Before Reading

BEFORE READING ACTIVITIES (PAGE 60)

ACTIVITY 1 BEFORE READING
1 F 2 F 3 T 4 F 5 F 6 T 7 F 8 T

ACTIVITY 2 BEFORE READING
Encourage students to speculate and to make guesses, but do not tell them the answers. They will find out as they read that the answers are 1a, 1d, 2c, 3b, 3c.

While Reading

CHAPTERS 1 AND 2 WHILE READING
1 Two men came to the house and Father had to go away with them.
2 In the country, in a dear little white house near a railway line.
3 They went by train, and from the station they walked to the house, while a man with a cart took their boxes.
4 It was the supper that Mrs Viney had left for them, but they didn’t find it on the night they arrived, so when they found it the next morning, they ate it for breakfast.
5 To the railway station.
6 Because coal was very expensive, and they were poor now.
7 Because he caught him one night, taking coal from the heap in the station yard.
8 He didn’t do anything – except tell Peter that taking coal, even from the middle of the heap, was stealing.

CHAPTERS 3 AND 4 WHILE READING
1 Phyllis, to Bobbie and Peter, about the 9.15 train, which they waved to as they sat on the fence by the railway line.
2 The Station Master, to Peter, about Peter stealing the coal.
3 Mother, to the children, about the special things the doctor said she needed when she was ill.
4 Phyllis, to the old gentleman, about getting to the station just in time to give him a letter before the train pulled out.
5 Perks, to the children, about the large box he had brought up from the station, full of the special things for their mother that they had asked for.
6 Peter, to Bobbie and Phyllis, wondering whether their mother would think they had been right to ask the old gentleman for help.
7 Mother, to the children, about asking the old gentleman for help.
8 Phyllis, to Bobbie, about Bobbie having to go out while the others prepared a surprise for her birthday.
9 Peter, to Bobbie, about giving half of his toy steam engine to Bobbie for her birthday present.
10 Bobbie, to the engine driver and the fireman, about mending Peter’s toy steam engine.
11 The engine driver, to the fireman, about mending the toy for Bobbie.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 5
Encourage students to speculate and to make guesses, but do not tell them the answers. They will find out as they read that numbers 3 and 7 are true.

CHAPTERS 5 AND 6 WHILE READING
1 What . . .? She stood on the line, waving her flags and shouting ‘Stop’ at the train, which stopped only twenty metres from her.
2 Why . . .? Because they had saved the train and stopped a bad accident.
3 Who . . .? The old gentleman, who the children waved to on the 9.15 train.
4 Who . . .? Mrs Ransome at the Post Office, because she said it was her birthday tomorrow and nobody would remember hers.
5 What . . .? A birthday present for Mrs Ransome, which was a box with some roses from the garden and one of Bobbie’s prettiest handkerchiefs.
6 Why . . .? It was her granddaughter’s pram, but the little girl died when she was six months old.
7 Why . . .? Because they wanted to surprise Perks by jumping out and saying ‘Happy Birthday’ to him.
8 Why . . .? Because he thought it was charity.
9 What . . .? They said he was kind and polite and hardworking.
10 What . . .? The kind thoughts of his neighbours.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 7
Encourage students to speculate and to make guesses, but do not tell them the answers. They will find out as they read that the answers are 1b and 2c.

CHAPTERS 7 AND 8 WHILE READING
1 The children had stopped asking questions about their father because their questions seemed to make Mother unhappy.
2 In the paper-chase the boy in the red shirt did not come out of the tunnel, so the children went in to look for him.
3 The children had a candle (and some matches) to give them light in the tunnel.
4 The boy was lying on the ground because he had broken his leg.
5 Bobbie stayed with Jim, while the other two went for help.
6 Jim was the old gentleman’s grandson.
7 The old gentleman asked Mother to be Jim’s nurse.
8 The old gentleman asked Bobbie to keep her secret a little longer.

BEFORE READING CHAPTER 9 (THE LAST CHAPTER)
Encourage students to speculate and to make guesses, but do not tell them the answers. They will find out as they read that it is the children’s father, and Bobbie sees him first.

After Reading

ACTIVITY 1 AFTER READING
1 This is Perks. He has just come home from work and seen the birthday presents that the children have brought from people in the village.
2 This is the old gentleman. He saw the message on the sheet by the railway line, looked out at the station, and Phyllis has just run along the platform to give him a letter, which he is about to read.
3 This is the engine driver. The train has just begun to move and Bobbie, who had fallen into the coal heap, had touched his arm because she couldn’t make him hear.
4 This is the Station Master. He has just caught Peter stealing coal from the station yard, and seen the two girls, who told him they were helping Peter. He has realized who the children are, and is probably feeling a bit sorry for them.

ACTIVITY 2 AFTER READING
2+5 8+1 6+3+9 4+7
There was nearly a serious accident today when some trees and rocks fell down on the railway line. Luckily, the rock fall was seen by three children who were walking on the hillside beside the railway. They knew they could not get a warning to the station before the 11.29 train came by, so they used the girls’ red petticoats to make flags. The driver of the train saw them waving these red flags and stopped the train to find out what the matter was.

ACTIVITY 3 AFTER READING
Suggested answers:
MOTHER: We live very quietly. My husband is – is away.
OLD GENTLEMAN: He’s in prison, isn’t he?
MOTHER: Yes, he is. How did you know?
OLD GENTLEMAN: I read about it at the time in the newspapers.
MOTHER: Ah yes, the newspapers. But my husband is not a spy. He never sold secrets to anybody!
OLD GENTLEMAN: I’m sure he didn’t, Madam. I’m sure he’s an honest man.

MOTHER: Thank you for saying that.
OLD GENTLEMAN: Do your children know that their father is in prison?
MOTHER: No. It’s better that they know nothing about it.
OLD GENTLEMAN: What have you told them?
MOTHER: I’ve told them that he will be away for some time, on government business.
OLD GENTLEMAN: Is there anything I can do to help? Would you like me to talk to the police?
MOTHER: You’re very kind, but nobody will listen. I’ve tried everything. All I can do now is be brave and patient.

ACTIVITY 4 AFTER READING
Words across: government, station, fireman, steam, brake, coal, line, yard, heap
Words down: charity, fence, signal, pram, master, engine, wave, porter, tunnel, platform, passenger, driver, flag

ACTIVITY 5 AFTER READING
1 The words are: FIVE YEARS IN PRISON FOR SPY. They were on a piece of old newspaper that Perks used to put round a parcel of magazines, and Bobbie read the words on the way home.
2 Very unhappy. She felt it was like a terrible dream, because the ‘spy’ in prison was her father, and she had known nothing about it.
3 Later she showed the newspaper to her mother and they talked about it. After that, Bobbie secretly wrote a letter to the old gentleman, asking for his help to get her innocent father out of prison.
ACTIVITY 6 AFTER READING

'Would you do something for me today, just after the train comes out of the tunnel? If you see three children, waiting by the fence, waving their handkerchiefs (hands), could you wave back at them? You see, it's a special day for them. Their father, who will be on the 11.54 train, has just come out of prison. He was sent there for selling government secrets to another country, but he didn't do it. The police have now caught the real spy (criminal), and so this man can go home to his wife and children. They don't know he's coming, so it will be a wonderful surprise!'

ACTIVITY 7 AFTER READING

Suggested answers:

1 A sheet is usually used on a bed, for sleeping on.
   In the story the children used a sheet to write a message on, because they needed something big enough for somebody to read it from a train.

2 Paint is usually used for colouring walls, etc., or for making pictures. In the story the children used paint like a pen, for writing words.

3 A petticoat is a kind of under skirt, worn by women.
   In the story the children used the girls’ petticoats to make red flags to stop the train.

4 A pram is usually used for carrying a baby in. In the story the children used a pram to carry all the birthday presents to Perks’s house.

ACTIVITY 8 AFTER READING

Open answers.