

M. G. LEONARD & SAM SEDGMAN



SCHEME OF WORK

PERFECT FOR: Ages 8+; a fast-paced adventure on board a royal train that's full of mystery and mayhem; creative writing opportunities including poetry, monologues and newspaper articles; researching the development of transportation; creating maps, diagrams and train timetables; researching Scotland; learning about sound waves; lots of train art and puzzle-solving.

KEY FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR OBJECTIVES:

English: Reading Comprehension; Creative Writing;
Writing to Entertain and Inform; Poetry;

Explanation and Recount Texts
Drama, Speaking and Listening

Design Technology & Art

Science

Maths

Geography

Music

History

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WEEK 1 (CHAPTERS 1–5): A GRAND DEPARTURE

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension - Analyse an author's style of writing and identify different techniques and vocabulary used.</p> <p>Drama, Speaking and Listening - Understand and empathise with a character's thoughts, feelings and attitudes by completing a Role on the Wall activity.</p> <p>Poetry - Explore and evaluate and perform a classic poem.</p> <p>Geography - Research the Scottish landscape, climate and famous monuments. - Create a map using information from the text.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Before beginning, create a spider diagram of words, ideas and themes linked to the word 'mystery'. What are the features of a mystery story?2. Look at the following words on page 1: <i>deftly, gouged, gently</i>. What do they tell us about each of the characters?3. Use the information on page 3 to draw and label a picture of Uncle Nat and Colin. How are they similar? How are they different?4. Which words and phrases in Chapter 1 are particularly effective at helping you envisage the setting of King's Cross and the busy platform?5. Look at page 11 and discuss the symbolism of the 'dense red'. What is the colour red usually associated with?6. What literary device do the authors use on page 14 to describe the train? Is it effective? Can you think of your own?7. Use the information in these chapters to draw and label a list of the guests on the train. Can you make a prediction about each character's role in the story?8. Why is Hal so desperate to find the mysterious girl on page 25?9. Why are train compartments like a 'box of delights'? (page 26)10. What might the authors be trying to say about the modern world – including technology and celebrities? Use evidence from the story so far.	<p>Complete a Role on the Wall activity. Draw an outline of Hal. On the inside of your drawing, write down everything you learn about him in these chapters. On the outside, record any questions you'd like to ask him and then write down how he might respond to them.</p> <p>The Highland Falcon is speeding to Scotland. In groups, conduct research into the Scottish landscape, climate and famous monuments. Create a colourful A3 poster or informative PowerPoint presentation to display your findings.</p> <p>Spend some time reading 'From A Railway Carriage' by R.L Stevenson. Consider what you like and dislike about it, what you find puzzling and any connections it may have with this story. You may wish to perform the poem to an audience or write your own version based on the story's setting.</p> <p>Use the information in Chapter 2 to draw your own labelled map, showing a bird's eye view of the of train. Consider how to show the various features and compartments on your map using a key.</p>

WEEK 2 (CHAPTERS 6–11): A ROYAL STOWAWAY

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES

Reading: Comprehension

- Define vocabulary, thinking carefully about its meaning and impact.
- Retrieve information to sequence events.

Design Technology & Art

- Design and make a bridge, exploring how it can be made stronger, stiffer and more stable.

Maths

- Research the length of famous railway bridges around the world, converting units of measurement between metres and kilometres.
- Show results in a bar graph.

Poetry

- Write and perform a poem, using expression, actions and musical instruments to convey meaning.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Write a definition of the following words from Chapter 6: *retreated*, *indignation*, *impractical*. Can you now use these words in sentences of your own?
2. Why might the authors describe the roads as 'ghostly cobwebs'? What image does this create for you? (page 45)
3. Look at pages 49 and 50 and compare how Uncle Nat and Steven Pickle react to the theft of the jewels. Which words help us understand their personalities?
4. Lenny says that trains are in her blood. What does this mean? (page 56)
5. Most of the train staff know Lenny is there but are turning a blind eye. What does this mean? Is this the right thing to do? (page 60)
6. What does the phrase 'spaghetti of silver tubes' suggest about the regulator? Can you think of two ideas? (page 66)
7. How does Hal's opinion about the Highland Falcon change in Chapter 10? Why is this?
8. Why might 'The Magpie' be a good name for the jewel thief? Can you think of some other nicknames for the thief and share them with a partner? (page 76)
9. Milo is the thief. Do you agree with this statement? What evidence is there to support this? What evidence is there to refute this statement? (page 79)
10. Does Hal remind you of any other characters in a children's story or film? Why? What makes him a good spy? Collect any words and phrases to support your ideas.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

In groups, look at a picture of the Forth Bridge. Can you use a range of materials, including art straws, to build your own bridge? How can you join the materials to ensure your bridge is sturdy? Test which group has the strongest bridge.

Research the length of famous railway bridges in the UK or around the world. Record the length of these bridges in metres and then convert them to centimetres and kilometres. Now, display your findings in a bar graph.

Hal says '*I'd rather be on the Highland Falcon than skinning squirrels.*' Use this to write your own 'I'd rather' poem. Write from your own experiences or as other book characters.

I'd rather be diving in a pool of chocolate than kissing a frog.

I'd rather be sleeping on clouds of cotton than fighting a minotaur.

Rehearse your poem and perform it with expression, actions and instruments.

WEEK 3 (CHAPTERS 12–16): BOWLED OVER AT BALMORAL

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES

Reading: Comprehension

- Identify evidence from the text to support theories and opinions.
- Use clues to make predictions.

Design Technology & Art

- Explore the style and techniques employed by Giorgio de Chirico and then use these to paint a piece of artwork inspired by the descriptions of the train.

Maths

- Create and read a train timetable.
- Solve problems involving converting units of time.

History: Victorians

- Order the main events that occurred during the Victorian era.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Uncle Nat 'jade with jealousy'? What does this mean? Have you ever felt like this? (page 82)
2. Summarise Milo's supposed motive for stealing the jewels in one sentence. (page 91)
3. Use the information on page 92 and your own imagination to draw and label the Atlas Diamond.
4. Predict why Lady Lansbury might have given her purse to Rowan. Is there more than one possible explanation? (page 101)
5. What are your initial thoughts and feelings about Uncle Nat? Do you like him? Do you trust him? Do you think he is a good uncle?
6. The answer is 'Gladys'. How many questions can you think of with 'Gladys' as the answer? (page 103)
7. Look at pages 104 and 105. How old do you think Melly is and why?
8. Read to the end of page 11 and predict what Hal will do. Now, think of three courses of action for Hal and the possible outcome of each.
9. What does Hal find in Milo's coat? What might it mean? Could the message have more than one meaning? (page 112)
10. What is the most important piece of information we learn on page 114 about the Atlas Diamond? Why?

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Spend some time exploring 'Perspective - The Anxious Journey' by Giorgio de Chirico, (1913). What techniques does the artist use to show space, perspective and movement? How is the train presented? Do you think the train looks ominous or welcoming? Create your own piece of train-themed artwork based on this and your knowledge of the Highland Falcon.

Design and draw your own high-tech train, thinking about what will make it special. Now, create a weekly timetable for your train. Where will it travel to? How long will it take to get there? How many stops will there be along the way? Finally, write some worded time problems for a partner to solve using your train timetable. Can they answer your questions in hours, minutes and seconds?

Create a timeline showing the main events that occurred during the Victorian era. You may wish to refer to the Industrial Revolution, the development of transportation and the railways, and other famous inventions.

WEEK 4 (CHAPTERS 17–21): SPIES AND ALIBIS

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES

Reading: Comprehension

- Use clues from the text to infer information about a character and what they might be thinking and feeling.
- Use an Emotions Graph to explore a character's thoughts.

Drama, Speaking and Listening

- Use body language and facial expressions to convey a character's feelings.

Writing in Role

- Empathise with characters by writing an inner monologue.
- Explore the difference between what a character says and does and what they might be feeling.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why might Hadrian be an ideal name for the giant guard? (page 122)
2. What might Hal be thinking and feeling on page 127 when the diamond necklace smashes?
3. What does the verb 'chuckled' suggest about Uncle Nat's feelings about the situation and Marlene? (page 130)
4. Read Chapter 18. Uncle Nat is behaving irresponsibly by encouraging Hal to investigate the crime. Do you agree?
5. Is there anything funny and amusing on page 137? Can you explain the word play to a partner?
6. What are your first impressions of DCI Clyde? Do you think she is a good detective? Will she solve the case? Can you describe her in three words and explain your word choice?
7. Why does Hal's jaw drop open on page 146? What might he be thinking and feeling?
8. What does the verb 'sighed' suggest about Lucy and her feelings about Sierra? (page 147)
9. Create a table with the following headings: *Character, Alibi, Motive*. Can you use the information in Chapter 20 and what you've learned so far to complete the table?
10. How do the authors create a sense of excitement and tension on pages 156 and 157? Is it successful?

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

What might Uncle Nat and Hal be thinking and feeling during the events in Chapter 18? Choose one of the characters and write an inner monologue to show their thoughts and feelings. Now, act out the scene in pairs, taking time to pause and share your inner monologue. Is there a difference between what your character is saying and feeling?

In a group of four, re-create the events from pages 156 and 157. One of you should play Hal one should play Lenny, one Uncle Nat, and one of you should play Mr Pickle. Perform the scene four times; each time swapping and considering another character's perspective, body language, voice and facial expression.

Create an Emotions Graph to plot Hal's changing thoughts and feelings throughout these chapters. You may wish to refer to: *the smashing of the necklace, telling Uncle Nat what you've been doing, meeting DCI Clyde, formulating your plan.*

WEEK 5 (CHAPTERS 22–27): THE TURN OF THE KEY

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define vocabulary, thinking carefully about its meaning and impact. - Explore vocabulary and carry out role-play to understand the relationship between characters. <p>Music</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perform a traditional song, using your voice expressively and with control. <p>Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify how sounds are made, associating some of them with something vibrating. <p>Design Technology & Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a colourful class display to show the cast of characters, their motives and alibis. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Role-play the conversation and scene between Hal and Lenny in Chapter 22, thinking about their body language. 2. Write definitions for the following words from Chapter 23: loitering, defiantly, lingered. Do they sound like any other words you know? 3. How is the verb 'scowling' similar to 'looking'? How is it different? (page 165) 4. Find and copy a word on page 170 that is similar in meaning to 'sluggish' and 'tired'. Why might Bailey be feeling like this? 5. How did you feel when you read the revelation on page 172 about Lenny? Do you believe it? Why? Why not? 6. Which words and phrases tell us that Crewe is an important railway town? What sort of image do they create in your head? (page 176) 7. The title of Chapter 27 is 'Drawing Conclusions'. What conclusions can you draw so far? Write down a prediction of who the thief is and their motive and then keep it somewhere safe until the big reveal. 8. Find an example of a simile on page 188 and discuss its effectiveness. How else could you describe sadness using similes? 9. Why is 'Harrison Beck' repeated on page 194? What effect does it have and is it successful? 10. How do the authors make you want to read on at the end of Chapter 27? Do you know any other stories that do this? 	<p>Listen to the traditional song 'The Runaway Train', which is performed by the choir on page 177. Can you work in small groups or as a class to perform the song? Perhaps you can develop your performance with percussion instruments or adapt this song with new lyrics based on the story.</p> <p>Mr White records the sound of the train as it travels. How does sound travel? What can you find out about sound waves? Carry out a class investigation to explore how to change the pitch and volume of an untuned instrument.</p> <p>Use the information in Chapter 25 and from the rest of the story, to create a class display entitled 'A Jigsaw of Clues'. Try to include some mugshots (police photographs) of each character, diary entries about their experiences, witness statements, pictures of the stolen items, artwork from Hal's sketchbook and your own conspiracies and theories about who is responsible.</p>

WEEK 6 (CHAPTERS 28–33): THE END OF THE LINE

SUGGESTED OBJECTIVES	COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS	EXTRA ACTIVITIES
<p>Reading: Comprehension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify and discuss the main themes in the story. - Create character profiles, exploring how the characters have developed. - Retrieve and summarise information from a passage and use it to inform writing. <p>Writing to Entertain and Inform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write a newspaper report, thinking carefully about layout and features for this type of writing. <p>Design Technology & Art</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create a storyboard and design a book cover to show predictions for the next book in the series. - Design a working board game, based on the book. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Summarise the events in Chapter 28 in six sentences. Now try and summarise them in three sentences, then one. 2. Look at the second paragraph on page 206. The authors use a series of short sentences – why might this be? 3. Some of the words on page 210 are written in capital letters and italics. How should they be read? How do they add to your understanding of the story? 4. What do you think is the significance of the dog poo and the revolting smell? (page 213) 5. Why do you think Hal touches his St Christopher on page 216? What might he be thinking and feeling? 6. Summarise the significance of Lucy’s bracelet and why it is important in helping Hal and Lenny solve the case. (page 219) 7. Complete these sentences: Grailax badly needs money because... Grailax badly needs money, so... Grailax badly needs money, but...(page 221) 8. Were you surprised by the revelation on page 223? What clues have there been throughout the book that have pointed to the culprit? 9. Describe each of these characters in the story using one word only and explain your word choice: <i>Hal, Uncle Nat, Lenny, Mr Pickle, Isaac, Lady Lansbury, Milo, Sierra.</i> 10. Which of these do you think is the most important theme in the story? Think of examples in the story where each of these themes is pivotal: <i>secrecy, revenge, lies, traditional vs modern, money, greed, friendship.</i> 	<p>Write a newspaper article to describe and summarise the exciting events at the end of the story and the capture of the thief. Remember to include a headline, photograph and caption, witness statements and write in paragraphs.</p> <p>Consider the ending of The Highland Falcon Thief. Do you think Hal and Lenny will have more adventures? In pairs, discuss what the next story might be about and create a storyboard and new front cover to show the events.</p> <p>Create illustrated character profiles for the following characters, including information about their personality, motivations and how they develop as the story progresses: <i>Hal, Lenny, Uncle Nat, Amy, Mrs Pickle, Rowan, Lady Lansbury, DCI Clyde.</i></p> <p>Work in teams to create an exciting, train-themed board game based on the story. Consider what the aim of the game will be, how the game will look and how players can win the game. Remember to include lots of puzzles and clues to solve!</p>