

# Old Heap *By David Hill*

## Introduction

Karl is desperate to learn to drive but he gets more experience at it than he expects when he has to drive to get help for his injured mother. He receives a crash course in more than just how to drive his mother's "old heap"!

## Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students to:

- explore the topics of safe driving and dealing with an emergency
- learn what to do when faced with a serious accident
- explore how the author builds character and creates atmosphere and tension.

## Setting the scene

Draw on your students' prior knowledge. If necessary, introduce concepts or vocabulary to help them access the story. Also communicate the reason for reading.

- Brainstorm ideas about learning to drive. What are the requirements for gaining a driver licence? How much does it cost? Where does one go to get one?
- Students think about situations in which they may need to be able to drive a car.
- In small groups or pairs, your students share their own experiences of an accident, no matter how minor. What happened? How did they deal with the situation? Were emergency services involved? Could the situation have been improved if people had behaved differently?
- Students explore the cover and determine what they think the story is about.
- Introduce vocabulary that the students may need to access the text. Refer to the vocabulary worksheets (3, 4a and 4b) for words that may be unfamiliar.

## Getting stuck in

Choose the prompts that you feel your students need. Remind them to note any unfamiliar words and check for clues to the meanings in the text or images.

- End of page 4 – "How does Karl feel about his younger brother Paul? Why?"
- End of page 9 – "What happened to Karl's mum? Do you think Karl has any knowledge of first aid? Is there anything else he could have done? Are they on holiday, or moving into a new home?"
- End of page 13 – "How much experience do you think Karl has had with driving a car? Can you empathise with Karl?"
- End of page 19 – "Karl had no time to think; he needed to react. Do you think he is right to stop the man from running away from the police? What would you have done? How old do you think Karl is? Why were the police chasing the guy?"
- End of page 24 – "Do you think Karl is lucky that he met the police? Why or why not? How do you think Paul feels staying behind with his mum? How do you think their mum feels about what Karl has done? Why?"

## Taking a closer look

Choose suggestions that suit your students and reason for reading.

### Exploring ideas and opinions

- Ask for your students' opinions of this story. How do they feel about it and why? Why do they think the author wrote it? Can they identify with Karl, and with Paul? Have they ever been in a similar situation? Have they ever had to administer first aid or call emergency services?
- Talk about the important things to do when someone is seriously injured. Rate these in order of importance. You could ask a paramedic, or someone trained in first aid, to speak to the class. Knowing what to do in an emergency can mean the difference between life and death.
- After the students complete the three-level thinking guide (Worksheet 1), they discuss their responses in pairs, in small groups, or as a class.
- Students discuss in pairs or small groups: "What happened and how I felt ... when I was involved in an emergency or when I drove a car or rode a (motor) bike for the first time".

### Exploring character

- Ask students to explore how Karl changes during the story: "Think about how he was feeling at the beginning of the story, then how he was feeling at the end. What words would you use to describe Karl, and to describe Paul?" Write the students' suggestions on the board, perhaps in the form of a chart comparing the two brothers. Look for dialogue that reflects the boys' characters.
- Discuss: Who are the other characters in this story? How would you describe each of them?
- Working in pairs, students prepare an interview with Karl for the local radio or television news.

### Exploring structure

- Give the students the statements from Worksheet 2 to sequence correctly.  
or  
Students take a statement each from Worksheet 2 and arrange themselves into the correct story sequence; then, taking turns based on this sequence, they retell their part of the story.
- Students create a visual sequence of events from the story. They could illustrate some of the statements from Worksheet 2.

### Exploring language

- Cut out the words and definitions from Worksheet 3 and mix them up. Hand them out to students, who then find their correct "partner".
- As an alternative to the above activity, divide the class into two groups: one group fills in the second column of Worksheet 4a and the other fills in the second column of Worksheet 4b. This activity involves the students in creating definitions, which they then use to test the other group.
- Students complete Worksheet 5 – the cloze activity.

## Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

### Reading

- Read *Smash-Up!*, the magazine from the GO for IT series that complements this book.

### Writing

- Set this writing task: “Write an article for the local newspaper or magazine about how Karl saved his mother’s life. **or** Put yourself in the position of Paul, or of Karl’s mum, and describe the events from their point of view.”

### Debating

- Hold a class debate on a topic related to the story, such as: “You should learn to drive a car as soon as you are 15 years old.”

### Research

Students do research on:

- the basic principles of first aid
- how to get your driver licence.

### Art and design

- Students prepare a static image, a poster or book cover that advertises *Old Heap*.
- Students create a poster showing the basic principles of first aid.
- Students prepare a poster that informs young people about: “How to get your driver licence”.

# WORKSHEET 1

## Old Heap – Three-level thinking guide

- Level 1 – Reading on the lines (interpreting what the text says on a literal level)
- Level 2 – Reading between the lines (inferring, or interpreting what the text might mean)
- Level 3 – Reading beyond the lines (evaluating ideas and information)

Students write “agree” or “disagree” beside each statement and then discuss their responses in pairs, in groups, or as a class. The value of this activity lies in the discussion it generates as students justify their views. The activity is not intended as a test for comprehension.

| <b>LEVEL 1</b>  | <b>Agree/disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|
| Karl, Paul, and their mum are moving into their new home.             |                       |
| The “old heap” is a manual car.                                       |                       |
| Karl’s younger brother, Paul, hides behind the fence.                 |                       |
| Karl drives the car around the paddock as soon as he starts it up.    |                       |
| Karl hits the brakes and just misses a fence post.                    |                       |
| The shelves fall on Karl’s mum and she cuts her head.                 |                       |
| First Karl tries to stop the bleeding.                                |                       |
| Karl gets some blankets to keep his mum warm.                         |                       |
| Karl’s wrists hurt because he is holding the steering wheel too hard. |                       |
| Karl sees two people coming towards him in a white car.               |                       |
| The white car just misses Karl’s car and ends up in the ditch.        |                       |
| The police arrive and arrest the driver of the white car.             |                       |
| The ambulance takes Karl’s mum to the hospital where Karl is waiting. |                       |

Sheet 1 of 2

| <b>LEVEL 2</b>   | <b>Agree/disagree</b> |
|--|-----------------------|
| Karl is scared of driving a car.   |                       |
| Paul hides because he doesn't want to help move their stuff into the house.      |                       |
| Paul thinks Karl is an awesome driver.   |                       |
| Karl wants to hit his younger brother, Paul.                                     |                       |
| Karl thinks his mum is going to die.   |                       |
| Karl trusts his younger brother to take care of their mum.                       |                       |
| Karl is confident that he can drive the car to get help.                         |                       |
| Karl thinks the driver of the white car is a fool for running away.              |                       |
| The driver of the white car is really angry with Karl.                           |                       |
| The policeman thinks Karl is an experienced driver.                              |                       |
| Karl's mum thinks Karl is a capable driver.                                      |                       |
| <b>LEVEL 3</b>   | <b>Agree/disagree</b> |
| Being experienced in first aid is very important.                                |                       |
| Learning to drive a car as soon as you legally can is important.                 |                       |
| Karl behaves irresponsibly by going off in his mum's car without her permission. |                       |
| The older a person is, the more mature and responsible they are.                 |                       |
| Think before you leap!   |                       |

Sheet 2 of 2

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# WORKSHEET 2

## Old Heap – Restore the order

Cut out the statements and mix them up. Ask your students to place them in the correct order.

|   |
|---|
| Karl asks his mum if he can try some more driving.  |
| The car jerks, jerks again, and stalls.   |
| Karl presses the accelerator by mistake and just misses a fence post.                         |
| Karl and Paul's mum lies on the kitchen floor, with blood pouring from a big cut on her head. |
| Karl checks his mum's pulse.  |
| Paul gets some towels to stop the bleeding.   |
| Karl asks Paul to get blankets to keep their mum warm.  |
| Karl has to drive the car to go and get help.   |
| The car almost skids into a deep ditch, and Karl sits shaking and holding the steering wheel. |
| Karl finally shifts into third gear and realises he is driving the car.                       |
| A white car comes straight towards him, with a police car chasing it.                         |
| Karl yells and braces himself for the crash.  |

The white car screeches to a stop beside Karl, and the driver jumps out and begins running away.

Karl slams his mum's car into first gear and knocks the man into the ditch.

The police arrive and grab the man.

Karl tells the policeman his mum has been hurt in an accident, and the policeman calls on the radio for an ambulance.

The policeman drives Karl in the "old heap" to the hospital.

Paul and his mum arrive at the hospital in the ambulance.

Karl is relieved to see his mum is conscious.

Karl's mum is very pleased with him.

Karl dreams of owning his own Ferrari.

Sheet 2 of 2

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# WORKSHEET 3

## Old Heap – Match the meaning

Cut out the words and their definitions, mix them up, and ask your students to match the pairs.

| <b>Word</b> | <b>Definition</b>  |
|-------------|--|
| accelerator | the pedal used to increase the speed of the car                                  |
| braced      | prepared for something to happen   |
| brake       | the pedal (or lever) used to stop the car from moving                            |
| clutch      | the pedal that allows the gears to change smoothly                               |
| ease        | to move or slide in slowly   |
| Ferrari     | a powerful and expensive type of car   |
| gear        | a setting in the gearbox that helps to regulate the speed and direction of a car |
| gearshift   | the lever used to change gears in a car  |
| glaring     | looking angrily  |
| hold-up     | an armed robbery   |
| hunched     | with shoulders drawn close together  |
| jammed      | stuck  |

| <b>Word</b> | <b>Definition</b>  |
|-------------|--|
| jerked      | moved in sharp spasms  |
| pulse       | the throbbing of arteries that lets you know a person's heart is beating (easiest to find on wrist and neck) |
| rear-view   | what can be seen behind the car  |
| siren       | a piece of equipment that makes a loud, high-pitched sound in order to warn and attract attention            |
| skidded     | slid in an uncontrolled, juddering way   |
| stalled     | cut off the car's engine by mistake  |
| swerved     | changed direction sharply  |
| yanked      | pulled hard  |

Sheet 2 of 2

Note that some words above may have different meanings in other contexts.

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# WORKSHEET 4a – GROUP A

## Old Heap – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups, and give one group Worksheet 4a and the other group Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column of its own worksheet, each group writes a definition for each of the words listed in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, the group may need to check the page of the book that is listed.
- Each group then folds the first column out of sight and swaps worksheets with the other group.
- Each group guesses the original words, based on the definitions given in the other group's worksheet, and writes them in the third column of that worksheet. A group can go to the page in the book that is listed if it needs help. For an extra challenge, groups can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

| <b>Word</b>       | <b>Definition (Group A)</b> | <b>Word (Group B)</b> |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| accelerator (p 4) | (p 4)                       |                       |
| clutch (p 4)      | (p 4)                       |                       |
| ease (p 4)        | (p 4)                       |                       |
| gear (p 10)       | (p 10)                      |                       |
| glaring (p 19)    | (p 19)                      |                       |
| hunched (p 14)    | (p 14)                      |                       |
| pulse (p 8)       | (p 8)                       |                       |
| siren (p 14)      | (p 14)                      |                       |
| stalled (p 4)     | (p 4)                       |                       |
| yanked (p 4)      | (p 4)                       |                       |

# WORKSHEET 4b – GROUP B

## Old Heap – Vocab swap

- Divide the class into two groups, and give one group Worksheet 4a and the other group Worksheet 4b.
- In the second column of its own worksheet, each group writes a definition for each of the words listed in the first column. Where a word has more than one meaning, the group may need to check the page of the book that is listed.
- Each group then folds the first column out of sight and swaps worksheets with the other group.
- Each group guesses the original word, based on the definitions given in the other group's worksheet, and writes them in the third column of that worksheet. A group can go to the page of the book that is listed if it needs help. For an extra challenge, groups can guess without referring to the page.
- You could make this a fun competition and give points for every correct word.

| <b>Word</b>      | <b>Definition (Group B)</b> | <b>Word (Group A)</b> |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| brake (p 4)      | (p 14)                      |                       |
| braced (p 15)    | (p 15)                      |                       |
| Ferrari (p 24)   | (p. 24)                     |                       |
| gearshift (p 4)  | (p 4)                       |                       |
| hold-up (p 19)   | (p 19)                      |                       |
| jammed (p 16)    | (p 16)                      |                       |
| jerked (p 4)     | (p 4)                       |                       |
| rear-view (p 12) | (p 12)                      |                       |
| skidded (p 4)    | (p 4)                       |                       |
| swerved (p10)    | (p 10)                      |                       |

# WORKSHEET 5

## Old Heap – Fill in the gaps

Add your own words in the spaces to make this passage come alive!

A ..... car came flying round the bend ..... him. Karl saw a ..... hunched over the steering ..... Right behind the white ..... was another car. Blue ..... red lights flashed ..... its roof. A siren ..... Karl saw the word ..... in blue letters written ..... the side of the second .....

The white car ..... to fill his side window. It was ..... to hit him! Karl ..... the steering ..... and his ..... car spun towards the edge of the road. The ..... wheels slid ..... the rough surface. He ..... sideways again. Karl ..... and braced himself for the ..... of metal.

It didn't come. The white car ..... to a ..... right beside him. The other ..... door almost touched his passenger ..... Karl ..... frozen. The ..... of his mum's car was still running.