

# The Mystery House

## Worksheet and activities

### Warm Up

*The Mystery House* is a story about a man who delivers newspapers.

Read the questions below. Think about your answers. Get ready to discuss.

How do you get your news?

- Do you read newspapers? How often? Which newspaper do you prefer? Do you have a newspaper delivered to your house? Do you buy a newspaper at the railway station or convenience store on your way to work or school?
- Television news programmes? Which news reports do you prefer?
- Internet? Which Internet sites have the best news?

### Read the story

#### The Mystery House



Tommy delivers newspapers. Every morning he gets up at 4:00 a.m. He rides his motor scooter to the newspaper centre. He collects 100 newspapers. Then he rides his motor scooter around the neighbourhood. He puts the newspapers into the letterboxes of the people on his list.

It is dark, and often it is cold. But Tommy likes it. There are no people on the streets so early. Everyone is still sleeping. Tommy likes to think about the people in the houses. He has never seen them. But he likes to make up stories about them. Some houses are very big. They have expensive cars in their garages. Some houses are very small. Some people have beautiful gardens. Some people have children's toys outside. Tommy has ideas about the people in almost every house. *This house belongs to a bank manager, he is very fat,* thinks Tommy. *The children in this house are in high school. The woman in this house is lazy. She doesn't take her garbage out and she doesn't tidy her garden.*

There is just one house that Tommy doesn't understand. It is small and old. It has expensive curtains and a beautiful garden. There is never a car, or a bicycle or toys outside. *Who lives there?* wonders Tommy. *Is it a man or a woman? Are they young? Are they old? It's a mystery.*

Tommy often thinks about the mystery house. Then one morning he meets the owner of the house. It happens like this. It is winter and it is snowing. The snow started just as Tommy got up. The first house on Tommy's list is the mystery house. When Tommy stops his motor scooter to put the newspaper in the letterbox, he sees that the door of the house is open. Then he sees

footprints. They go from the front door of the house towards the road. Then they go towards the garden. Tommy is puzzled. He puts the newspaper in the letterbox and then goes to look at the footprints. *Someone got up early this morning, he thinks. It only started snowing at 4:00 a.m.*

The footprints are very small. They look like a child's footprints. But Tommy doesn't think a child lives in the house. The other strange thing is that the person was not wearing shoes. They are footprints of bare feet.

Tommy is worried. He thinks there is something wrong. He follows the footprints. In the garden, he sees someone lying on the ground. He runs towards the person lying on the ground. It is a very small, very old woman. She is wearing a nightgown. There is blood on the back of her head. Tommy thinks she is dead, but he kneels down and touches her. "Are you OK?"

She isn't dead. She says something. Tommy has to put his head next to her face to hear. "The house. Someone inside. Hit me. I ran away. Frightened."

Tommy looks at the house. He takes his mobile phone and calls the police and an ambulance. He runs to his motor scooter. Someone is coming out of the house. He has a gun. Tommy throws his bag of newspapers at the gunman. The man shoots. But the bullet hits the bag. The man is running towards Tommy but he falls over the bag. Tommy jumps on the man and sits on his head.

Then the police and ambulance arrive. The old woman is very ill but the ambulance people think she will be OK. The police take the man with the gun away. Tommy's newspapers are wet from the snow. Some of them have holes in them from the bullet.

Tommy has to go back to the newspaper centre and get more newspapers. He must finish his delivery. The newspapers will be late today. Tommy hopes the readers don't mind. He is wet and cold but he is happy. The policemen told him he was a hero. That makes him feel good. But he also feels good because he knows who lives in the mystery house.

## Check your understanding Quick quiz.

- 1 Tommy delivers a newspaper to:
  - a) everyone in the neighbourhood
  - b) the people who have ordered a newspaper
  - c) the people he knows
  
- 2 Tommy is very interested in:
  - a) gardens      b) people      c) money
  
- 3 Tommy knows all the people in the neighbourhood.
  - a) true   b) false

- 4 Tommy has almost finished his newspaper delivery when he sees the footprints.  
a) true b) false
- 5 The policemen are angry with Tommy.  
a) true b) false

## Your opinion

Tommy likes to make up stories about the people in the houses where he delivers newspapers. He never sees them, but he makes a picture in his mind about them.

Do you have an image of Tommy? What do you think he looks like? What do you think about his character?

Look at the adjectives in the box. You will know some of these words but maybe you do not know all of them.

Look up the words you don't know in your dictionary.

Circle the adjectives that you think describe Tommy.

Tell the class why you chose these words.

tall	short	thin	well-built	shy
young	old	cheerful	friendly	quiet
unfriendly	kind	selfish	rich	energetic
lazy	curious	childish	bored	imaginative
creative	brave	strong	silly	smart

## Advanced discussion topic

People used to find out what was happening in their country and in the world from the newspaper. Now there are many ways to get information such as television and the Internet. Do you think newspapers will disappear from our lives?

## Activity

Look at the pictures below. Choose the house that you would like to live in.

### Work with a partner

Ask your partner questions to find out which picture your partner chose.  
You can ask questions like:

- Would you like to live in a large or a small house?
- Would you like to live in an apartment?
- Would you like to have a big garden?
- Do you like flowers?
- Would you like to live in the inner city?
- Do you like to have neighbours?
- Do you like playing music very loudly?
- Do you like fishing?

When you think you know which house your partner chose, you can ask:

Did you choose number...?

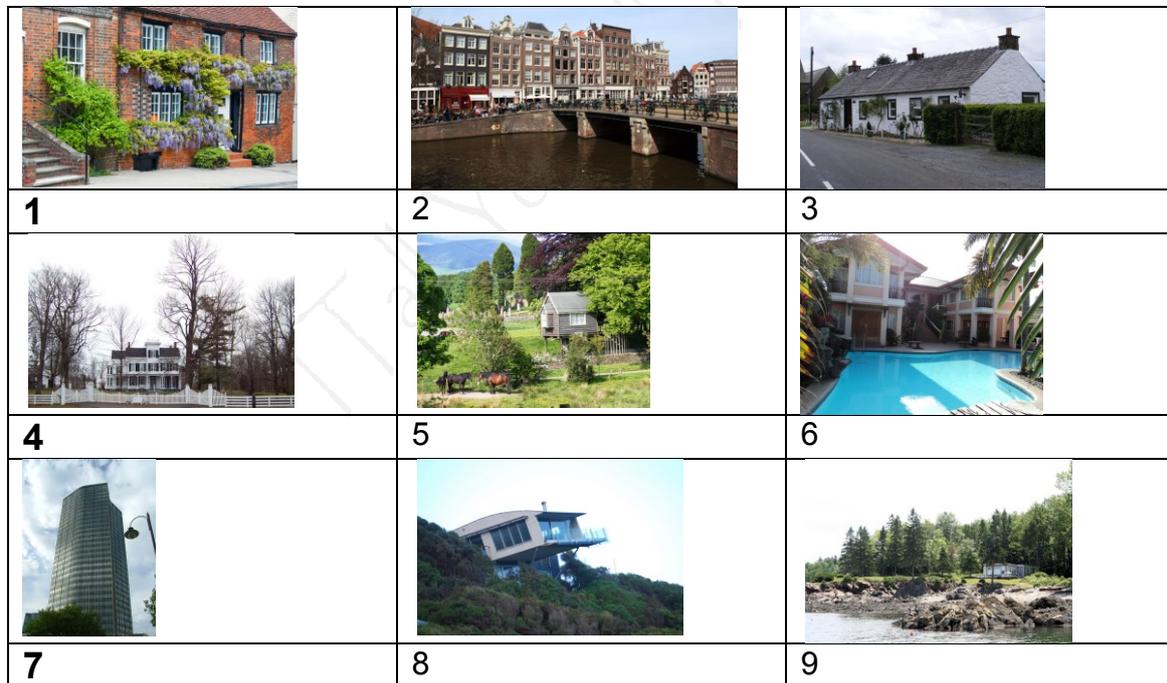


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