look on his face that said he wanted much more than that.

"Let's go down and have a look," he said.

Billy heard every word. Clear like crystal. There were just the two of them there.

But he blinked and stared back at Jake like he had understood nothing he said.

Jake turned to face him. His eyes looked menacing now. Like something had a grip on him.

"Okay?"

Billy shook his head and swallowed away the dryness in his throat.

“No,” he said.

“No?”

Billy shuffled further away from Jake.

“I’m not going down there,” he said. “It’s too dangerous. And no one knows we’re here. If we get trapped down there —”

Reading Comprehension Questions

27. What was the boys’ original plan?

28. What does Jake now suggest?

29. How do Jake’s eyes look when he turns towards Billy?

30. What answer does Billy give Jake?

31. What reasons does Billy give for refusing?

Section 7

Jake curled his top lip in disgust and turned away.

“Well, I’m going down there,” he said.

He pushed himself into an upright position and swivelled his legs around. Both his feet hung over the dark hole.

Jake eased himself closer to the edge of the hole and leaned over. He cleared his throat and spat down into the darkness.

“It can’t be that deep,” he said. “Just a few metres.”

“Jake, let’s get out of here,” said Billy. “We can come back another time. With a rope. Or a ladder.”

Jake glanced over at Billy.

“Yeah, why not Billy? We’ll bring your dad’s ladder. And maybe your mum can pack us some sandwiches. We can have a picnic at the bottom.”

He let out a single laugh at Billy.

Reading Comprehension Questions

32. What does Jake do with his legs?

33. How deep does Jake claim the hole is?

34. What does Billy suggest they bring if they return?

35. How does Jake respond to Billy’s suggestion?

Section 8

Billy no longer cared about being ridiculed at school on Monday. It no longer seemed important to follow the rules anymore.

This was stupid. This was dangerous.

“Well, looks like it’s just me,” said Jake.

He pulled himself closer to the very edge of the hole.

Billy reached out a hand. “Jake, stop it. Let’s get out of here. I don’t want you to do this.”

“What you want and what I want are two different things,” said Jake.

And without another sound, he pulled his weight off the edge of the hole and leapt into the blackness.

Reading Comprehension Questions

36. Does Billy still care about being ridiculed at school?

37. How does Billy try to stop Jake?

38. What does Jake say about their different wishes?

39. What does Jake do next?

Section 9

Billy jerked his hand back. He watched as Jake's body disappeared from view into the darkness.

Watched as the top of his head, his crop of short blonde hair just cut out of view like he ceased to exist.

"Jake," said Billy in a loud whisper. "Jake. Are you okay?"

He couldn't hear a sound.

"Jake!"

He edged forward and stared down into the hole.

Not a single sound came up from the abyss. Not one fragment of light.

It was like Jake had never existed at all.

Reading Comprehension Questions

40. What happens to Jake's body as Billy watches?

41. What does Billy call out to Jake?

42. What can Billy hear from the hole?

43. What can Billy see when he looks down again?

Essential Vocabulary

peered	inky	vines
crept	slithering	vantage point
glistened	dew	tumbling
abyss	ridge	corridor
clung	chirping	chickened out
universal	crouched	on all fours
expanse	shimmering	flicker
fragment	nudged	mesmerised
glee	edged	unearthly
unpleasant	unblinking	shallow
transfixed	dare	initial
sneak	menacing	grip
shuffled	trapped	disgust
swivelled	ridiculed	leapt
jerked	crop	ceased to exist

Vocabulary Practice

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

Abyss – *a very deep space that seems to have no bottom.*

Example sentence: *From the bridge, the dark valley looked like an abyss.*

Menacing – *seeming threatening or dangerous.*

Example sentence: *The stranger gave us a menacing look, so we moved away.*

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 (1–15) with its correct definition (a–o).

Word	Write letter here →
1. peered	
2. vines	
3. glistened	
4. dew	
5. abyss	
6. ridge	
7. clung	
8. crouched	
9. flicker	
10. nudged	
11. glee	
12. unearthly	
13. transfixed	
14. menacing	
15. ridiculed	

Definitions

a. a very deep, seemingly bottomless space

- b. a long, narrow raised part of the land
- c. held tightly to something
- d. bent down close to the ground with the knees bent
- e. a brief, unsteady flash of light
- f. pushed someone gently, often with an elbow
- g. great happiness or excitement
- h. strange, as if not belonging to this world
- i. so fascinated that you cannot look away
- j. seeming threatening or dangerous
- k. made fun of someone in an unkind way
- l. looked closely or carefully, especially when it was hard to see
- m. plants with long stems that climb or trail
- n. shone with small flashes of reflected light
- o. small drops of water that form on surfaces overnight

True or False

Read the statements below and decide if they are True or False. You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan.

If the statement is false, correct it and make it true.

1. Billy stands closer to the hole than Jake does.
2. The boys can clearly see the bottom of the hole.
3. Kevin Anderson first discovered the big hole.
4. Some other children are enjoying the sunshine down by the river.
5. Billy approaches the edge partly because he fears being laughed at at school.
6. Billy honestly tells Jake that he has seen a flicker of light.
7. Jake becomes fascinated by the hole.
8. Billy agrees to climb down into the hole with Jake.
9. Jake accepts Billy's suggestion to return with a rope or ladder.
10. The story ends without explaining what happens to Jake.

What is the Correct Synonym?

A synonym is a word of similar meaning. Match each word from the story with its synonym from the box below.

Word Box: *delight, stopped, looked closely, spellbound, first, jumped, held tightly, piece, mocked, threatening*

1. peered → _____
2. clung → _____
3. glee → _____
4. initial → _____
5. menacing → _____
6. ridiculed → _____
7. leapt → _____
8. fragment → _____
9. transfixed → _____
10. ceased → _____

What is the Correct Antonym?

An antonym is a word of opposite meaning. Match each word from the story with its antonym from the box below.

Word Box: *pleasant, further, white, huge, same, shallow, remembered, grippy, dangerous, cold*

1. deep → _____
2. black → _____
3. safe → _____
4. slippery → _____
5. warmth → _____
6. tiny → _____
7. unpleasant → _____
8. forgotten → _____
9. closer → _____
10. different → _____

Words and Meanings

Match each expression from the story (1–10) with its correct meaning (a–j).

1. vantage point
2. chickened out
3. on all fours
4. the light of day
5. clear like crystal
6. had a grip on him
7. curled his top lip
8. let out a single laugh
9. disappeared from view
10. ceased to exist

Meanings

- a. became too frightened to do something
- b. stopped being visible
- c. as clearly as possible
- d. a place that gives a good view of something
- e. stopped existing or being present
- f. supported by both hands and both knees
- g. daylight, used here to suggest the outside world
- h. gave one short laugh
- i. seemed to control him strongly
- j. raised his upper lip to show disgust

Gap Fill Exercise

Look at the word bank below. Complete each sentence with the correct word. Not all words will be used.

Word Box: *nudged, shallow, ridge, peered, leapt, dew, swivelled, clung, menacing, flicker, crouched, ridiculed*

1. She _____ through the dusty window to see what was inside.
2. Small drops of _____ covered the grass early in the morning.
3. The frightened child _____ to his mother's hand.
4. He _____ behind the low wall so that nobody could see him.
5. A brief _____ of light appeared beneath the closed door.
6. My friend _____ me with her elbow to get my attention.
7. The other children _____ him for being afraid, which was unkind.

8. We crossed the stream where the water was _____
enough to reach only our ankles.
9. She _____ her chair around to face the door.
10. The cat _____ from the wall onto the garden shed.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do Billy and Jake visit the cave? What attracts them to the hole?
2. How does the writer show Billy's fear without simply saying that he is frightened?
3. What differences do you notice between Billy and Jake?
4. Why does Billy move closer to the edge even though he wants to leave?
5. What does Billy mean by the "universal law of the playground"?
6. Is this playground rule familiar to you? Can you give a different example?
7. Why does Billy lie about seeing the flicker of light?
8. What might the flicker be? Give a natural explanation and a supernatural explanation.
9. What effect does the smell have on the atmosphere of the story?
10. Why might the smell be disturbing even though it is not entirely unpleasant?

11. When does Jake's behaviour begin to seem strange?
12. Do you think the hole influences Jake, or is he simply determined to prove himself?
13. What evidence supports your interpretation?
14. Why does Jake mock the suggestion of a rope or ladder?
15. At what point does Billy stop caring about being ridiculed?
16. Does Billy show courage when he says no? Explain your answer.
17. What could Billy say to Jake to challenge him without insulting him?
18. Should a good friend respect your refusal to do something dangerous?
19. Why might people take greater risks when their friends are watching?
20. How can schools make it easier for pupils to refuse dangerous dares?
21. Have you ever changed your mind because of pressure from other people? You may use an imaginary example.

22. What would you do if you were Billy at the end of the story?
23. Who should Billy tell about Jake's disappearance, and what should he explain?
24. What might stop Billy from telling the truth?
25. What do you think happens to Jake? What clues support your idea?
26. Why does the writer leave Jake's fate unexplained?
27. Does the final sentence suggest death, another world or something else?
28. Would explaining the mystery make the ending stronger or weaker?
29. Have you visited a cave? What did you notice about the light, sounds and temperature?
30. What appeals to you about caving, and what would concern you?
31. How does the contrast between the sunny river and the dark cave affect the story?
32. What do you think the story suggests about friendship, fear and courage?

Role Play: Telling the Truth

This is a role play activity.

There are two characters in the role play.

1. Billy
2. Kevin Anderson

The Situation

On Monday morning, Billy goes to school. In this imagined continuation, nobody has heard from Jake since the visit to the cave. Jake's mother has called Billy's mother, and Billy has lied, saying that Jake went home afterwards.

Billy is frightened and feels guilty. He tells Kevin Anderson what really happened. Kevin must decide how to respond and help Billy explain the disappearance to a responsible adult.

Billy

Describe the cave, Jake's changing behaviour and his leap into the hole. Explain why you did not tell the truth straight away. You are afraid people will blame you.

Kevin Anderson

Ask questions to understand what happened. Decide how to persuade Billy to tell an adult immediately. You must not suggest that the boys go back to investigate alone.

In pairs, create a conversation that you can present to the class.

Take some time to prepare your role play.

When you are ready, show the class.

Debate: Is Refusing a Dangerous Dare Brave?

The Motion

“This house believes that refusing a dangerous dare takes more courage than accepting it.”

Option A — Full Two-Team Debate

Divide the class into two teams.

Team A — For the Motion

Argue that real courage means making your own decision, facing ridicule and protecting yourself or others. Use Billy’s refusal as one example.

Team B — Against the Motion

Argue that refusing is not always the harder choice, and that courage depends on the situation and the person’s reasons. You can discuss challenging activities carried out with suitable preparation. You do not need to defend Jake’s unprepared leap.

Preparation (10 minutes)

Each team should prepare their arguments. Think about:

- Does courage mean overcoming fear, resisting pressure, or both?
- Is Billy's decision to approach the edge different from his refusal to jump?
- When does an exciting challenge become an unreasonable risk?
- Can the same action be brave in one situation and foolish in another?

The Debate

1. Team A gives an opening statement (2 minutes).
2. Team B gives an opening statement (2 minutes).
3. Rebuttal round — each team responds to the other's points (2 minutes each).
4. Closing statements — each team sums up its strongest argument (1 minute each).

The Vote

After the debate, the rest of the class votes on which side made the more convincing argument. The teacher can act as moderator and timekeeper throughout.

Option B — Simplified Class Discussion

If a full debate does not suit the class, the teacher can run this as an open discussion. Ask individual students whether they agree or disagree with the motion and why. Encourage students to respond to each other's ideas rather than assigning fixed sides.

The Perfect Adventure

This is a presentation exercise.

Get into groups of four students. Then choose one of the adventures below.

A guided cave visit • A forest walk • A mountain hike • A river trip • A coastal walk • A wildlife visit • A camping trip • An evening city walk

No group can choose the same adventure!

Prepare a presentation explaining why your chosen adventure would be the perfect class outing. Unlike Billy and Jake's visit, your trip should be well planned.

Think about

- Where you will go and what makes it interesting.
- What the class will see, learn or experience.

- Who will lead the trip and what equipment you will need.
- How you will include people with different abilities or levels of confidence.
- What rules will help everyone enjoy the trip safely.

For example

A guided cave visit might allow the class to see unusual rock formations, learn about underground environments and explore with an experienced guide. The group would follow the agreed route and use the equipment provided.

In your groups, take some time to prepare your ideas. Then present to the class.

When each group has finished, the rest of the class should ask questions about its adventure.

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

Continue the story from the end.

Decide what Billy does next and whether the mystery of the hole is explained. Keep the atmosphere tense and use details of sound, smell and light.

Here are some possible directions

- Billy tells an adult. A search party enters the cave. What do they find?
- Jake returns to school and claims he visited his aunt. But Billy notices that something about him has changed.
- Other pupils want to visit the hole. Billy must decide how to stop them and whether to reveal what happened.

Choose one of these ideas or develop your own. Try to make your continuation as exciting as you can.

When you have finished, read your story aloud to the class.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Answers

1. Billy and Jake.
2. On the wall of the cave behind him.
3. It spreads from one side of the cave to the other.
4. No. The sides disappear into darkness.
5. They are wet with dew.
6. Kevin Anderson, according to Billy.
7. Kevin Anderson.
8. Underneath a high ridge in Blake's Wood.
9. By lunchtime, the whole school is talking about it.
10. He kneels, then lies with his head over the edge.
11. A small triangle of light that seems too far away.
12. Jake.
13. He feels as if a magnet is pulling at his body.
14. Get down beside him and look into the hole.
15. Leave the cave and go outside into the warmth and birdsong.
16. Down by the river, enjoying the first days of summer.

17. He thinks everyone at school will hear that he chickened out and ridicule him.

18. On all fours, with his feet back, away from the edge.

19. A flicker, like a tiny fragment of reflected light.

20. Jake nudges him with his elbow.

21. No. He lies and says he did not see anything.

22. A smile of mesmerised glee.

23. Something buried underground and long forgotten.

24. No. It is not altogether unpleasant, but he does not want it near his face for long.

25. His eyes are unblinking, his lips are slightly parted and his breathing is shallow.

26. No. It seems to have become something much more.

27. Go to Blake's Wood, sneak into the cave and look at the hole.

28. Going down into the hole to have a look.

29. Menacing, as if something has a grip on him.

30. No. He refuses to go down.

31. It is too dangerous, nobody knows they are there and they could become trapped.

32. He swivels them around so that both feet hang over the hole.

33. Just a few metres.

34. A rope or a ladder.

35. He mocks Billy's idea with jokes about a ladder, sandwiches and a picnic.

36. No. He now thinks the danger matters more.

37. He reaches out a hand and asks Jake to stop and leave with him.

38. "What you want and what I want are two different things."

39. He pulls his weight off the edge and leaps into the blackness.

40. It disappears from view into the darkness.

41. He calls Jake's name and asks if he is okay.

42. Nothing. Not a single sound comes up.

43. No light or sign of Jake. His fate is not revealed.

True or False — Answers

1. False. Billy stays near the cave wall while Jake stands close to the edge.
2. False. Billy cannot see the bottom, and the boys do not establish how deep it is.
3. True.
4. True.
5. True.
6. False. He lies and says that he did not see anything.
7. True.
8. False. Billy refuses because it is dangerous and nobody knows they are there.
9. False. He mocks the suggestion and leaps into the hole.
10. True.

What is the Correct Synonym? — Answers

1. peered = looked closely
2. clung = held tightly
3. glee = delight
4. initial = first
5. menacing = threatening
6. ridiculed = mocked
7. leapt = jumped
8. fragment = piece
9. transfixed = spellbound
10. ceased = stopped

What is the Correct Antonym? — Answers

1. deep ↔ shallow
2. black ↔ white
3. safe ↔ dangerous
4. slippery ↔ grippy
5. warmth ↔ cold
6. tiny ↔ huge
7. unpleasant ↔ pleasant
8. forgotten ↔ remembered
9. closer ↔ further
10. different ↔ same

Words and Meanings — Answers

1. vantage point = d (a place that gives a good view of something)
2. chickened out = a (became too frightened to do something)
3. on all fours = f (supported by both hands and both knees)
4. the light of day = g (daylight, used here to suggest the outside world)
5. clear like crystal = c (as clearly as possible)
6. had a grip on him = i (seemed to control him strongly)
7. curled his top lip = j (raised his upper lip to show disgust)
8. let out a single laugh = h (gave one short laugh)
9. disappeared from view = b (stopped being visible)
10. ceased to exist = e (stopped existing or being present)

Gap Fill Exercise — Answers

1. peered
2. dew
3. clung
4. crouched
5. flicker
6. nudged
7. ridiculed
8. shallow
9. swivelled
10. leapt

Vocabulary Practice Exercise — Answers

1. l (looked closely or carefully, especially when it was hard to see)
2. m (plants with long stems that climb or trail)
3. n (shone with small flashes of reflected light)
4. o (small drops of water that form on surfaces overnight)
5. a (a very deep, seemingly bottomless space)
6. b (a long, narrow raised part of the land)
7. c (held tightly to something)
8. d (bent down close to the ground with the knees bent)
9. e (a brief, unsteady flash of light)
10. f (pushed someone gently, often with an elbow)
11. g (great happiness or excitement)
12. h (strange, as if not belonging to this world)
13. i (so fascinated that you cannot look away)
14. j (seeming threatening or dangerous)
15. k (made fun of someone in an unkind way)

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