

Level  
1

## The Ghost House

Teacher's Notes

### Summary of the story

One winter's afternoon, Rick and Mia explore a big old house. Rick thinks there is a ghost but Mia does not. She smiles because she finds the idea funny. The old house is falling down and the stairs break when Mia climbs them. Rick is trapped under a part of the broken stairs. Mia starts to rescue him but cannot lift the wood herself. Strong hands come from behind her and help her lift it. Rick gets better. He didn't see any ghosts and so doesn't believe there was one. Mia hasn't told him about the lifting up of the wood. She doesn't smile any more, because now she is not sure that there are no ghosts.



### Background to the story

This is an original story by John Escott, who has written many other popular stories for the Penguin Readers. He began by writing children's stories and now writes for all ages and enjoys doing thriller stories. He lives in the south of England but likes to travel, especially in North America and Canada.

### Topics and themes

**Buildings** The story takes place in a big old house. Are there any old houses where the pupils live? Which do pupils prefer – old or new buildings? How do some old buildings stay and others are knocked down or fall down. What should we do with empty buildings? Who should decide? A further topic is one of ghosts, and might suggest a discussion of why ghosts are to be found in old houses.

**Friendships** In the story the two children are friends. What do they expect of their friends? The

boy does what his friend wants to do, even though he doesn't. So sometimes being friends means doing something you might not want to do. Can the pupils think of examples in their own lives. They may like to write their own story round this theme.

**Magic** Strong invisible hands help Mia. A discussion or questionnaire can be set off on this theme. Does anyone believe that we are sometimes helped in this way? Can anyone find examples from other stories or real life?

### Making use of the Reader

**Building boxes** Pupils can collect pictures and photographs or do their own drawings of buildings they like. Brainstorm categories of buildings, perhaps expanding work on opposites (see Activity 3) (e.g. old/new, modern/period, large/small, business/housing, country/town, wood/brick/stone). Label a series of boxes and let the pupils sort the collection.

**Fill the gap** This is a card game for groups of 2-6 players. It needs two different sets of cards. The first set contains between 20 and 40 cards, each showing a simple sentence using a preposition but with a gap where the preposition should be (e.g. The dog is \_\_\_\_\_ the table.) On the same face it also has a drawing or photo showing clearly which preposition is missing. (In the example, the drawing would show the dog *under* the table.) You might make the first 10 of these and the pupils could make the rest.

The second set of cards has a single preposition on each. Start with the 7 prepositions used in the story, each with seven duplicates (49 cards in all). This set is shuffled and seven cards dealt out to all the players in the group. The sentence cards are laid face down and turned up one at a time. Each player takes it in turns to fit the right preposition in the sentence. If a player does not have the right card he or she has to miss a turn. If a player tries to use the wrong card, he or she must pick an extra preposition card from the spare cards left. Once the sentence is filled the next sentence card is turned up. Play continues until one player has used all the cards in the hand.

This can be adapted in various ways: Extra prepositions and matching sentence cards can be added; nouns, verbs or adjectives could be matched instead.



Level  
1

# Penguin Young Readers Factsheets

## The Ghost House

## Teacher's Notes

### Using the accompanying audio cassette

#### During listening – whole class prediction

If pupils have read or heard *The Ghost House* already, play through the cassette. Stop just before a dramatic event (e.g. before the stairs collapse, p. 9 or the ghost helps p. 11) and ask the class to predict what happens next.

**While-listening activity** Ask the pupils what made Mia feel happy and what made her feel unhappy. Did Rick feel the same at the same time? Explain they are going to map how Rick and Mia feel through the story. First ask what clues they

can find in the story about Rick and Mia's feelings (smiling, going on, shouting out in a dare/happy, sure: not smiling, not calling out, wanting to go home, moving slowly/unhappy, not sure)? Draw a simple graph on the board with unhappy at the bottom of the vertical axis and happy at the top. Write the page numbers 1-15 along the horizontal axis. In pairs, the pupils can make their own copy. Play the tape and pause at the end of each page to ask pupils to decide how Mia and Rick each feel and to mark a cross on the graph. They could use different colors for the two.

### Chants

**Chants** help pupils become familiar with the sounds and rhythm of English, in a fun way. The language in each chant recycles language from the story.

Pupils listen to the chant a few times, clapping in time with the rhythm. Then they say the chant, verse by verse, with the cassette, beating out the rhythm as they say it, to become familiar with the words and rhythm.

A possible activity with the chants, is to split a class into groups and they each say one verse.

#### Chant 1

"There's a ghost  
In that big, old house!"  
"There are no ghosts!  
I can't see a ghost."

There's a ghost  
In that big old house  
Come on, Rick  
Let's go find the ghost!

"There's a ghost  
In that big, old house!"  
"There are no ghosts!  
I can't see a ghost."

#### Chant 2

"Ghost, ghost"  
Mia shouts  
"Where are you?  
Where are you?"

"Ghost, ghost"  
Mia shouts  
"Mia come back!  
Mia come back!"

#### Chant 3

Who is helping her?  
Who is it?  
Rick's eyes are shut  
Mia looks up and down

Who is helping her?  
Who is it?  
Mia looks up and down  
Who is helping her?

Some strong hands  
Help Mia  
Who is helping her?  
Who is it?

### Notes on the activities in the Factsheet

**Activity 1** Wordsearch. Explain that all words are in the book. You may want to brainstorm some of the vocabulary from the story on the board before they start.

**Activity 2** Pupils play in groups of four. They will need a dice or spinner. It will be useful to revise numbers 1-18 first and check they understand the captions. They roll the dice in turn and see who gets to the Ghost's Secret first. If they land on 3, 5, 8, and 17 they should read out what it says and follow the instruction.

**Activity 3** Pupils search for the missing words and then pair opposites to get the final answer. If pupils have not done this kind of exercise before, elicit some opposite word pairs first e.g. happy/sad, come/go, sleeping/waking.

### Answers to the activities

#### In the back of the Reader

##### Before you read

Check: house, tree, boy, pants, girl, shoes

##### After you read

1. No (already done), 2. Yes, 3. No.  
4. No, 5. Yes, 6. No, 7. Yes, 8. No,  
9. Yes, 10. The ghost/strong hands.

#### In the Factsheet

##### Activity 1

The letters that are left out spell 'Friends smile and help.'

##### Activity 3

1. down 2. quickly  
3. up 4. weak  
5. strong 6. slowly. 1 and 3, 2 and 6,  
4 and 5.

F	H	A	N	D	S
H	O	M	E	R	T
I	U	O	E	N	A
T	S	O	H	C	I
D	E	R	S	S	R
M	I	L	E	A	S
N	D	H	E	L	P



Level  
1

PHOTOCOPIABLE

Pupils' Activities

## The Ghost House

Name.....

### Activity 1

Find these words: ghost, house, home, stairs, room, hands. (One word reads back to front and one word reads from bottom to top.)

Then, starting at the top left, write out the letters that are left. What do they say?

F	H	A	N	D	S
H	O	M	E	R	T
I	U	O	E	N	A
T	S	O	H	G	I
D	E	R	S	S	R
M	I	L	E	A	S
N	D	H	E	L	P

### Activity 2

In your group, take turns to throw the dice and play the game.

Step 3: It's dark, but you are not afraid. Go forward four steps to 7.

Step 5: You fall. Stop and get up. Miss one turn.

Step 8: The ghost helps you climb two steps. Go forward to 12.

Step 17: The stairs are weak. You fall back to 10.



Longman

### The Ghost House

Name.....

#### Activity 3

Read the pages of the Reader carefully and fill in the missing words.

1. Mia jumps down. (page 8)
2. She turns \_\_\_\_\_ . (page 9)
3. She looks up and down. (page 11)
4. The stairs are \_\_\_\_\_ . (page 8)
5. Some \_\_\_\_\_ hands help Mia. (page 11)
6. Rick is walking \_\_\_\_\_ . (page 6)

The missing words give three pairs of opposites. Pair the sentences that use the words with opposite meaning.

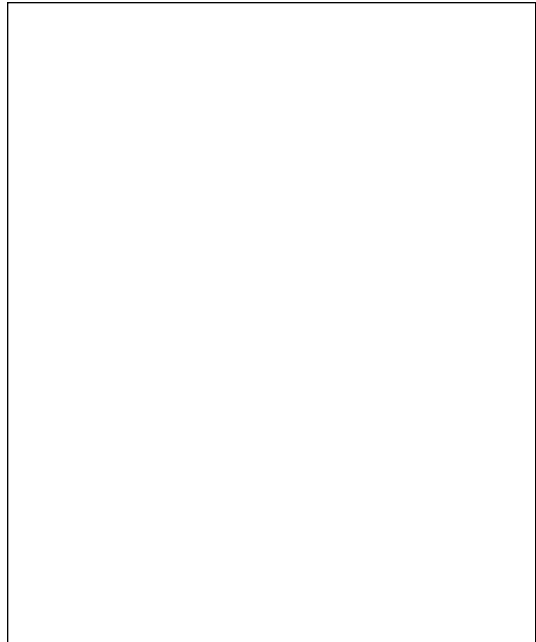
1 and 3\* \_\_\_\_\_

#### Activity 4

Draw a picture for each group of words.



Friends, smile, home, help



Winter, cold, wind, trees, house

