

# Secret Agent



## Before Reading

### Text Type

Draw students' attention to the:

- title
- illustrations
- chapter titles.

Ask "What type of book is this?" (Narrative) What things tell you this will be a narrative text?

### Visual Literacy

Examine the cover illustration to predict the content of the story. How has the illustrator used colour to add impact?

Discuss why the illustrator has written 'BOOM' on page 4, an exclamation mark and a question mark on page 9, and an exclamation mark on page 23.

Have students examine and discuss the layout and design of the pages.

### Background Knowledge

Discuss the job of a secret agent. What kind of work do they do? Where do they work? Is their work dangerous? What kinds of devices do they use to help them with their work?

### Phonological Awareness

Ensure students know these phonological patterns:

- /air/ sound: discuss which letters can make this sound. Locate examples in the text, and add to the list:
  - air – chair (p.14), fair, pair, stair;
  - are – bare, care, dare, fare, hare, mare, share, stare, warehouse (p.14);
  - ear – bear, pear, tear;
  - ere – there (p.8), where

Say these words to the students. Ask them to identify which part of the words sounds the same. Say a sentence that includes a word containing that pattern. Ask students to identify the word and the appropriate letters that make up the sound.

- a = /ar/ sound: locate words in the text and add to the list, e.g. pass (p.6), blast (p.8), fast (p.10), mask (p.17). Draw attention to the letter 's' which follows the /ar/ sound.

### Vocabulary:

agent, blast, crept, dived, enemy, fast, mask, swinging, trackers, traffic, untied, warehouse

- silent 'w': list words beginning with silent 'w', e.g. wrapped (p.23), write, wrong. Discuss the initial 'r' sound.

### High Frequency Words

fast, full, gone, great, inside, somewhere, there, under, you're

Discuss various ways of learning high frequency words. Many are visual and cannot be spelt or read phonologically. Divide the list of words into two groups: 'visual' words and words that can be 'sounded out'.

### Motivation / Purpose

The purpose of the text is to entertain with a story about a secret agent who successfully puts his newly acquired skills to the test.

## During Reading

### Vocabulary in Context

Discuss the meaning of each vocabulary word. Draw students' attention to the following:

- **fast:** Discuss uses and meanings: **Thinking fast** (p.10), **stuck fast** (p.11). Also mention the meaning 'not eating', e.g. breakfast
- **untied** (p.18): Discuss the prefix 'un-' and how it changes a word into its opposite. List other examples: happy – unhappy, tidy – untidy
- **warehouse** (p.14): Break the compound word into two smaller words to assist with decoding (ware- / house). Locate other compound words in the text, e.g. somewhere, everything, skateboard

### Checking for Meaning

#### Literal:

- What test does Trent pass? (p.6)
- What is inside the bag Dr Holland gives Trent? (p.7)
- How is Trent able to follow the car? (pp.11–12)
- Where does Trent find Dr Holland? (p.14)

### Inferential:

Why is Dr Holland's room a mess? Who messed it up? How do you think Dr Holland feels when she is driven away by the enemy agents?

How would Trent know how to use the tracker and the smoke balls?

### Response:

Do you think Trent will be a successful secret agent? Why?

What skills does Trent have that will assist him with his work?

### Grammatical Patterns

Ensure students understand the following components of a narrative:

- Orientation – introduces the main characters and the setting (pp.4–5)
- Complication – the sequence of events develops a problem for one or more of the characters. *Trent passes the test to become a secret agent and has to come to the aid of Dr Holland quickly.* (pp.6–19)
- Resolution – the problem is solved and things return to normal. *Trent rescues Dr Holland using special secret agent tricks.* (pp.20–4)
- Use of particular nouns to refer to particular people, animals and things: *Dr Holland* (p.6), *agents* (p.10)
- Use of adjectives to describe nouns or build noun groups: *loud* (p.4), *secret* (p.6), *super* (p.20)
- Use of time connectives to sequence events through time: *Suddenly* (p.8), *Thinking fast* (p.10), *As it pulled out into the traffic* (p.11)
- Use of adverbs and adverbial phrases to locate particular events: *Somewhere behind him* (p.4), *under a bench* (p.8), *Then* (p.9), *towards the enemy agents* (p.21)
- Use of past tense action verbs to indicate action: *grobbed* (p.5), *ran* (p.11), *pulled* (p.11), *crept* (p.14)
- Use of saying and thinking verbs: *asked* (p.6), *shouted* (p.8), *thinking* (p.10)

### Fluency / Punctuation Patterns

Commas are used to separate adverbial phrases or clauses from the remainder of the sentence: *Seconds later, Trent was swinging his way in and out of the traffic.* (p.13). Encourage students to pause at commas when reading.

These punctuation patterns occur in the text:

- Use of apostrophes in contractions: *You're* (p.6), *you'll* (p.7), *wouldn't* (p.19)
- Use of apostrophes of possession: *agent's things* (p.7)
- Use of speech marks to indicate the actual words being spoken: *"Did I pass the test?" asked Trent.* (p.6)

- Use of punctuation mark before closing speech marks: *"First, you'll need this," said Dr Holland.* (p.7)
- Use of an ellipsis to show the speech has been interrupted: *"It's full of agent's things, like trackers and smoke balls and ..."* (p.7)
- Use of an exclamation mark to show strong emotion: *"Great!" said Trent.* (p.6)

### Critical Literacy

How might the author have thought of the idea for this text?

How else could this story be presented to an audience?

Discuss the differences between the spoken language and general information in the text.

### Linking Visual and Written

Discuss what it is about the enemy agents that makes them appear 'bad'.

Point out that the illustrations in small circles on page 7 show what is in the agent's bag. What use are the things in the bag, especially the agent's super tape on pages 20–3?

## After Reading

Discuss the excitement level of events in the story. What is the most exciting part? How does the author create this?

Discuss television programs about secret agents. Make a graph to show students' favourite programs.

### Activities

Students will:

- rearrange groups of words to complete sentences about the text
- group words according to common sounds made by different letter combinations
- insert words to complete a simple crossword
- prepare a plot profile of key events in the text.

Comprehension (meaning)    Phonics (visual)    Vocabulary (structure)    Writing (structure)

