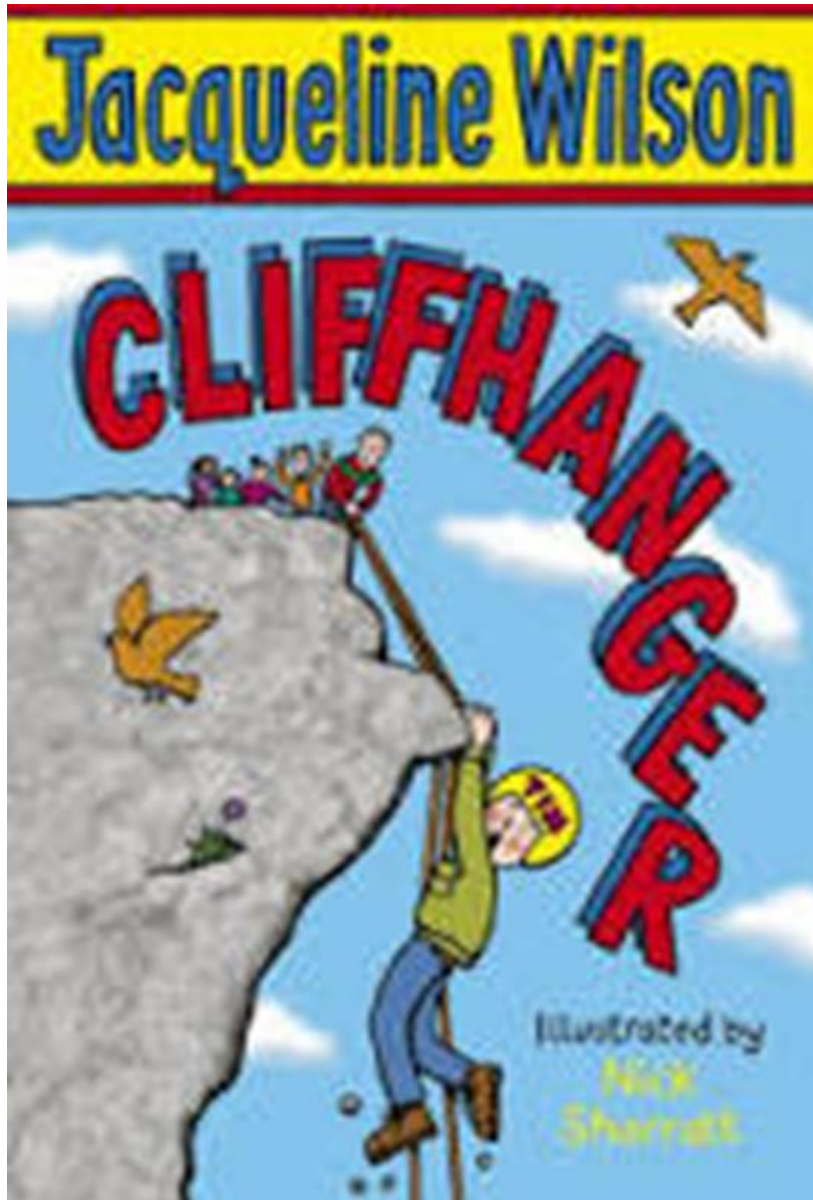


English Lesson Year 3

Write your date and title in
your exercise book.

Friday 12th February

Can I answer questions about the next
chapter of Cliffhanger?



What has happened so far in the story?

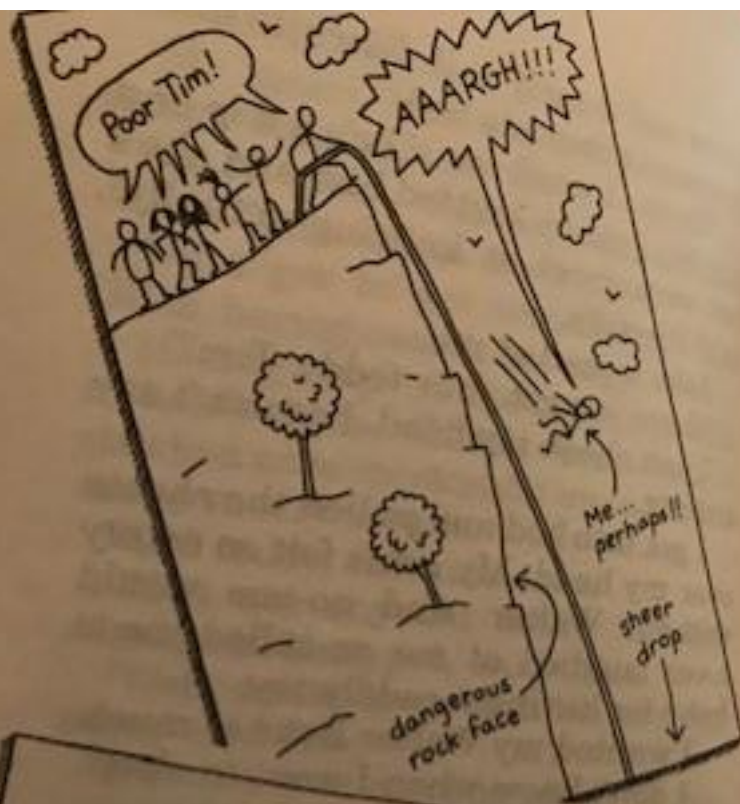
What do we know about the characters?

What activity are they doing next?

Let's now read chapter 3 read by Mrs Milne.

Use this link but make sure you ask an adult first.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxAllWdnhhc&t=36s&safe=active>



POST CARD

Dear Mum and Dad

I promised to write you lots of postcards. So I am. I keep my promises. Not like some people.

Maybe this will be the last postcard you will get though. Because we are going abseiling today. It is very dangerous. I could easily fall to my death. But if you'd only come and collected me last night you'd still have your only son alive and well.

From Tim



Mr and Mrs R. Parsons,
10 Rainbow Street,
Didcot,
Oxon

Chapter Three

It took ages and ages to get up to the top of the hill. And all the way up I kept thinking about what it would be like coming down.

The others raced ahead, desperate to get there first.

I was jolly determined to be last.

Jake kept yelling to Biscuits and me to hurry up. We went as slowly as possible. And then even slower. And then we slowed almost to a standstill.

'Come on, you guys! We're all waiting!' Jake shouted.

He had the others gathered round ready to learn about abseiling. Biscuits and I had to gather too, puffing and panting.



It was like being on the edge of the world. I took one look at the steep drop and started shaking. Kelly and Giles were pushing and shoving each other, arguing about who had got to the top first. They didn't even seem to notice that if they took six steps the wrong way they'd be pushing and shoving in thin air.

'Hey, hey! No messing around now,' said Jake. 'This is the serious bit. OK. Abseiling for beginners!'

He got all the ropes out of his backpack.

'Who's going to go first?'

'Me! Me!' said Giles.

'No, me! Pick me, Jake. *Please*,' said Kelly.

'You two are always first,' said Jake.

He put his arm round Laura and

Lesley, who were hanging on to each other.

'How about you, Laura? Or Lesley?' said Jake.

'Lesley can go first,' said Laura.

'No, *you* can go first, Laura,' said Lesley.

Jake laughed. Then he looked at me.

'How about you, Tim?'

'No!' I squeaked.

Biscuits suddenly stepped forward.

'I'll have a go,' he said.

We all stared at him, stunned.

'Great!' said Jake, giving him a pat on the back. 'OK. Come and step into the harness, Biscuits.'

'That's going to be a bit of a squeeze!' said Giles.

'Why do the boys always go first? It's not fair,' said Kelly.

'You lot pipe down,' said Jake. 'Watch carefully and listen.' He was helping Biscuits get the ropes sorted around him. 'We'll hitch this up and tighten it . . .'

'It's tight already,' said Giles.
'Giles! Shut it!' said Jake. 'Now, we tie up all the buckles and clip this gadget here – tighten it up, see, so it can't be opened. That means you can't fall out.'

'Are you sure?' said Biscuits.

He was starting to sound as if he was regretting his decision. He shifted from one foot to the other, helplessly trussed up like a turkey.

'I'm one hundred per cent certain, pal,' said Jake. 'Now, you go down at your own pace —'

Biscuits screwed up his face.

'What if I get dizzy?'

'Any time you want to stop you just pull the ropes apart. OK? Now, I'll just secure myself, right. And then we're ready for your big moment, Biscuits.'

'Good luck, Biscuits. I think you're a hero,' I said earnestly.

Biscuits beamed at me – though his teeth had started chattering.

'OK. Start walking backwards

towards the edge, Biscuits,' said Jake.
'Er. This is when it starts to get a bit ...' Biscuits wavered.

Even Giles and Kelly looked relieved that they weren't going first now. The thought of stepping backwards into space made my legs tremble inside my tracksuit.

'You'll be fine, I promise,' said Jake. 'When you get to the edge stick your bottom out, legs and feet at right angles to the cliff – and don't let go of the rope! Especially not with your left hand. You walk yourself down. You're in control. Your bodyweight helps you down.'

'Then Biscuits' bodyweight is going to whizz him down mega-fast,' said Kelly.

'Shut up, Kelly,' said Jake. 'Come on, Biscuits. Over you go, I'll buy you



a chocky biscuit for going first, OK?
'How about a huge great bag of biscuits?' said Biscuits.

He started shuffling backwards to the edge – and then – OVER IT!

'That's it. Good boy!' said Jake. 'Don't let go with your right hand. Down you go. Easy does it. Great. Absolutely perfect! One foot after the other. Are you watching, kids? Biscuits is doing a grand job.'

I couldn't watch. But everyone suddenly cheered – which meant Biscuits had made it right to the bottom of the cliff.

I didn't dare look all the way down but I shouted 'Well done, Biscuits,' into the wind.

'There! I told you it was easy,' said Jake, hauling the ropes and harness back after Biscuits had unscrewed



himself. 'OK, Tim. You next.'

'No!'

'Yes,' said Jake, coming over to me.

'No,' I said.

'You've all got to go sooner or later,' said Jake.

'Later,' I insisted.

'No. Sooner,' said Jake. 'Get it over with.'

'I can't,' I said.

'Yes you can, Tim,' said Jake, holding my hand.

'He's scared,' said Giles.

'We all get scared,' said Jake. 'Especially the first time.' He bent down and looked me straight in the eye. 'But you'll see it's easy, Tim. Trust me. Now. Into the harness.'

I found I was being strapped in before I could get away. Jake was telling me things about this rope in this hand, that rope in that, but the wind was whipping his words away. I couldn't listen properly anyway. There was just this roaring inside my head.

'Don't let go of the rope, right?' said Jake.

I felt as if my head was going to burst right out of my personalized safety helmet.

This couldn't be real. It couldn't be happening to me. If I closed my eyes maybe it would all turn into a nightmare and then I'd wake up in bed at home with Walter Bear.

'Tim?' said Jake. 'Open your eyes! Now, your pal Biscuits is down there waiting for you. Come on. Start backing towards the edge.'

I backed one step. Then another. Then I stopped.

'I can't!'

'Yes you can,' said Jake. 'You'll see. Over you go. Don't worry. You can't fall. You just have to remember, you *don't* let go of the rope.'

I stared at him and started backing some more. Then my heels suddenly lost contact with the ground. I slipped backwards and suddenly . . . there I was! Suspended. In mid-air.



'Help!'

I reached forward, desperate.

I had to hang on to something.

I grabbed at the rock.

I let go of the rope!

Suddenly I was sliding backwards, backwards, backwards.

I screamed.

I caught hold of the rock, though my fingers bent right back. I clung to it, sobbing.

I heard them shouting up above me.

'He's fallen!'

'He's let go of the rope.'

'I *knew* he would!'

'Trust Tim to blow it.'

'He's *stuck*.'

'Don't stop, Tim!' Biscuits called from underneath me.

I turned my head and tried to look at him. The whole world started



swerving and swooping. Biscuits seemed a tiny blob millions and millions of miles below me. I was hanging by my hands in whirling space.

'Help!'

'It's OK, Tim. Don't panic,' Jake called down.

'Don't panic, Tim, don't panic!' Kelly yelled. 'He's panicking, isn't he, Jake?'

'Sh, Kelly. All of you. Just back off, eh?' Jake said. 'Now, Tim. Listen. You've let go of the rope.'

'I know!'

'But it's OK. You can't fall. You're safe, I promise.'

'I don't feel safe, I feel *sick*.'

'Well, you can get yourself down in a couple of ticks. All you need to do is grab hold of the rope.'

'How???'

'Just let go of the rock and —'
'I can't!' Was Jake crazy? The rock was the only thing stopping me swinging through space. I *couldn't* let go.

'You're safely strapped into your harness,' Jake called. 'You don't need to clutch the rock. You've just got to take hold of the rope and then you're back in business. See the rope? Tim! Open your eyes!'

'I can't look down.'

'Look up. At me,' said Jake.

I tilted my head and dared peep out between my eyelashes. Jake was leaning right over the edge, not too terribly far away. He gave me a thumbs-up sign.

'That's the ticket. Now. It's OK. Have a little rest if you like. It's not so bad now, is it?'

'Yes!'

'You can dangle there all day if you really want,' said Jake.

'No!'

'Or you can get hold of that old rope and walk yourself down, one foot at a

time, easy-peasy. Mmm?"

I peered up at him.

"Can't you pull me up?" I begged.

"We're trying to get you down, pal, not up!" said Jake. "You can do it. You're being ever so brave."

He had to be joking!

"Stay there long enough and you'll get such a head for heights you'll become a trapeze artist," said Jake.

"I don't think!"

"So just reach out —" Jake urged.

I thought about it. My fingers were hurting terribly. My hands were so scratched and sore. I *couldn't* hang there for ever. Maybe if I let go and grabbed the rope I *could* get down. So I loosened my grip, I reached out suddenly, I tried to grab . . .

I swung round and it was so scary I shut my eyes and caught hold of the rock all over again.

I heard the others groaning. But Jake didn't give up on me.

"Nearly. Try again. Go on."

So I tried again. I reached out. I

made another grab at the rope. My hand was sticky with sweat but I got it — I held on to it — I had it safe!

"Well done!" Jake called. "There! I knew you could. Just keep hanging on to it this time, eh? Now walk yourself down. One step."

I tried to move my feet. They were numb inside my boots. I made a teeny-tiny mouse-move downwards.

"Great!" said Jake. "Now another step."

My other leg moved. And I moved too. I was going down.

"We're back in business," said Jake. "There we go. That's it. You're getting the hang of it now."

"I'm doing it!" I said, stepping myself down through space.

"That's right. You're doing it, Tim," Jake called. "You're nearly halfway



down. Doing just great. Carry on.
Nice and easy. Good boy. Well done.
'I'm doing it,' I mumbled. 'I'm doing
it. I'm doing it. It's awful. But I'm
doing it!'

'Come on, Tim!' Biscuits called up
at me. He sounded much nearer now.
'You're nearly there!'

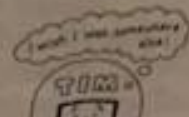
I carried on, quicker and quicker –
and then suddenly I was at the bottom
and Biscuits gave me such a thump on
the back to congratulate me that I
very nearly fell over.

'You did it, you did it, you did it!'
Biscuits sang.

Jake was cheering me from right up
at the top of the rock.

'Well done, Tim! It wasn't so bad,
was it? Do you want another go, eh?'

I shook my head so hard my helmet
wobbled.



'Never ever ever again!'

All the others managed it without
making a fuss. Giles was especially
good at it. I knew he would be.

He went on and on and on at me
going back to the Centre.

'You were so scared!' he said. 'You
just dangled there. And you *cried*! Boo
hoo, boo hoo, little baby.'

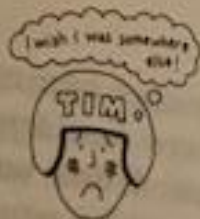
He kept pushing and punching me
too, when he thought Jake wasn't
watching. Really hard.

After tea Jake asked me to help him
look for lost balls in the garden. Just
him and me.

I found a red ball right in the
middle of the roses. Jake was pleased
with me.

'Well done, Tim.' He patted me on
the back. His hand stayed on my
shoulder. 'You're finding it a bit tough
at the moment, aren't you, Tim?'

'They keep teasing me, saying I'm
scared. Well, it's mostly one person in



particular. In my bedroom. The one who isn't Biscuits.'

Jake sat down and I did too.

'Giles?' said Jake, throwing the red ball at me.

'Giles!' I said, sighing, catching the ball.

'You caught it!' said Jake.

I threw the ball back. He threw it to me. I caught it each time. But Jake was giving me very easy throws.

'You could try standing up to him,' Jake said, bouncing the ball.

'Hmm!' The ball skidded into the roses again and I went to fetch it. I found a little wiggly worm too. It almost got run over by the ball, but not quite. I stroked it very gently.

'I'm like this little worm,' I said, holding it in my hand. 'And Giles is like a great big blackbird. Going peck peck at me.'

Jake seemed surprised that I liked worms so I told him about this pet worm I had once called William. I filled a shoe-box with earth and made him a special Wormotel but then Mum made a fuss and I had to empty the shoe-box into the garden - and William got emptied out too.

'I'll tell you a secret, Tim,' said Jake.

Jake said he was scared of worms! Always, ever since he was a little boy. And all the other boys teased him and threw worms at him to make him squeal.

'So one day I thought this is nuts. I made myself pick up a worm and I threw it right back. And it was OK after that.'

I wondered whether Giles was scared of worms.

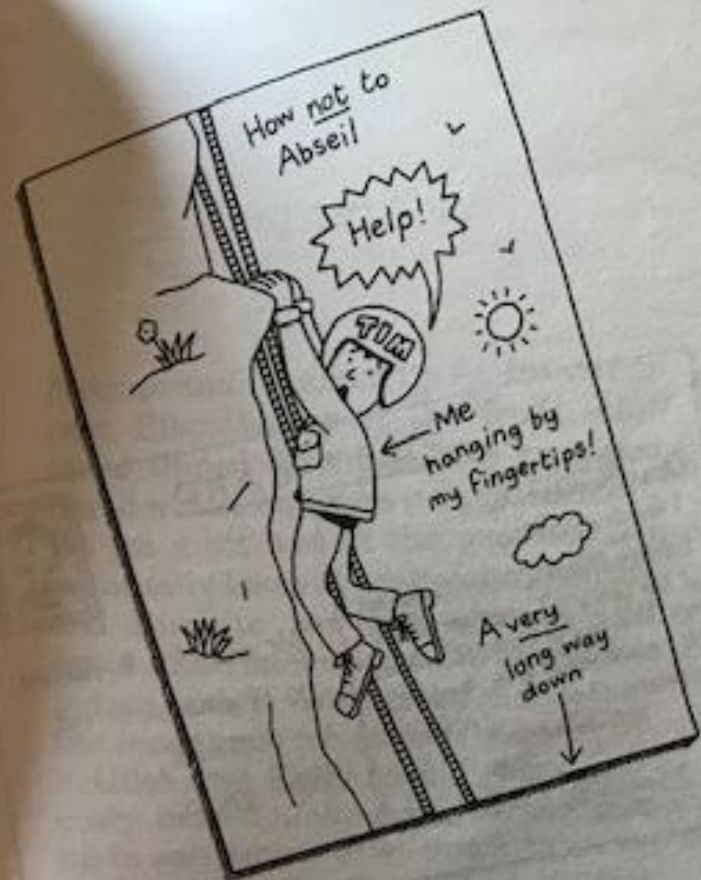
Jake said everyone's scared of something. Mice. The dark. Wetting the bed!

I held the wiggly worm out and he squealed and made out he was dead

scared. But he was only kidding.
'I think you've been kidding all
along, Jake,' I said. 'To make me feel
better.'

Jake laughed and said I was amaz-
ing at sussing things out.

I've sussed out one thing. I know
what my friend Biscuits is scared of.
Running out of biscuits!



Task - Answer these questions in full sentences in your home learning book.

1. What was the next activity?
2. Why are Biscuits and Tim walking so slowly up the hill?
3. "The others raced ahead, desperate to get there first?" What does the words raced tell us about how the other children felt about the activity?
4. Who is falling out about wanting to go abseiling first?
5. On page 39, Biscuits volunteers to go abseiling first. Why do you think he does this?
6. What does Tim do when he is abseiling that Jake told him not to do? (pg45)
7. What does Tim grab hold of when he lets go of the rope?
8. What does Biscuits do to Tim when he lands on the ground?(pg50)
9. What did Jake and Tim go in to the garden for after tea?
10. What does Tim manage to do when he is in the garden?

How did you do?

I can't wait to look at your work.



Don't forget to put your
finished work on Class
Dojo!