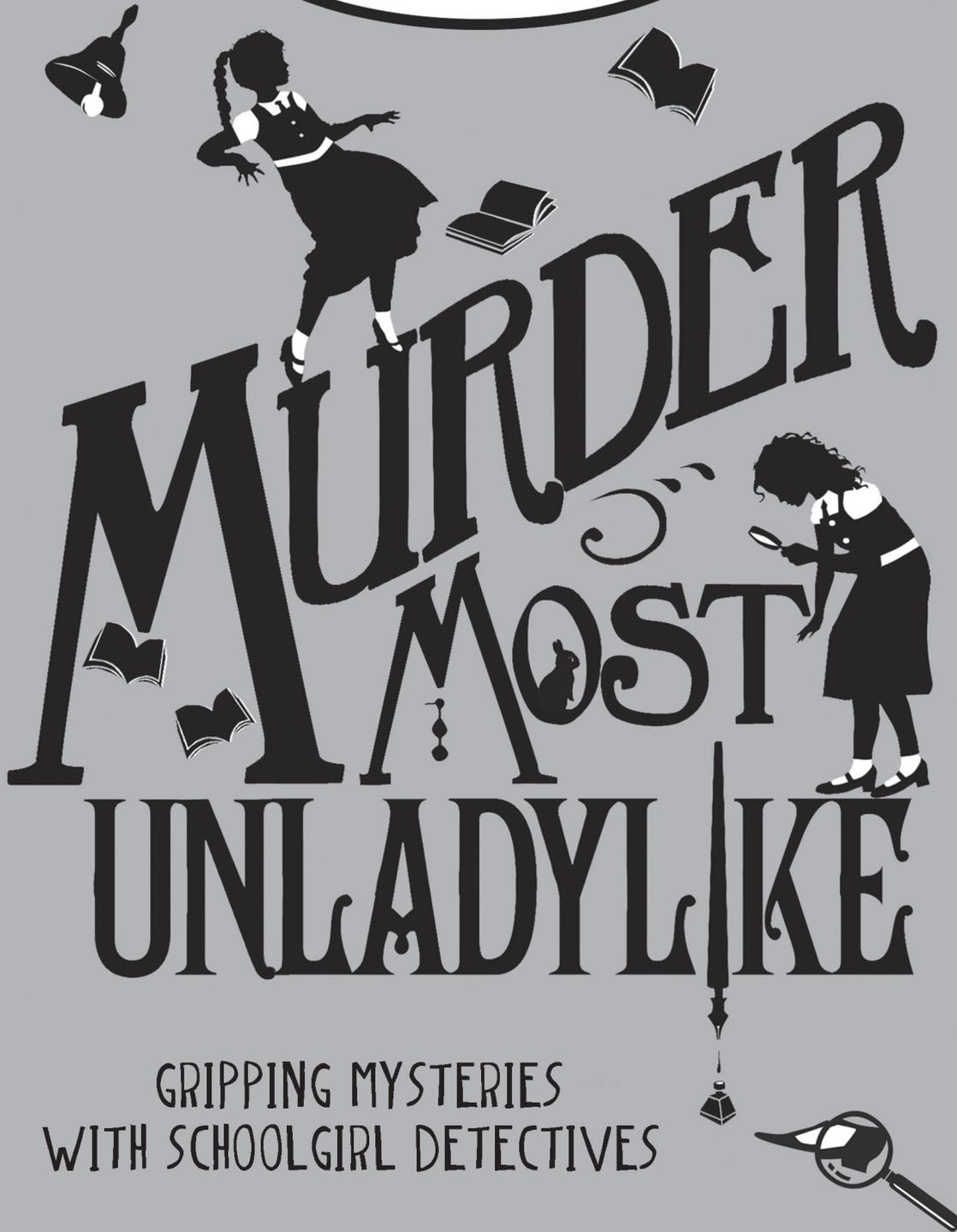




A MURDER  
MOST UNLADYLIKE  
MYSTERY



GRIPPING MYSTERIES  
WITH SCHOOLGIRL DETECTIVES

ROBIN STEVENS



Schools

Inspiring you to share stories



## Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the *Murder Most Unladylike* activity pack. This is the first novel in an exciting new mystery series, in which readers get to join a secret detective society at Deepdean School for Girls, and follow the clues and evidence uncovered by our two memorable super sleuths, Hazel Wong and Daisy Wells, to solve the murder of their Science mistress, Miss Bell. Will our two determined detectives succeed? Will their friendship stand the test? More importantly, can your class solve the mystery before Hazel and Daisy discover their final piece of evidence?

## What is covered in the pack:

This pack is designed around encouraging students to read and respond to the text, offering opportunities for creative writing, research, group discussion and drama. Each activity builds on the previous one, allowing students to explore the characters, themes and historical setting of the novel (the 1930s), while also compiling their own casebooks to record important information and clues. By completing the activities, students will be learning about the key elements of a good murder mystery, which they can then put into practice through imaginative drama and their own creative writing. The culmination of the project is a 1930s inspired party, where students can celebrate their learning – and enjoy some cakes, biscuits and other treats that are a firm favourite during bunbreaks at Deepdean School for Girls!



## Skills:

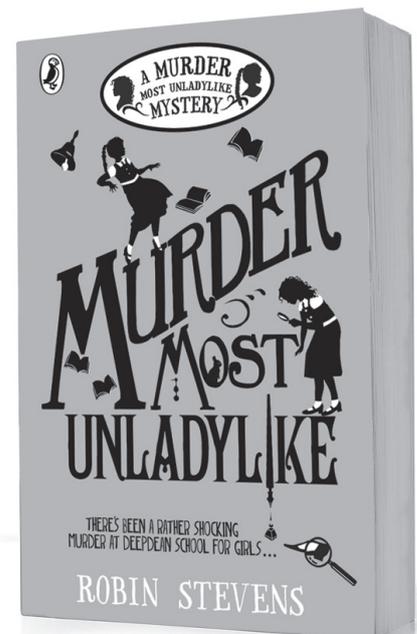
The skills that students will develop from this pack include:

- creative writing and composition;
- group discussion, including listening and responding constructively;
- identifying and discussing themes and conventions;
- drawing inferences and motives from a character's actions;
- discussing and evaluating how authors use language;
- providing reasoned justifications for their views;
- performing their own dramas and compositions.

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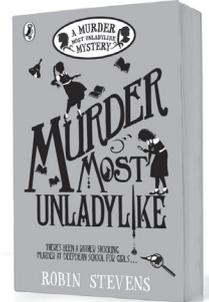
## About *Murder Most Unladylike*

*Murder Most Unladylike* is the award-winning first title in Robin Stevens' gripping mystery series, starring schoolgirl detectives Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong.

When Daisy Wells and Hazel Wong set up their very own secret detective agency at Deepdean School for Girls, they struggle to find any truly exciting mysteries to investigate. (Unless you count the case of Lavinia's missing tie. Which they don't.)

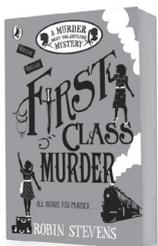
Then Hazel discovers the Science mistress, Miss Bell, lying dead in the Gym. She assumes it was a terrible accident – but when she and Daisy return five minutes later the body has disappeared. Now Hazel and Daisy not only have a murder to solve: they have to prove one happened in the first place.

Determined to get to the bottom of the crime before the killer strikes again (and before the police can get there first, naturally), Hazel and Daisy must hunt for evidence, spy on their suspects and use all the cunning and intuition they can muster. But will they succeed? And can their friendship stand the test?



## More *Murder Most Unladylike* Mysteries

Daisy and Hazel's brilliantly plotted second mystery, *Arsenic for Tea*, is set at Daisy's home, Fallingford, where they are for the holidays. Daisy's glamorous mother is throwing a tea party for Daisy's birthday, and the whole family is invited, from eccentric Aunt Saskia to dashing Uncle Felix. Then one of their party falls seriously, mysteriously ill – and everything points to poison.



*First Class Murder* sees Daisy and Hazel taking a holiday on the world-famous Orient Express, but it's clear that each of their fellow first-class passengers has something to hide . . . Then, during dinner, there is a scream from inside one of the cabins. When the door is broken down, a passenger is found murdered, her stunning ruby necklace gone. But the killer has vanished – as if into thin air.

In *Jolly Foul Play*, Daisy and Hazel return to Deepdean for a new school term, but nothing is the same. There's a new Head Girl, Elizabeth Hurst, and a team of Prefects – and these bullying Big Girls are certainly not good eggs. Then, after the fireworks display on Bonfire Night, Elizabeth is found – murdered. Many girls at Deepdean had reason to hate Elizabeth, but who might have committed such foul play?



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## About Robin Stevens

Robin Stevens was born in California and grew up in an Oxford college, across the road from the house where Alice in Wonderland lived. She has been making up stories all her life.

When she was twelve, her father handed her a copy of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* and she realised that she wanted to be either Hercule Poirot or Agatha Christie when she grew up. When it occurred to her that she was never going to be able to grow her own spectacular walrus moustache, she decided that Agatha Christie was the more achievable option.

She spent her teenage years at Cheltenham Ladies' College, reading a lot of murder mysteries and hoping that she'd get the chance to do some detecting herself (she didn't). She went to university, where she studied crime fiction, and then worked in children's publishing. She is now a full-time writer.

Robin lives in London with her pet bearded dragon, Watson.

For more information on Robin Stevens, you can visit: [www.robin-stevens.co.uk/about-me](http://www.robin-stevens.co.uk/about-me)

Follow Robin on Twitter: [@redbreastedbird](https://twitter.com/redbreastedbird)



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## Extract from *Murder Most Unladylike*

### Chapter 1

This is the first murder that the Wells & Wong Detective Society has ever investigated, so it is a good thing Daisy bought me a new casebook. The last one was finished after we solved *The Case of Lavinia's Missing Tie*. The solution to that, of course, was that Clementine stole it in revenge for Lavinia punching her in the stomach during lacrosse, which was Lavinia's revenge for Clementine telling everyone Lavinia came from a broken home. I suspect that the solution to this new case may be more complex.

I suppose I ought to give some explanation of ourselves, in honour of the new casebook. Daisy Wells is the President of the Detective Society, and I, Hazel Wong, am its Secretary. Daisy says that this makes her Sherlock Holmes, and me Watson. This is probably fair. After all, I am much too short to be the heroine of this story, and who ever heard of a Chinese Sherlock Holmes?

That's why it's so funny that it was me who found Miss Bell's dead body. In fact, I think Daisy is still upset about it, though of course she pretends not to be. You see, Daisy is a heroine-like person, and so it should be her that these things happen to.

Look at Daisy and you think you know exactly the sort of person she is – one of those dainty, absolutely English girls with blue eyes and golden hair; the kind who'll gallop across muddy fields in the rain clutching hockey sticks and then sit down and eat ten iced buns at tea. I, on the other hand, bulge all over like Bibendum the Michelin Man; my cheeks are moony-round and my hair and eyes are stubbornly dark brown.

I arrived from Hong Kong part way through second form, and even then, when we were all still shrimps (shrimps, for this new casebook, is what we call the little lower-form girls), Daisy was already famous

throughout Deepdean School. She rode horses, was part of the lacrosse team, and was a member of the Drama Society. The Big Girls took notice of her, and by May the entire school knew that the Head Girl herself had called Daisy a 'good sport'.

But that is only the outside of Daisy, the jolly-good-show part that everyone sees. The inside of her is not jolly-good-show at all.

It took me quite a while to discover that.

### Chapter 2

Daisy wants me to explain what happened this term up to the time I found the body. She says that is what proper detectives do – add the evidence first – so I will. She also says that a good Secretary should keep her casebook on her at all times to be ready to write up important events as they happen. It was no good reminding her that I do that anyway.

The most important thing to happen in those first few weeks of the autumn term was the Detective Society, and it was Daisy who began that. Daisy is all for making up societies for things. Last year we had the Pacifism Society (dull) and then the Spiritualism Society (less dull, but then Lavinia smashed her mug during a séance, Beanie fainted and Matron banned spiritualism altogether).

But that was all last year, when we were still shrimps. We can't be messing about with silly things like ghosts now that we are grown-up third formers – that was what Daisy said when she came back at the beginning of this term having discovered crime.

I was quite glad. Not that I was ever afraid of ghosts, exactly. Everyone knows there aren't any. Even so, there are enough ghost stories going round our school to horrify anybody. The most famous of our ghosts is Verity Abraham, the girl who committed suicide off the Gym balcony the term before I arrived at Deepdean, but there are also ghosts of an ex-





mistress who locked herself into one of the music rooms and starved herself to death, and a little first-form shrimp who drowned in the pond.

As I said, Daisy decided that this year we were going to be detectives. She arrived at House with her tuck box full of books with sinister, shadowy covers and titles like *Peril at End House* and *Mystery Mile*. Matron confiscated them one by one, but Daisy always managed to find more.

We started the Detective Society in the first week of term. The two of us made a deadly secret pact that no one else, not even our dorm mates, Kitty, Beanie and Lavinia, could be told about it. It did make me feel proud, just me and Daisy having a secret. It was awfully fun too, creeping about behind the others' backs and pretending to be ordinary when all the time we knew we were detectives on a secret mission to obtain information.

Daisy set all our first detective missions. In that first week we crept into the other third-form dorm and read Clementine's secret journal, and then Daisy chose a first former and set us to find out everything we could about her. This, Daisy told me, was practice – just like memorizing the licences of every motor car we saw.

In our second week there was the case of why King Henry (our name for this year's Head Girl, Henrietta Trilling, because she is so remote and regal, and has such beautiful chestnut curls) wasn't at Prayers one morning. But it only took a few hours before everyone, not just us, knew that she had been sent a telegram saying that her aunt had died suddenly that morning.

'Poor thing,' said Kitty, when we found out. Kitty has the next-door bed to Daisy's in our dorm, and Daisy has designated her a Friend of the Detective Society, even though she is still not allowed to know about it. She has smooth, light brown hair and masses

of freckles, and she keeps something hidden in the bottom of her tuck box that I thought at first was a torture device but turned out to be eyelash curlers. She is as mad about gossip as Daisy, though for less scientific reasons. 'Poor old King Henry. She hasn't had much luck. She was Verity Abraham's best friend, after all, and you know what happened to Verity. She hasn't been the same since.'

'I don't,' said Beanie, who sleeps next to me. Her real name is Rebecca but we call her Beanie because she is very small, and everything frightens her. Lessons frighten her most of all, though. She says that when she looks at a page all the letters and numbers get up and do a jig until she can't think straight. 'What did happen to Verity?'

'She killed herself,' said Kitty in annoyance. 'Jumped off the Gym balcony last year. Come on, Beans.'

'Oh!' said Beanie. 'Of course. I always thought she tripped.'

Sometimes Beanie is quite slow.

Something else happened at the beginning of term that turned out to be very important indeed: The One arrived.

You see, at the end of last year Miss Nelson, the Deputy Headmistress and our dull old Music and Art mistress, retired. We were expecting her to be replaced by someone else quite as uninteresting – but the new Music and Art master, Mr Reid, was not uninteresting at all. He was also not old.

Mr Reid had rugged cheekbones and a dashing moustache, and he slicked his hair back with brillantine. He looked exactly like a film star, although nobody could agree on which one. Kitty thought Douglas Fairbanks Jr, and Clementine said Clark Gable, but only because Clementine is obsessed with Clark Gable. Really though, it did not matter. Mr Reid was a man, and he was not Mr MacLean (our dotty, unwashed old Reverend whom Kitty calls Mr





MacDirty), and so the whole school fell in love with him at once.

A deadly serious half-secret Society dedicated to the worship of Mr Reid was established by Kitty. At its first meeting, he was rechristened The One. We all had to go about making the secret signal at each other (index finger raised, right eye winking) whenever we were in His Presence.

The One had barely been at Deepdean for a week when he caused the biggest shock since Verity last year. You see, before this term, the whole school knew that Miss Bell (our Science mistress) and Miss Parker (our Maths mistress) had a secret. They lived together in Miss Parker's little flat in town, which had a spare room in it. The spare room was the secret. I did not understand when Daisy first told me about the spare room; now we are in the third form, though, of course I see exactly what it must mean. It has something to do with Miss Parker's hair, cut far too short even to be fashionable, and the way she and Miss Bell used to pass their cigarettes from one to the other during bunbreaks last year.

There were no cigarettes being passed this term, though, because on the first day Miss Bell took one look at The One and fell for him as madly as Kitty did.

This was a terrible shock. Miss Bell was not considered a beauty. She was very tucked-in and buttoned-up and severe in her white lab coat. And she was poor. Miss Bell wore the same three threadbare blouses on rotation, cut her own hair and did secretarial work for Miss Griffin after school hours for extra pay. Everyone rather pitied her, and we assumed The One would too. We were astonished when he did not.

'Something has clearly *happened* between them,' Clementine told our form at the end of the first week of term. 'I went to the science lab during bunbreak and I came upon Miss Bell and The One *canoodling*. It was really shocking!'

'I bet they weren't, really,' said Lavinia scornfully. Lavinia is part of our dorm, too – she is a big, heavy girl with a stubborn mop of dark hair, and most of the time she is unhappy.

'They were!' said Clementine. 'I know what it looks like. I saw my brother doing the same thing last month.'

I couldn't stop myself blushing. Imagining stiff, well-starched Miss Bell *canoodling* (whatever that meant) was extraordinarily awkward.

Then Miss Parker got to hear about it. Miss Parker is truly ferocious, with chopped-short black hair and a furious voice that comes bellowing out of her tiny body like a foghorn. The row was immense. Almost the whole school heard it, and the upshot was that Miss Bell was not allowed to live in the little flat any more.

Then, at the beginning of the second week of term, everything changed again. We could barely keep up with it all. Suddenly The One no longer seemed to want to spend time with Miss Bell. Instead, he began to take up with Miss Hopkins.

Miss Hopkins is our Games mistress. She is round and relentlessly cheerful (unless you happen not to be good at Games) and she marches about the school corridors brandishing a hockey stick, her athletic brown hair always coming down from its fashionable clipped-back waves. She *is* pretty, and (I think) quite young, so it was not at all surprising that The One should notice her – it was only shocking that he should jilt Miss Bell to do it.

So now it was The One and Miss Hopkins seen canoodling in form rooms, and all Miss Bell could do was storm past them whenever she saw them, her lips pursed and her glare freezing.

General Deepdean opinion was against Miss Bell. Miss Hopkins was pretty while Miss Bell was not, and Miss Hopkins's father was a very important magistrate in Gloucestershire while Miss Bell's was



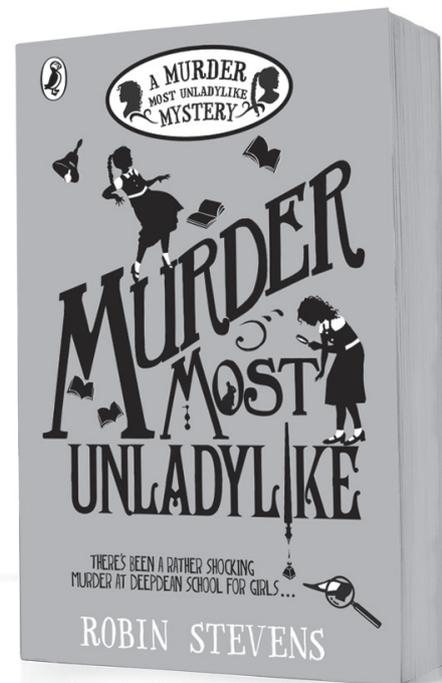


nothing important at all. But I could not help being on Miss Bell's side. After all, it was not *her* fault that The One had jilted her, and she could not help being poor. Now that she could not stay in the flat, of course, she was poorer than ever, and that made me worry.

The only thing Miss Bell had to cheer her up was the Deputy Headmistress job, and even that was not the consolation it should have been. You see, Miss Griffin had to appoint a new Deputy, and after a few weeks the rumour went round that Miss Bell was about to be chosen. This ought to have been lucky – once she was formally appointed, Miss Bell's money worries would vanish for good – but all it really meant was that the mistresses who were not

chosen began to despise her. There were two others really in the running. The first was Miss Tennyson, our English mistress – that is her name, really, although she is no relation to the famous one. If you've seen that painting of the Lady of Shalott drooping in her boat, you have seen Miss Tennyson. Her hair is always down round her face, and she is as drippy as underdone cake. The second was Miss Lappet, our History and Latin mistress, who is grey and useless and shaped like an overstuffed cushion, but thinks she is Miss Griffin's most trusted adviser. They were both simply fuming about the Deputy Headmistress job, and snubbed Miss Bell in the corridor whenever they saw her.

And then the murder happened.



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## Meeting the detectives



**Learning objective:** to explore a chapter to learn about character and narrative style.

Hazel Wong has started a new casebook in readiness for the next crime to be solved by the Wells & Wong Detective Society. Its members are Hazel Wong and Daisy Wells, two pupils at Deepdean School for Girls. As official Secretary of the society, Hazel is the author of the casebook and reveals that it was she who discovered the body of Miss Bell, one of the mistresses at their school.

### Activity one:

- Read the first chapter of *Murder Most Unladylike* with your students.
- Consider how first chapters are written to capture the reader's attention and to set the scene for the story. In groups, ask students to write down what they have learned from this short chapter. Invite groups to share their findings and make a whole-class list.
- Consider the character of Hazel Wong, who is the narrator of the story. What do we learn about her in this chapter? For example: she is Chinese, comes from Hong Kong, is the Secretary of the society, describes herself as 'bulging all over' with moony-round cheeks, and doesn't consider herself to be a heroic character at all.
- What is Hazel's view of Daisy? Explore the contrasting description of Hazel's fellow detective in the opening chapter. How are the two characters set up to be opposites of each other? Ask students to list some adjectives that might describe each character based on the limited information we have been given. What first impressions do we have of Hazel and Daisy?
- Pose the question: through which character's eyes are we seeing the story unfold? Why might the author have chosen to have Hazel as the narrator?
- Consider the narrative technique of telling the story as a journal/diary. What are the advantages of this technique? For example, it allows us to step 'inside the head' of Hazel and experience her thoughts and emotions as we progress through the story. Are there any features of a personal account we also need to consider when examining the text? For example, Hazel's own views and emotions might colour how we see events or other characters. Do the students think that Hazel sounds like an honest narrator? Is there evidence in the first chapter to support their view?
- The chapter ends by suggesting that Daisy is not all that she seems. Invite the students to consider what this might mean and share their ideas of how the two girls might have become friends and fellow detectives. Despite their differences, what might they have in common? Record the students' ideas. This list could be revisited as the story progresses.





### Activity two:

- If possible, provide students with notebooks that they can use as their own 'detective' casebooks. Explain that, throughout the course of the story, Hazel and Daisy will be investigating the murder of Miss Bell: uncovering clues, listing their suspects, and coming up with their own theories and motives as to who the murderer might be. The students can also take on this role, using their own casebooks to record new information as it is revealed, as well as their own theories about the murderer's identity.
- Students can use their casebooks in any way they wish, but you might want to suggest that they use a variety of techniques to help them to keep track of the characters and the plot developments. For example, students could draw and update maps (using a key to record important events), create a timetable of events for the time of the murder, draw pictures and make notes, use flow diagrams and so on. Books could also be decorated and personalised, to make them feel special.
- Students may also wish to record any unfamiliar vocabulary that they come across. Throughout the story there are many detective phrases and expressions, as well as objects and other references to the period (1930s). Encourage students to look up the meaning of a word and write its explanation in their casebook. These can also be shared and discussed in class sessions – perhaps contributing to a whole-class 'glossary' of useful words and phrases.
- To support this work, you may want to have a list of the key suspects on prominent display in your classroom (a list of staff names and descriptions are provided at the start of the novel). Students can then vote at the beginning or end of each session as to who they think their prime suspect is most likely to be. Encourage students to use evidence from their casebooks and make reference to the book text, to support their views. This provides a great stimulus for discussion, with students putting forward their own individual arguments as to who they believe committed the murder of Miss Bell!

Note: with a book of this type, inevitably there will be students who will read ahead or even skip to later chapters to uncover the murderer. From the outset, discuss this as a class and how revealing later scenes before others have reached them would spoil the fun of the experience. Agree that your sessions are to be 'spoiler-free'. If students are aware of the identity of the murderer (or murderers!) ahead of time, then encourage them not to share this with others. You may even want to encourage them to try and throw their fellow detectives off the scent by putting forward other characters as the potential prime suspects. Try to ensure the students are aware that you should all work together to preserve the fun and mystery of the text – and even those who might skip ahead and think they know everything about the story might still be in for a few unexpected surprises!





## Getting spooked!



**Learning objective:** to explore a chapter to learn how an author creates tension and atmosphere.

Hazel Wong has discovered the body of Miss Bell in the Gym – evidence which then promptly disappeared. Daisy and Hazel are keeping this secret to themselves, although Hazel is starting to worry that the murderer might discover what they know and come after them.

### Activity one:

In this short extract (pages 14–15), Hazel is making her way towards the Gym, but is nervous because of her surroundings and the legend of the ghost that haunts this part of the school:

*There's a school legend that the Gym is haunted by the ghost of Verity Abraham. When I first heard it I was younger and I believed it. I imagined Verity all bloody, with her long hair hanging down in front of her face, wearing her pinafore and tie and holding a lacrosse stick.*

*Even now that I am older and not a shrimp any more, just knowing that I am on my way to the Gym gives me the shivers. It does not help that the Gym corridor is awful. It's packed full of dusty, broken bits of old school furniture that stand up like people in the gloom. That evening all the lights were off, and everything was smudged in murky shades of grey and brown. I ran very fast down the corridor, pushed open the doors to the Gym and galumphed in, wheezing.*

- Ask students to highlight a word and then a sentence from the extract that stands out for them, perhaps because it represents a powerful use of language, or they thought it best represents the mood of the scene. Next, ask them to record their own personal response to the extract. This could be a word, phrase or sentence. Students should share their choices with a partner, giving reasons for the word and sentence that they chose, and their own personal response to the extract. Explore some of these as a whole class/group.
- Ask students to reread the extract and consider how the author creates a mood for this scene. What powerful words and phrases communicate this? Compare with those that the children chose earlier.
- Explain what a simile is – a description that compares one thing with another thing of a different kind. Challenge the children to find the simile in the extract (...*dusty, broken bits of old school furniture that stand up like people in the gloom*). Do they think it is an effective writing technique – and if so, why? Challenge the children to invent their own similes to describe the broken bits of old school furniture.





### Activity two:

In this short extract (page 35), Hazel is struggling to get to sleep. Still haunted by the memory of finding Miss Bell's dead body, Hazel starts to imagine that the sounds she hears are more frightening than they really are:

*I went back to my bed, but it was a very long time before I got to sleep. I could hear Daisy breathing peacefully next to me, and thumping from Lavinia's bed as she rolled to and fro in her sleep. But then there were other noises I was not so sure about. The House pipes squealed and groaned louder than I had ever heard them before, and then there was a squeak below me, rattles and rustles in the walls; a soft sigh just outside the door. A floorboard, I told myself – mice ... Matron on her rounds – but I was most shamefully afraid. I squeezed my eyes tight shut, to stop myself looking at the curtain floating in the breeze from our open window (Matron believes fresh air is good for children), and tried to be brave.*

- Ask students to consider why Hazel might be afraid. What events have recently happened in the story – and what thoughts has Hazel shared with the reader that might contribute to her feeling of unease? Explore the students' ideas.
- Pose the question: would we be afraid if we were Hazel? Revisit the previous scene when Hazel discovers the body in the Gym. How do we feel as a reader? Is there an element of excitement as well as fear? Consider the genre of murder-mystery/detective writing and why it might be popular with readers.
- How does the author describe the House in this extract? Ask students to highlight the relevant adjectives and phrases. Consider how the author has approached this description. What senses is the author exploring here? What is the significance of the floating curtain and why that might contribute to Hazel's feeling of unease?
- Ask the students to share their own experiences of when they might have been feeling afraid. Did they invent scary possibilities for the sounds and sights that they experienced? What might contribute to our feelings of being frightened? Perhaps being in an unfamiliar place, somewhere that is dark, having recently read or watched something scary and so on. Ask students to record their ideas in preparation for the next activity.





### Activity three:

- Tell the students they are going to be writing their own short descriptive piece to describe a spooky scene. Revisit the two extracts to remind the children of the use of adjectives, similes and powerful phrases to help create a mood.
- Ask students to imagine that they are alone at school after dark. Using the senses as a starting point, ask the children to imagine what they might see, hear, touch and smell as they explore their dark environment. Would perfectly normal everyday objects suddenly take on scary silhouettes? What about the types of noises they might hear? The creak of floorboards, the ticking of a clock, the groan of pipes, the hum of distant traffic and so on.
- Allow time for the students to plan and write their scenes. Then invite volunteers to share their writing with the rest of the class/group. Highlight and talk about effective use of adjectives and similes.





## A difference of opinion



**Learning objective:** to create character profiles and use hot-seating techniques to explore a character's feelings.

Hazel and Daisy go into town to confront Miss Tennyson at the Willow Tea Rooms. Miss Tennyson acts very suspiciously to their questioning. However, as they are leaving, Hazel and Daisy bump into Head Girl, Henrietta Trilling ('King Henry'), heading towards the Willow. Hazel immediately realises there must be something they are missing, but Daisy is adamant that the case is solved.



### Activity one:

- Begin the session by asking groups to take two large sheets of paper. At the top of the first, write the name 'Daisy' and on the second, 'Hazel'. Pose the question: how do these characters approach their detective work? Challenge the students to record their thoughts and ideas on the paper provided, developing a character profile for each of the main protagonists. Prompt them to refer back to the book text to find supporting evidence for their views.
- Invite each group to share their feedback with the others. Discuss the differences and similarities between the two characters. Also note any key scenes or incidents that the students may have identified to support their profiles.
- Who do they think makes the best detective? Allow time for groups to debate which character they feel has contributed the most to the case. Consider if it is a fair question. Do the characters complement each other, supporting the other's weaknesses? Ask the students to describe situations in which they might have needed to work as a team to achieve an objective. What attributes should a good team player have?





### Activity two:

- After reading Part Six, Chapter Three, focus on the following short extract (page 203):

*'Daisy!' I said. 'I think King Henry was about to go into the Willow!'*

*'So?' asked Daisy.*

*'So, I think she was going to meet Miss Tennyson! Daisy, I think she's mixed up in this somehow. There's something going on we don't understand yet!'*

*'No there isn't,' snapped Daisy. 'Don't be stupid, Hazel! We've solved the murder and that's that. Leave off, can't you?'*

*'No I can't,' I said. 'We haven't solved the murder. King Henry as good as proves it. I tell you—'*

*'Oh, DO BE QUIET!' shouted Daisy. 'I don't want to hear another word about it. I'm thinking, can't you see?'*

- Discuss what is happening in this scene. Why does Hazel believe that there is more to the mystery than meets the eye? What is Daisy's reaction to this and why might this be the case? Display and revisit the character profiles from the previous activity. Discuss how this scene highlights their differences as detectives – Hazel is more thoughtful and adaptable, whereas Daisy is more pragmatic and inflexible.
- In pairs or small groups, ask the students to hot-seat each of the characters, exploring their thoughts and feelings about the Miss Tennyson and King Henry encounter. One student can take on the role of Daisy or Hazel, while other students ask questions to prompt responses. Another student can then take on the role of the other detective.





### Activity three:

- Revisit an earlier scene in the novel, when Daisy and Hazel have a disagreement over Miss Hopkins. Focus on the following extract (page 130):

*'Why do you care if Miss Hopkins doesn't have an alibi?' I asked as we walked down to school. 'If she's got a motive and she's been behaving extremely oddly, why shouldn't she be a suspect?'*

*Daisy glared at me. 'You know why!' she said. 'Because she didn't do it, I know she didn't. And now we have to rule her out all over again. It's simply not tidy.'*

*'You only want to clear her name because you like her and you don't want her to have done it!'*

*'I don't see what's wrong with that!'*

*'Daisy, you can't be a proper detective if you don't follow the clues!' I said. 'What if she did do it?'*

*'She didn't! Anyway, I'm the President of the Society. Have you forgotten?'*

*'What does that matter? I thought you said that I was the cleverest person you knew in the whole school?'*

*'Apart from me! And I say that I don't think Miss Hopkins did it!'*

*We glared at each other.*

- Recap what is happening in this part of the story. Hazel has discovered that Miss Hopkins, who was previously a non-suspect, doesn't have an alibi after all. Daisy is frustrated by the news because she likes Miss Hopkins and doesn't like her ideas challenged.
- Explore the extract together. Does this scene support the students' character profiles that they created earlier (see activity one)? Who do they think is at fault – or are both girls responsible for the argument? Consider why these scenes of tension and conflict are important to making a good story.
- Ask the students to imagine they could step into this scene and give advice to the characters, based on what they already know of the two characters and the story. This could be a written piece of work or a short drama/monologue. Invite students to share their responses.



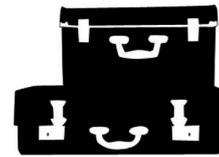


## Taking the trunk test



**Learning objective:** to retell a scene through the eyes of another character.

In a flashback to when Hazel first started at the school, we discover that the other girls in her dorm played a trick on her, by getting Hazel to climb inside a trunk to see how long she could stick it out inside. As soon as Hazel gets in the trunk, Daisy closes and locks the lid, and the girls run off giggling, leaving Hazel locked inside. Hazel realises she has been tricked and is the butt of a joke, but refuses to tell Matron about what happened.



### Activity one:

- After reading Part Four, Chapter Nine (pages 146–149) ask students to write a word or a phrase that best describes their response to this chapter. Explore these and discuss the different emotions that the scene evoked. Prompt students to reference the text to help explain their responses.
- Focus on Hazel's emotions in the chapter and how her feelings change throughout the scene – from describing herself as 'empty and out of place' to feeling excited and scared at being involved in the game.
- Do the students think Hazel was treated fairly by the other girls? Was Hazel right not to tell Matron about what happened? Consider if our view of Daisy has changed at all in light of the trick that she has played. Explore the students' responses.
- Hazel is often made to feel different from the other girls. Ask students to identify evidence of this in this chapter. (Daisy refers her to repeatedly as 'foreign girl'.) Can the students remember any other instances when Hazel's nationality has been referenced in a negative sense ('little bits of nastiness', as she calls these in the text)? Examples can be found on pages 21, 44, 93 and 108. Note that both pupils and a mistress at the school make negative comments. Discuss if such behaviour is acceptable, recapping your own school policy on bullying and inclusion if necessary. The story is set in the 1930s, when people may have been less educated about the culture and backgrounds of others, and hence would have easily fallen back on stereotypes. Ask students to define what a stereotype is. Do we still use them today? Discuss whether stereotypes are useful or harmful, and if so, why?





### Activity two:

- In pairs or small groups, ask the students to think about the scene from Daisy's perspective. What are her motives? Do we think Daisy is putting on an act in this chapter to be popular with the other girls? Might there be other reasons to consider also? For example, perhaps pranking new girls is a school tradition and a way of testing someone's bravery and loyalty? Would Daisy feel any guilt for what she says or how she acts? Invite groups to share their views.
- Ask students to write the same scene, but this time from Daisy's point of view. Prompt them to think about how Daisy might be feeling at different moments in the scene and her motives for performing the prank. How might her opinion of Hazel change as the scene develops? Invite students to share their responses.





## The haunting truth



**Learning objective:** to use empathy to explore character and emotion.

The following activities are focused on the discovery of a major piece of evidence, which points to the murderer of Miss Bell and Verity Abraham, and explains their motive. **Avoid tackling these until you are sure all students have had chance to read up to Part Eight, Chapter Six of the novel.**

While in the cloakroom, Hazel and Daisy discuss their suspicions of Miss Griffin and the possibility she may have been blackmailed by Miss Bell. A search of the cloakroom leads to the discovery of Verity Abraham's diary. Verity was the school girl who was found dead in the Gym the year before and is now believed to haunt it. The diary provides her account of her dealings with Miss Griffin, and reveals a big secret that Miss Griffin would be at pains to keep hidden . . .

### Activity one:

- After reading Part Eight, Chapter Six, discuss as a whole-class what the students have learned from Verity Abraham's diary and Joan Bell's letter. Do they believe this is conclusive evidence that proves the murderer's identity?
- What motives do we have for the murder of Verity and Miss Bell? Revisit the diary extracts and letter in Chapter Five, and the students' own casebooks (see activity one). Did any students predict this outcome to the story? What other evidence have the detectives uncovered that link the murderer to the crime (the gold earring)?
- Consider why Daisy and Hazel had never considered Miss Griffin as a suspect before. Had any of the students had their suspicions? Miss Griffin is seen by the girls as an authority figure. You may wish to revisit Hazel's first description of Miss Griffin (see pages 37–38). In this scene Miss Griffin also gives a sermon about honour and striving. There is a sense that her character is someone to whom we would look up. Are there authority figures that the students look up to? What are their qualities – what makes them special? Discuss Miss Griffin's motive for the murders: she felt a deep shame for the illegitimacy of her daughter. Would she have had such feelings today? Would she have been judged differently by others? Explore the students' ideas.
- In pairs, ask the students to imagine the scene when Miss Griffin confronts Verity on the Gym balcony. On separate sheets of paper, one for each character, ask students to record what they think the characters would have been feeling, their reasons for feeling that way, and their motivations for meeting/talking. Do they think that Miss Griffin had the intention of murdering Verity or did she simply choose the Gym balcony because it was private and no-one goes there? Was Verity's fall an act of murder or just an unfortunate accident? Encourage the students to record their ideas for the scene as they explore the two characters.

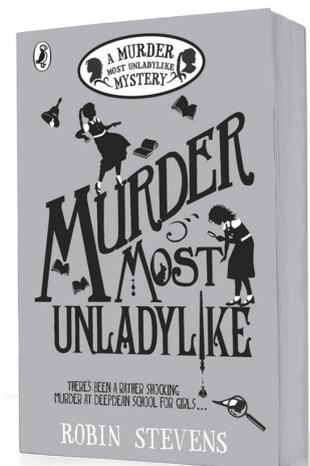




- In the same pairs, challenge students to plan and rehearse their own drama piece to explain what they think happened at that fatal meeting between Miss Griffin and Verity. What would have been said? How would the characters have acted? Consider how the scene might have escalated to the final outcome – and whether that involved Verity being pushed or accidentally falling.
- Invite confident volunteers to perform their drama for the rest of the class. Discuss the different interpretations of the characters and scene.

### Activity two:

- The girls at Deepdean School believe that Verity Abraham now haunts the Gym as a ghost. Of course, this is just a made-up story to scare the 'shrimps', but for this activity we are going to imagine that Verity's ghost is real!
- Revisit the learning from the previous activity, and discuss Verity's character and what we have learned about her dealings with Miss Griffin. If she really was now a ghost and trapped in the Gym, how do we think she would feel? In pairs or small groups, ask students to re-explore the emotions of the character now that she is a ghost. How might she feel when she watches the other girls playing and leading normal lives? Would she be angry and frustrated that she can't communicate the truth about what happened – or perhaps even feel sad and regretful instead? Allow time for groups to share their opinions.
- Based on their ideas, ask students to write their own narrative piece, imagining they are Verity's ghost. This could be a scene in which she watches Hazel find the body of Miss Bell or simply a scene where she watches other children playing and wants to be involved. Prompt children to consider the emotions of the character – whether that is anger, sadness, regret, and so on – and how these could be communicated through their written work. Invite students to share their pieces afterwards.





## A touch of drama



**Learning objective:** to use drama to reimagine a scene from the book.

Based on the evidence that Hazel and Daisy have provided, Inspector Priestly calls a meeting of the school staff in the music room. The two girls watch the scene through an adjoining doorway and listen to the inspector as he reveals the evidence and names the murderer. Other secrets are also revealed, including 'Mamzelle's' real identity.

### Activity one:

- After reading Part Eight, Chapter Nine, in which the inspector has gathered the staff together and reveals that he is looking for the murderer of Miss Bell and Verity Abraham, ask students to suggest how they think the scene might continue. What evidence will the inspector reveal? Students may wish to refer to their own notes and casebooks to remind themselves of the clues that led to the solving of the case. How will the characters react – in particular, the murderer? Do they think Hazel and Daisy will be spotted by anyone? Explore the students' ideas, before continuing with the scene and its aftermath, through Chapters Ten to Twelve.
- In Chapter Twelve, Hazel refers to the episode in the music room as 'a sort of film scene in my head'. Why might she think of that scene as something she would see in a film? Ask the students to imagine that they are making a film of the book and will be adapting the music room scene for a cinema audience. Put students in groups of eight to ten pupils. Group members can take on the role of one of the characters present at the meeting, with any remaining students taking on the role of 'directors' to help structure the action.
- Students should begin by considering each of the characters in the scene. What do we know about them? How might they look and behave? Provide copies of the 'A touch of drama' photocopiable resource for students to record their thoughts and ideas.
- Students will already be familiar with how the scene is told in the novel, but encourage them, for their 'film adaptation', to feel free to change the scene in any way they wish – perhaps making it even more dramatic and suspenseful. Students should decide on the space they will use for their scene and any props that might be required. Prompt them to consider how the space could be used and how characters might interact in this space. Perhaps, rather than having the staff members seated for the whole scene, some might stand or move about the room. Remember, the audience will know who the murderer is (from the evidence that has been collected by Hazel and Daisy) but the characters don't (apart from the inspector and the murderer themselves). How could this be played for maximum effect?
- Allow time for groups to rehearse their scene, exploring how the characters might act and interact with each other. Use a freeze frame technique to 'freeze' the action of one group, so other students can see and explore how that group is interpreting their scene. Focus on how scenes have been changed/adapted and techniques that have been used to add further drama and suspense.





### Activity two:

- Ask students to imagine that they are journalists from a local newspaper, who have been sent to Deepdean to report on the murder case. In pairs or small groups, allow time for students to discuss the key facts of the case that a journalist would want to report on, and the key characters/eye witnesses they would want to interview.
- Look at some examples of newspaper articles and focus on the format (you may also want to look at some examples of 1930s newspapers to compare and contrast – a Google Images search will bring up some good examples to look at). Consider the structure and content of a newspaper article. They feature an eye-catching headline and include facts and quotations, as well as photos and captions. Students should use the notes from their group discussion to begin drafting their articles. When they are happy with their draft, they can then design and create their newspaper page using desk-top publishing software. These can then be printed and displayed.
- Ask students to evaluate their own work and that of others. Draw focus to those articles that have used effective attention-grabbing headlines and/or made good use of quotes and facts. Also highlight examples of work for which students have captured the mood and tone of the different characters and setting.





## A touch of drama – Photocopiable

Inspector Priestly 	Miss Griffin 
Rogers (the spotty policeman) 	Miss Lappet 
Miss Hopkins 	The One 
Miss Parker 	Mamzelle 





## Meeting the detectives



**Learning objective:** to collaborate as a group to plan and write an engaging mystery story.

Throughout the novel, we have followed Hazel and Daisy's exciting journey, as the two girls investigated and solved the murder of Miss Bell – an adventure brought vividly to life by the pen of the author, Robin Stevens. Now it is time for the students to become murder mystery writers of their own, planning their own exciting narrative for others to explore and solve!

### Activity one:

- Explain to the students that they are going to be planning and writing their own murder-mystery story. You may want to do this as a whole class activity, or put students into groups. Begin by mind-mapping the important elements of a murder mystery story. These might include: a murder scene, a murderer, a motive, suspects, clues and evidence, a detective, the setting and so on. Students may also want to highlight their favourite scenes and moments from the book, and discuss how these helped to engage the reader.
- Next, choose a suitable setting for the murder mystery. You may want to choose a fictitious school, so that students can incorporate elements of their own experience into the story. Students can then start to develop their story, considering who will be the victim, the reasons for the murder (you may want to re-visit page 261 of the novel, when Hazel recounts the common motives for murder), how the murder will be discovered and so on. From here, students can draw up a list of characters/suspects and decide who will be the murderer. Effective murder mysteries will have a number of characters with strong motives for performing the murder, so students should keep in this mind when developing their characters.
- Finally, groups should consider the clues that might lead a detective to solving the murder. Could there be an object at the crime scene, perhaps? Or the discovery of an incriminating diary or letter? Does someone's alibi turn out to be a lie?

### Activity two:

- Based on their learning from the previous session, students can start to plan the key scenes of their story. It often works well to have these written on sticky notes or cards, so that they can be swapped and rearranged as students discuss the best order of events.
- Students should then choose an event from the story to write. Encourage students to be inventive in how they might present their element of the story. As well as straightforward narrative, students might also want to consider using a different format, such as a diary entry, a newspaper report, a journal, a transcript of an interview and so on.
- When students have worked on their pieces, these can then be arranged into an exciting 'Murder Mystery' display. You could leave the final identity of the murderer a mystery, so that viewers of the display are encouraged to explore it interactively, piecing together the clues and evidence to work out who did it!





## Living in the 1930s



**Learning objective:** to find out more about the historical setting of the book and host a 1930s party.

The novel is set in 1934, five years before the outbreak of the Second World War. The 1930s was a period of contrasts. On the one hand there was substantial economic growth, with a boom in new industries, such as housing, automobiles and aviation, as well as a significant rise in the popularity of leisure pursuits, in particular cinema-going and outdoor recreation. However, many areas of the country still suffered from unemployment and poverty, as the 1929 Depression continued to be felt.

### Activity one:

- Discuss the historical setting of the novel. What evidence is there in the text to tell us that the story is set in a different era? You may want to begin by comparing Deepdean School with your own, exploring the similarities and differences. Extend your investigation to other aspects of the story. For example, references to movie stars ('The One' is compared with Douglas Fairbanks and Clark Gable), food (particularly the many sweets and cakes during bunbreaks), as well as opinions and beliefs (the treatment of Hazel, the shame of Miss Griffin's past).
- In groups, provide students with access to books and the internet to perform additional research on the 1930s. Prompt students to find out more about home life, leisure (cinema, music, sports and so on), fashion, technology and transport. Some useful websites are listed below.
- Allow time for students to feedback their learning to the rest of the class. Work together to create a digital or physical scrapbook of facts and images that captures the decade. Compare and contrast with life today. If possible, watch some clips of 1930s movies and listen to music that was popular during that period.

**[www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zjwjmp3](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zjwjmp3)**

The BBC education website Bitesize provides a short film exploring home life in 1930s Britain.

**[www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zygc87h](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zygc87h)**

The BBC education website Bitesize has a short film that investigates housing in Britain since the 1930s.

**[www.markedbyteachers.com/gcse/sociology/media-leisure-fashion-britain-in-the-1930-s.html](http://www.markedbyteachers.com/gcse/sociology/media-leisure-fashion-britain-in-the-1930-s.html)**

Marked By Teachers offers a helpful overview of entertainment and leisure in the 1930s.

**[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/thirties-britain/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/thirties-britain/)**

The National Archives provides a number of interesting primary sources, exploring some of the political and social aspects of 1930s Britain.

**[www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNaoKle7Cto](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNaoKle7Cto)**

YouTube hosts a documentary exploring the key inventions of the 1930s.

**[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTWZ7inN\\_KM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wTWZ7inN_KM)**

YouTube hosts footage of daily life in the 1930s, highlighting fashion and transport.





### Activity two:

- Explain to the students that they are going to be having their own 1930s party. If you wish, this could be an event to which friends and family are also invited, giving students a chance to show off their learning from the *Murder Most Unladylike* project. It also provides a great opportunity to eat buns! Bunbreaks are a popular fixture of the Deepdean timetable, so why not give students a chance to turn their party into their own special 1930s bunbreak?
- Recipes for moon cakes and 'squashed fly' biscuits (also known as Garibaldi biscuits) are available online. Students could also be encouraged to research their own cake, tart and biscuit recipes, or use a favourite one from home.
- If suitable facilities are available, then students could then make their biscuits and cakes at school, or alternatively they could be made at home and brought in for the day of the party. Consider other elements you can add to your party setting to make it feel suitably 1930s, such as having music from the era, dressing up as a famous actor or actress, learning a popular dance such as swing or the jitterbug, and so on.





## Activity Sheet – Design Your Own Book Cover



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## Activity Sheet – Speak like Daisy and Hazel!

Daisy and Hazel live in 1934, when English sounded a little different to the way it does today. Guess what these words mean:

Bunbreak: .....

Spiffing: .....

Keep Mum: .....

Buck up: .....

Pax: .....

Good egg: .....

Brick: .....

Shrimp: .....

Big Girls: .....

Squashed Fly biscuits: .....

Dorm: .....

Tuck box: .....

Contraband: .....

Answers on the following page.





**Activity Sheet** – Speak like Daisy and Hazel! (Answers)

**Bunbreak:** A sweet treat, like a cake or a biscuit

**Spiffing:** Fantastic!

**Keep Mum:** Stay quiet

**Buck up:** Chin up!

**Pax:** Peace

**Good egg:** A nice person

**Brick:** Someone to rely on

**Shrimp:** A younger girl

**Big Girls:** The oldest girls in school

**Squashed Fly biscuits:** Raisin biscuits

**Dorm:** The room where Daisy, Hazel and their friends sleep in term time

**Tuck box:** A box where the girls keep sweets and toys

**Contraband:** Something that is not part of school uniform

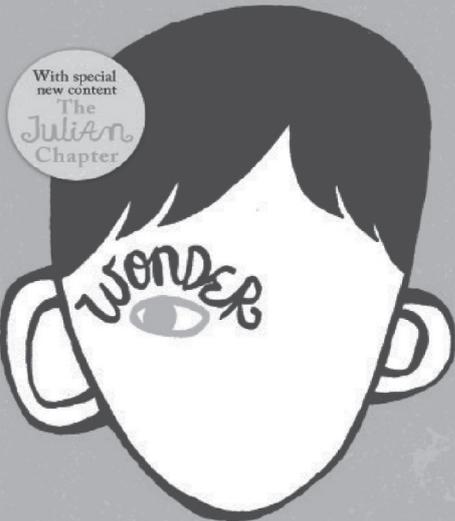


# The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas

JOHN BOYNE

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when you were born to stand out.*

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*R. J. Palacio*



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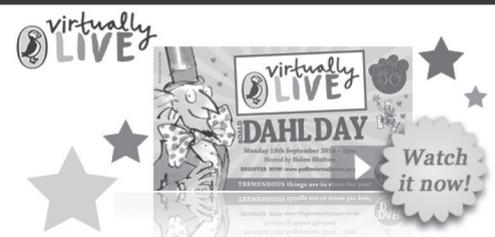
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