Edward never forgets that he wants to fight against Cromwell so when the King’s son arrives in Scotland Edward goes off to fight in his army. But the King is defeated and Edward comes back to the New Forest dressed in the uniform of a Roundhead to avoid discovery. He goes back to work for Hetherstone. Eventually Edward tells Patience he loves her. She loves him too but does not say so because she is unsure of what her father will think. Before Edward can ask if he can marry her, Hetherstone tells him that Arnwood has been given to him and that he is going to give it to the man who marries Patience. Edward is silently angry and believes his poverty means he will never be able to marry Patience. He returns to his family and tells them his plan to run away and join the army in France. He leaves without a word to Patience who is very upset. Hetherstone had suspected that Edward was a Beverley and had planned to give him Arnwood when he married Patience. Now his plans have gone wrong.

After nine years Edward returns to England. Cromwell is dead and Charles II is King. Hetherstone and Humphrey have rebuilt Arnwood. Patience and Edward marry and live happily at Arnwood.

Background to the story
The English Civil War (1642–49) divided families and communities. People who supported the King were known as Loyalists while those who supported Parliament were called Roundheads. King Charles I was executed in 1653. Oliver Cromwell ruled as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth until 1658. His son Richard ruled for one year until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, when Charles II became King.
The Children of the New Forest

Pre-reading activity

Anticipation through chapter titles

Put these chapter headings in the order in which you think they occur. Then match the pictures with the chapter titles.

Secretary to Mr Hetherstone     Escape
Edward goes visiting           Life in the Forest
Soldier of the King

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To the teacher

Aim: To anticipate plot
Time: 15–20 minutes
Organization: Give the students the worksheet. Check to make sure that there are no problems with vocabulary items in the list. Then divide the students into small groups and ask them to speculate as widely as they can about the meaning of the chapter titles, their connection with one another and the pictures, and their connection with the title. It is not important whether their guesses are correct or not; they should simply be encouraged to speculate about possible connections. They may be able to come up with an idea of a plot line, but this is not essential. When students have finished, allow each group to outline its ideas in a short verbal report to the class. Give no indication as to whether they have guessed correctly, but let them listen to all the ideas and discuss them if they wish.
Number the events in the story in the right order.

a. Arnwood is burnt by Cromwell’s soldiers.
b. Cromwell’s soldiers search Jacob’s cottage.
c. Edward becomes Mr Hetherstone’s secretary.
d. Edward goes to France to fight with Charles II.
e. Edward returns from France and marries Patience Hetherstone.
f. Edward saves Patience Hetherstone from the fire.
g. Edward visits Oswald Partridge to get a puppy.
h. Edwards goes to fight for King Charles II but comes back when the King is unsuccessful.
i. Humphrey finds a cow to milk.
j. Humphrey finds Pablo in the forest.
k. Jacob dies.
l. Jacob teaches the Beverley children how to live in the forests.
m. Mr Hetherstone tells Edward not to kill deer.
n. Parliament gives Arnwood to Mr Hetherstone.
o. The Beverley children escape Cromwell’s soldiers.
p. The King dies.

To the teacher

Aim: To order, revise, remember what has been read, and to summarize
Time: 10–20 minutes
Organization: Give out the worksheets to pairs or groups of students. Ask them to put the 16 incidents in order without looking at the book (they can check later).
Key: 1o, 2a, 3l, 4b, 5i, 6g, 7m, 8f, 9k, 10p, 11j, 12c, 13h, 14n, 15d, 16e