Before Reading

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES (PAGE 60)

ACTIVITY 1 BEFORE READING
Encourage students to speculate. Right answers do not matter at this stage but the ‘yes’ answers are probably 2, 4, and 5.

ACTIVITY 2 BEFORE READING
Encourage students to speculate but do not tell them the answers.
1 John Duncan doesn’t tell the truth about his job.
2 The chemical factory kills some animals.
3 John Duncan loses his job at the chemical factory.
4 By the end of the story John Duncan is a poor man.

ACTIVITY 3 BEFORE READING
Encourage students to think about different types of guilt, in order to prepare them for thinking about John Duncan at the end of the story – is he guilty, and if so, what is he guilty of?
Some ideas for the discussion:
• The man who kills his wife’s lover (or woman who kills her husband’s lover) is guilty of deliberate intentional murder, but has the excuse of being provoked.
• The drunk driver is not guilty of deliberate murder, but the death of the victim is equally tragic.
• The person who knows the name of a murderer has killed no one directly, but shares in the guilt of the murder and may be putting other victims at risk by keeping silent.

While Reading

CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 WHILE READING
1 How . . .? Forty-five.
2 What . . .? Biology and boats.
3 Why . . .? Because he started a boat-building business with his wife.
4 What . . .? She died in a storm in a sailing race.
5 Why . . .? To make sure that everything in the factory was safe / to tell the government that it was safe to work there and safe to have a paint factory near the town.
6 How . . .? He disliked him because Wilson made him feel uncomfortable and seemed to enjoy making people feel small.
7 How . . .? Two years.
8 Why . . .? Because her father had never had enough money to pay for it.

CHAPTERS 3 AND 4 WHILE READING
1 The company had brought four hundred new jobs to the town.
2 The waste products from the factory went into the river.
3 The factory was two kilometres from the sea.
4 The town’s drinking water came from the river five kilometres upstream.
5 John had spilled some of the waste products on his leg, but was not very worried about it.
6 John bought a boat for his children.
7 When Mary came to dinner, the evening went badly.
8 Everybody enjoyed watching the seals on the sandbank.

CHAPTERS 5 AND 6 WHILE READING
Several experiments were done on rats to test the waste products which are produced by the factory. These chemicals are diluted and on most days less than two parts per million go into the river. Two groups of mother rats were given drinking water which contained the waste products: the first group had five parts per million; the second group had two parts per million. When the baby rats were born, in the first group some had no eyes, some had no ears, and some had six legs. In the second group some were born without legs.
These results show that it is not safe to put these chemicals in the river. The company must build machines to clean up the waste products before they leave the factory.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 7
Encourage speculation. The one ‘yes’ answer is number 5.

CHAPTERS 7 TO 10 WHILE READING
3+8 Although John didn’t want Christine to marry Simon, in the end he agreed to the marriage.
10+4 Mary liked John and felt sorry for him, but she was pleased that he hadn’t asked her to marry him.
6+1 Christine did not believe her father when he told her that the river water was not dangerous.
9+5 The Greenworld people put bags of cement in the pipe in order to stop the chemicals going into the river.
2+7 Christine was unconscious when she fell in the river so she nearly drowned before Simon saved her.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 11
Open answers. Encourage speculation.
CHAPERS 11 AND 12  WHILE READING
1 Because David Wilson told him he would lose his job if he didn’t.
2 Because he had been in Scotland with Mary that weekend.
3 The newspaper with the report about Christine nearly drowning in the river.
4 Because he told the enquiry that he was worried about Christine’s baby, and that the chemicals were dangerous.
5 Because Christine wouldn’t see him, or speak to him on the phone, or answer his letters.
6 He was afraid that Christine’s baby would be born with no eyes or ears or legs, like the baby rats.

After Reading

ACTIVITY 1  AFTER READING
Yesterday a young woman nearly drowned in the river when she was sailing with her husband and two friends near the paint factory. Christine MacDonald, aged 18, was hit on the back of the head by a sail and was unconscious when she fell into the water. Her body began to float downstream, towards the sea, but a man from the factory shouted a warning, and her husband, Simon MacDonald, swam after her and managed to pull her out onto the river bank further downstream.

Mrs MacDonald is the daughter of John Duncan, who is the chief biologist at the paint factory. His daughter Christine belongs to Greenworld, an environmental group which believes that chemicals in the factory’s waste products are killing the baby seals. She and her friends put bags of cement into the factory’s waste pipe to stop the chemicals going into the river.

Mrs Macdonald is going to have a baby and doctors are very worried because she drank a lot of water from the river near the factory.

ACTIVITY 2  AFTER READING
Students may come up with their own ideas during discussion, but here are some suggestions:
John Duncan was a bad father because . . .
• he liked to talk to his children.
• he looked after his children when their mother had died.
• he got a good job because he wanted them to go skiing, to have a good home, and to have a boat and a horse.
• he spent time with his children – he went sailing with them.
• he was pleased when his daughter got married, and tried to help her.
• he was worried about his daughter’s baby.

ACTIVITY 3  AFTER READING
6 WILSON: Hello, Mary, what can I do for you?
3 MARY: I’ve come to tell you that I’m leaving, David.
12 WILSON: Leaving? But why?
5 MARY: You know why. Because of the waste products that are going into the river.
7 WILSON: Oh, them! Mary, I’ve told you, those chemicals aren’t dangerous!
2 MARY: Yes, they are. Look at those baby rats!
9 WILSON: But they’re rats, Mary, not people. And nobody drinks water from the river mouth. You know that!
1 MARY: The seals do. And look at their babies.
8 WILSON: Seals! Who cares about a few seals?
15 MARY: I care. I care about everything in the river.
4 WILSON: OK, so you care. But what can I do about it?
10 MARY: You can buy machines to take out some of the chemicals before the waste products go into the river.
13 WILSON: No, I can’t, Mary. The company can’t afford them.
11 MARY: So the seals have to die because you can’t afford the machines?
16 WILSON: Yes. People come first, Mary. Four hundred people work here. That’s what I worry about – their jobs!
14 MARY: Well, you don’t have to worry about my job any more, David. I’m leaving tomorrow. Goodbye.

ACTIVITY 4  AFTER READING
Sir: your article yesterday about our factory contained some information which was completely untrue, and I wonder where your journalist got his facts from. Scientists do not yet know why the seals are dying. Although our factory puts some waste products into the river, it is less than two parts per million, and a lot more waste comes from the sewage works. It is also untrue to say that the river water is unsafe for people. All the town’s drinking water comes from five kilometres upstream, so nobody can drink water which contains our waste products.

Our company cares about this town because a lot of our workers live here. We have created four hundred new jobs since we came here ten years ago. We can clean up the waste if we spend two million pounds on machines to do it, but that would mean fewer jobs for the people of this town.

David Wilson,
Managing Director, Wiltech Paints
ACTIVITY 5 AFTER READING
Encourage students to discuss and give reasons for their opinions.

ACTIVITY 6 AFTER READING
Possible answers:
1 If I get this job at the paint factory, I’ll be able to buy a nice house / I’ll be able to give my children anything they want / we’ll all live well and go on holidays.
2 If Mary likes my children, perhaps she’ll marry me / I’ll ask her to marry me.
3 If the baby rats are born healthy, everything will be fine / the river water will be safe / there won’t be a problem.
4 If Wilson agrees to build the machines, we’ll clean up the river / the river water will be safe and clean.
5 If I leave this job, I’ll never get another job / I won’t have any money / we’ll all be poor again.
6 If I stay here and say nothing, I’ll keep my job / we won’t be poor / nobody will know that the river is dangerous.
7 It was a terrible mistake to take this job in the first place / stay in the job when Wilson refused to build the machines / say nothing to Christine and Simon about the problem / agree to write to the newspapers for David Wilson / agree to speak at the enquiry.

Encourage students to discuss what John Duncan’s biggest mistake was.

ACTIVITY 7 AFTER READING
Encourage students to use their imagination and invent their own ideas.