

# Acknowledgements

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# Teachers' notes

## Using the study guide

The study guide is in three sections:

### 1. Before reading

Pre-reading activities to give students a 'way in' to the novel.

### 2. Reading the chapters

Activities to do on many, but not all, chapters. In order to break up the text, the chapters have been grouped into five sections: the opening (Chapters 2-53); the investigation (Chapters 59-139); the discovery (Chapters 149-173); the journey (Chapters 179-227); the ending (Chapters 229-233). At the end of each section there are activities to help students look back at the whole section.

### 3. After reading

These activities encourage students to think about the novel as a whole and include factual resources about Asperger Syndrome, more extended writing tasks and a wider reading activity. Many of the tasks are scaffolded to support the less able. You may wish to direct more able students to work independently, without the scaffolding prompts.

### Choosing a focus

You may wish to study a particular aspect of the text. If you decide to do this, the following chart may help you to find relevant activities in the pack. Where indicated, the strand leads to a more extended task.

Aspect of the novel	Location of activities in the pack
Genre	15, 25, 65
Writing to describe	18, 19, 30, 39 (Extended task)
Structure	12, 25
Narrator	13, 20, 25, 36, 53, 61-2 (Extended task)
Character of Mother	21, 23-24, 43-4, 55-6
Character of Father	20, 37, 40, 43, 44
Language and style	14, 26, 38, 62-64, 75 (Extended task)
Tension and suspense	41, 48, 54
Writing to review	11, 71 (Extended task)

### *The Curious Incident* – CD ROM

The pack includes a CD ROM of resources which are designed for use on an interactive whiteboard (see page 6).

## Before reading Chapter 23

### Writing to describe – what's in the bag?

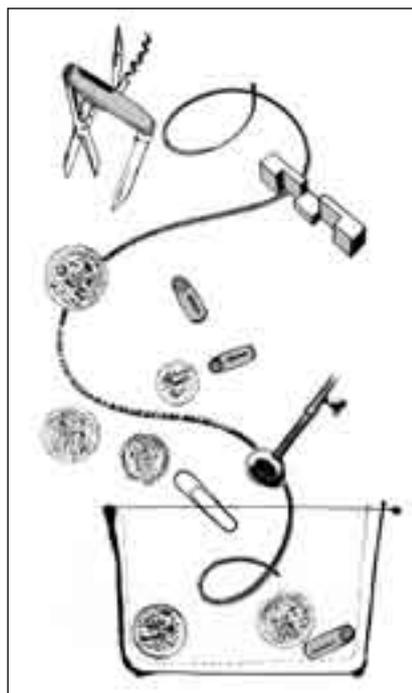
In Chapter 23 we learn about Christopher's character from what he has in his pockets.

- Think of a character of your own, and think about what he or she is like. Imagine what they might have in their pocket or bag that would show something about them. For example, what kind of person would have in their bag: a first class train ticket to Ascot, a champagne cork, a lipstick, an expensive-looking leather purse containing several credit cards and a betting slip.
- Write or draw these objects on separate pieces of paper and put them in an envelope, or, if you have more time, bring in some props in a carrier bag. Hand the 'pocket' or 'bag' to a partner.
- When your partner gives you their envelope or bag, take out the things one by one. Try to imagine what kind of person would have these things in their bag or pocket. Share your ideas with your partner.
- Choose one of the following tasks:
  - Write one or two paragraphs about the character you created, making use of some items from your 'bag' or 'pocket'.
  - Write one or two paragraphs about the character your partner created, making use of some items from their 'bag' or 'pocket'.
- Share your piece of writing with your partner.

### What's in Christopher's pockets?

In his pockets Christopher has:

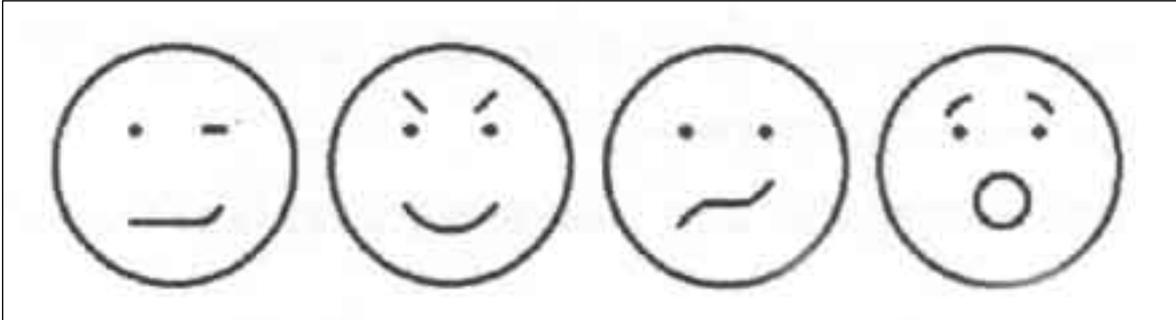
- A Swiss Army Knife (a kind of pen knife with lots of different tools)
  - A piece of string
  - A piece of wooden puzzle
  - 3 pellets of rat food
  - £1.47
  - A red paper clip
  - A front door key
- Talk about what you can tell about Christopher from the contents of his pockets.



**READING ON... Chapters 23 and 29**



The list and activity are included on the CD ROM.

**After reading Chapter 29****Describing body language**

One of the reasons Christopher says he finds people confusing is that he can't read body language. Siobhan tries to explain to him the different emotions that can be expressed through closing your mouth and breathing out through your nose. She mentions that you could show boredom, anger or relaxation by doing this, at the same time as you are making a particular shape with your mouth and sitting in a particular way.

- Try expressing each of these emotions (boredom, anger, relaxation) to your partner, using only the body language clues Siobhan describes.
- See if your partner can guess which is which and then talk about how hard or easy you found the activity. What clues did you use?
- Talk about what other clues you would use to help you read someone's emotions in a real-life situation.
- Now ask your partner to repeat one of the emotions two or three times.
- Observe very closely what they do with their body language. You could think about some of the points below.
  - How quickly or noisily do they let out the air?
  - What shape is their mouth?
  - What are they doing with the rest of their posture?
- Write a careful description of your partner's body language. Give it to a new partner and see if they can guess the emotion from your description.



**READING ON... Chapter 31**

# Looking back – Chapters 2-53

## Writing task

### First person narrator

One of the advantages of using a first person narrator is that the reader sees the world from someone else's point of view.

- With a partner, choose an event from the novel so far and re-write it from the point of view of one of the other characters.
- Talk about what is gained and what is lost when you tell the story from this new point of view. For example, one effect of having Christopher tell the story is that we can understand some of his behaviour because he explains his reasons, such as why he starts groaning.
- As a class, talk about what sense you have so far of the way Christopher sees the world.

## Discussing structure

### Alternating chapters

You may have noticed that the chapters alternate between what is happening to Christopher in the story in the present and information about him, or memories of the past.

- Talk about what you have learnt about Christopher from the chapters that are not directly telling the story.
- Talk about why you think Mark Haddon uses this alternating structure, for example:
  - how does it create tension?
  - why is it useful to have background information about Christopher?

## Discussing genre

### What sort of novel is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time*?

- With a partner, talk about what kind of story you think this is going to be. For example: crime fiction; a story about growing up; a story about an unusual boy's life; a story for children; a story for adults. Find evidence from what you have read so far to back up your views.

## Looking at language

### Metaphors

Christopher finds the way people use language confusing. One thing he finds confusing is the way people use metaphors. The metaphors he mentions in Chapter 29 are:

- I laughed my socks off.
- He was the apple of her eye.
- They had a skeleton in the cupboard.
- We had a real pig of a day.
- The dog was stone dead.

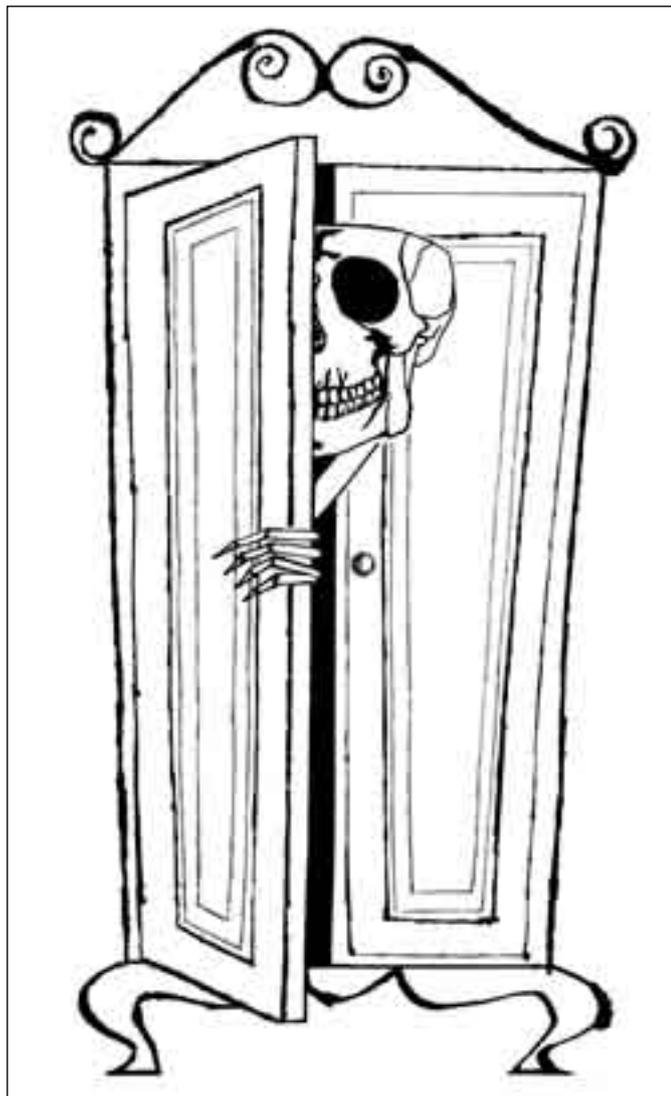
■ Think of some more metaphors people use in everyday speech.

■ Choose one metaphor. Make a drawing of what is being described (for example, a picture of a skeleton peeking out of a cupboard).

■ Imagine you are explaining the metaphor to Christopher. Try to explain how the metaphor came to mean what it does. For example, if you chose 'They had a skeleton in the cupboard', you could say this means that they had a guilty secret. Just as a murderer might hide the skeleton of the person they'd killed in a cupboard, hoping no-one would see it, so these people had kept something secret, hoping no-one would find it out.

■ Write your explanation on your drawing.

■ Write a sentence or two explaining why Christopher finds metaphors difficult to understand, using the metaphor you illustrated as an example.



## Drama activity

### The boy who cannot tell a lie

We probably all like to think of ourselves as honest people who don't lie. But the truth is that without lots of little lies we might not get on so well with friends or family. Some lies are told to make others feel better. For example you might tell someone their new haircut looks good, even though you think it looks terrible, or that you missed them while you were on holiday, even though you were having such a good time you hardly thought about them.

There are many traditional stories about situations in which people cannot lie. You may know the story of Pinocchio, the puppet whose nose grows each time he lies. You may also have seen the film *Liar, Liar*, starring Jim Carrey, in which a little boy makes a wish that his father will be unable to lie for 24 hours, and his wish comes true.

- Find the reasons Christopher gives in Chapter 37 for not being able to lie.
- In a small group, create a short drama called 'The boy/girl who cannot tell a lie'.
  - Before you start, your group should talk about what has caused your character to be unable to lie, although you do not have to include an explanation in the final drama.
  - Your drama should include at least one situation in which your character's inability to lie causes a problem, and at least one scene in which it has a positive outcome.
  - Your drama should have three scenes and last no more than 5 minutes.
- As a class, watch some of the dramas. Talk about your views on lying, such as whether there is such thing as a harmless lie. You could discuss one or two of the moral dilemmas below, to get your discussion started.

**Your friend has found a new friend, but it's someone you hate. Do you pretend to like them, for the sake of a quiet life? Or do you give an honest opinion?**

**1**

**The teacher is threatening to keep your whole class in detention unless someone comes to them before the end of the day to say who set off the fire alarm. You know who it is. Do you tell and save the class a detention? Or do keep quiet, in case someone finds out you're a grass?**

**2**

**You come back from a school trip. 'Did you miss me?' asks your parent/carer/friend. Actually you were having such a good time, you hardly thought about them. Do you pretend you missed them? Or do you tell the truth?**

**3**