

KS2 Teacher Notes – *The Hedgehog* by Dick King-Smith

Chapter One pp. 1-7

Reading Comprehension

What does Ma hedgehog tell Pa hedgehog not to talk about in front of the children?

Hedgehogs getting run over by cars.

Read page 5. How would you describe Max's personality in your own words?

How does the author create this impression of Max? What type of imagery does the author use?

He uses a simile. He says, 'by now his eyes, his ears, and his wits were all as sharp as his spines.' (p. 5) Sharp can mean pointy (like a hedgehog's spines) or clever (like Max's wits). The author compares different things by using a word that has more than one meaning.

Write a few similes of your own. Remember that you can use the words *like* and *as* to compare two things.

For example:

She looked as relaxed as a cat lying on a hot radiator.

The surface of the lake was so still it looked like a mirror.

Synonym Challenge

Can you find

- a word on page 2 that means *lived* → *dwelt*
- a word on page 4 that means *walked quickly* → *trotted*
- a word on page 4 that means a *young female hedgehog* → *sow*
- a word on page 5 that means a *young male hedgehog* → *boar*

Set the Scene

Draw a picture of the park described on page 2. Remember to include all the animals that the author describes. You can add other animals and objects you might find in a park.

Chapter Two pp. 8-15

Reading Comprehension

What is Max researching?

He is trying to find out how humans cross the road safely.

The author describes Max as “nocturnal by nature” (p. 9). What does this mean?

It means that Max is an animal that sleeps in the day and is awake at night.

Why do you think Max is “confused” and “dazzled” by the lights of the traffic?

Because he is nocturnal so he is probably not used to bright lights.

What two words does Max use to describe the cars, buses and lorries?

“Noisy monsters” (p. 10)

Why do you think Max calls them this?

He might call them monsters because he doesn't know what they are, because he is a hedgehog. The cars probably seem very noisy and scary because he is so small compared to them.

What is the “magic place” Max describes on page 14?

A zebra / pelican crossing

Antonym Challenge

Can you find

- a word on page 9 that means the opposite of *silence* → *din*
- a word on page 9 that means the opposite of *suddenly* → *gradually*
- a word on page 13 that means the opposite of *in pairs* → *singly*
- a word on page 13 that means the opposite of *disrespectfully* → *respectfully*

Grammar Challenge – Word Roots

What is the word root for the word **disrespectfully** and its antonym?

Respect

What prefix is used in the word **disrespectfully**? What does this prefix do?

*The prefix is **dis-**. This prefix usually makes a word mean the opposite of its root word.*

Write down any other prefixes you can think of that also do this and give some examples of words in which they are used.

For example:

*Immodest means the opposite of modest. Modest is the word root. The prefix is **im-**.*

Chapter Three pp. 16-22

Reading Comprehension

What did the lorry driver do to avoid hurting Max?

He steered so that the lorry drove over Max but the wheels didn't touch him.

How did the cyclist feel when he saw Max lying in the road? Write down one **adverb** that tells you how he feels.

He feels sad because he thinks he has killed a hedgehog.

The adverb is 'sadly' (p. 20).

Synonym Challenge

Can you find

- a word on page 19 that means *remembered* → *recalled*
- a word on page 20 that means *empty* → *deserted*
- a word on page 21 that means *confused* → *muddled*
- 3 words on pages 20 & 21 that mean *said* → *echoed, cried, asked*

Create a Fact File

Create a **Hedgehog Fact File** using information you can find in *The Hedgehog*. Add your own illustrations. You could include information such as:

- where do hedgehogs live?
- what do they eat?
- when do they hunt?
- what dangers do they face?

Note: For a longer project, students could research hedgehogs more extensively on the internet using reputable websites such as The Woodland Trust

<<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/trees-woods-and-wildlife/animals/mammals/hedgehog/>> or National Geographic

<<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/general-animals/hedgehog-facts/>>

Students could make collage or model hedgehogs using craft supplies. They could present their Fact File(s) to one another, to other classes, or to parents/guardians.

Chapter Four pp. 23-34

Punctuation Challenge

Look at page 27. Challenge students to identify all the different types of punctuation on this page (full stop, comma, question mark, semi-colon, dash, inverted comma). Ask students to write one paragraph involving hedgehogs. Their paragraph should include as many of these punctuation marks as possible, used appropriately.

The paragraphs can be fiction or nonfiction, featuring their own characters or characters from the story – encourage them to be as imaginative as they like! It could even be a paragraph about their reaction to *The Hedgehog* so far.

Reading Comprehension

How did Ma feel about Max's injury? What **adverb** does the author use to let you know this?

Ma was worried about Max. We know this because the author uses the adverb "anxiously", which means worriedly.

What do Peony, Pansy and Petunia bring Max to make him feel better? Why?

They bring him slugs because hedgehogs like to eat slugs.

Why does Pa go next door to 5B?

To steal the dog food that the people who live there put out for the hedgehogs.

Act Out a Scene

Look at the dialogue and action on pages 23-26. Have students rewrite these pages in the form of a script with stage directions. (Or just work directly from the book.) In small groups, or as a class, act out this short scene. Encourage students to get into character by thinking carefully about how each of the hedgehogs is feeling in this scene.

Chapter Five pp. 35-45

Antonym Challenge

Can you find

- a word on page 35 that means the opposite of *dawdling* → *hurrying*
- a word in page 37 that means the opposite of *calmly* → *frantically*
- a word on page 39 that means the opposite of *narrow* → *wide*

Grammar Challenge – Apostrophes

Look at the sentence below from page 44.

“It’s a tall house, just big enough for one human to stand up in, and it has windows on three sides and it’s bright red.”

What do the apostrophes in this sentence do or show?

They show that the word “is” is there – “it’s” means “it is”.

What else can apostrophes show? Write down some examples.

They can show possession – that something belongs to someone. For example: Max’s mother was angry. This shows that the mother of Max was angry.

Creative Writing – Muddle Poems

When Max gets his first bang on the head, he starts to muddle his words. Challenge students to write a **Muddle Poem**, in which the speaker of the poem gets their words muddled just like Max.

Look back on some of the ways in which Max muddles his words in the book:

- “‘Am I where,’ said Max, looking round him.” (p. 39)
In this example, Max swaps two different words in one sentence.
- “‘Something bot me on the hittom,’ said Max” (p. 21)
In this example, Max swaps the first two letters of ‘hit’ with the first two letters of ‘bottom’.
- “‘Yes,’ said Max. ‘Not if you’re a hodgeheg.’” (p. 29)
In this example, Max mixes up two letters in one word – hedgehog.

Depending on the ability of your students, you could have them muddle the words of a well-known nursery rhyme or poem you have already studied.

Chapter Six pp. 46-56

Reading Comprehension

What word does the author use in the first sentence to express time?

“Meanwhile,”

What **type** of phrase is this?

An adverbial phrase

How does Pa react to the neighbour hedgehog speaking to him at first?

He thinks the neighbour is angry with him for eating his dog food. He wants to fight him.

Look at page 49. What **verb** does the author use to show that Pa is not happy?

“Growled”

Look at page 51. Why does Pa feel guilty?

Because the neighbour hedgehog is being kind and helpful even though Pa ate his dog food.

Straight after describing the milk cart crashing, the author goes back to describing the story from Ma and Pa’s point of view. What effect does this have?

It builds tension / suspense, because the reader has to wait to find out what happens to Max.

How does the author use humour at the end of the chapter?

Max says “There’s no point in crying over spilt milk!” This is funny because it’s a common saying that means you shouldn’t worry about problems that are easily fixed. But in this chapter Max nearly gets hit by a milk cart, so there really is spilt milk.

What metaphor does the author use to describe the spillage on page 55?

The spilt milk and juice and eggs are described as a ‘sea’.

Why do you think this metaphor is effective?

Because Max is small, so the spilt milk, juice and eggs would seem like a sea to him.

Write some metaphors of your own. Remember that a metaphor is a piece of imagery that describes one thing by saying that it is another thing, for example:

The moon was a friendly face in the sky, lighting their way.

Max looked up to see a forest of legs around him.

The long, spindly fingers of the trees caught at her hair.

Synonym Challenge

Can you find

- a word on page 48 that means *worry*

→ *fret*

- a word on page 53 that means *quietly* → *softly*
- a word on page 56 that means *happy* → *cheery*

Create a Story Board

Create a **story board** showing the events of Chapter Six. Decide whether you will include captions in the storyboard or show the action only through pictures.

For an extra challenge, include at least one **onomatopoeic** word in the captions or illustrations.

→ Extension

Use the storyboard exercise to encourage students to think about the structure of stories. Depending on their ability, they might think in terms of *beginning, middle, end* or in more specific plot arcs (e.g., *exposition, action, climax, resolution*).

Challenge students to take a well-known story (e.g., a fairy tale or popular book) and break down the structure of the plot. They could do this with basic storyboard items, bullet points or summarising sentences.

Chapter Seven pp. 57-67

Reading Comprehension

Why do Peony, Pansy and Petunia call their neighbour Uncle B?

Because he lives at 5B.

What is Uncle B's idea to help Max's research?

He thinks Max should do his research in the daytime, rather than the night-time, because that is when humans are awake.

Read page 65. What kind of person do you think Uncle B is describing?

A police officer, a school crossing patrol officer / lollipop person, a teacher

Find 3 **adverbs** used in this chapter. Rewrite the sentences with a different adverb of your choice. How does this change the meaning of the sentence?

Here are some examples:

Max slept heavily (p. 57)

The neighbour scratched his head thoughtfully with his hindfoot. (p. 59)

'Oh hello, sir,' he said politely. (p. 61)

He listened carefully while Max told him everything that had happened (p. 63)

'Trouble is with either of them, you've got to get across so quickly.' (p.65)

Grammar Challenge

Underline the **two fronted adverbials** in the sentences below (pp. 57-58).

“After it all, Max slept heavily, and by evening, when he reappeared, the neighbour had come through the hedge twice, once to enquire if Max was back and again to ask if he was quite well. At first Ma and Pa felt a little uncomfortable at these visits, Ma because she knew what Pa had done, Pa because he knew that the neighbour knew.”

Creative Writing – What Happens Next?

After reading Chapter Seven, write 2-4 paragraphs carrying on the story in the style of the author. Think about imagery the author uses and try to imitate it. How will Max try to cross the road this time?

Remember to include:

- adverbs and adjectives
- subordinate clauses
- direct speech using inverted commas

Chapter Eight pp. 68-78

Reading Comprehension

How does Max work out the ages of humans and “small humans”? Why?

He looks at how big their feet are, because “small humans” (children) have smaller feet than adults.

What is the “magic wand” that Max describes on page 73?

The lollipop lady’s stick

Why does Max describe it as magic?

Because when the lollipop lady holds it up, it makes all the traffic stop.

Look at pages 72-74. The author uses a lot of exclamation marks in Max’s speech on these pages. Why do you think the author does this?

He uses a lot of exclamation marks to show that Max is excited when he is speaking.

Look at the illustration on pages 70-71. How does the illustration and its position on the page help us to understand the story?

The illustration goes across two pages, so it looks like a long stretch of road. We can see the feet of the children and Max from low down, so it helps us to understand what the scene would look like from a hedgehog’s perspective.

Synonym Challenge

Look at the following sentences on page 76. Think about the meaning of the sentences and work out the synonym below.

“Pa considered this. ‘One of us ought to try it first. See if it works,’ he said.

‘And if anyone’s going, it’s me.’

‘Not without me,’ said Ma **stoutly**.”

A synonym for **stoutly** is

1. happily
2. stubbornly
3. quickly
4. fearfully

Create an Advertisement

Create a poster advertising a safe way of crossing the road to hedgehogs. Your method of crossing the road can be the same as Max's, or you can come up with a different idea.

Think about the features good adverts have. How do they persuade people?

Your advert might include the following:

- Bright colours and attractive illustrations
- A catchy slogan
- Information about the thing you are advertising

Chapter Nine pp. 79-86

Reading Comprehension

How does the author describe the hedgehogs at the very beginning of the chapter?

“Seven spiny shapes”

What type of language is this description an example of?

Alliteration

On pages 82 and 84, Max and the lollipop lady speak to each other. What device does the author use when describing this, and what effect does it have?

The author uses repetition. The phrase “the noise [she/Max] made meant nothing to [Max/her]” is repeated. The repetition has the effect of showing us what is happening from both Max’s and the lollipop lady’s perspective.

Look at this sentence from page 82.

“Never, for the rest of her life, did the lollipop lady forget the sight that now met her eyes.”

What kind of clause is underlined? What does it do in this sentence?

A subordinate clause – it adds information to the sentence. It emphasises that the lollipop lady never, ever forgot what she saw.

Synonym Challenge

Can you find

- a word on page 81 that means *hid* → *concealed*
- a word on page 81 that means *cold* → *crisp*
- a word on page 84 that means *surprised* → *astonished*
- a word on page 84 that means *noble* or *majestic* → *dignified*

Vocabulary Challenge

Look at the following sentence on page 84. Think about the meaning of the sentence and try to work out what the word means. Write down a few different guesses.

After you have guessed you can look up the word in a dictionary to check.

“Raising her magic wand on high, the great female strode into the middle of the street and at the sight of her the traffic **meekly** halted.”

Create a Character Profile

Pick one of the characters in *The Hedgehog* and make a character profile for them. Look for clues in the text about how they speak and how they behave. What do they like and dislike? How old are they? What do they look like?

Include as much information as you can find, and remember to use your imagination!

Write a Newspaper Article

Imagine you are a reporter writing an article about the hedgehogs crossing the road in this chapter. Your newspaper could be for humans, or hedgehogs, or another type of animal.

Think about some of the possible features of a newspaper article:

- A headline
- Separate paragraphs or columns
- A sentence that sums up the story
- Quotes from witnesses
- A photo with a caption