

# Trapped *By David Hill*

## Introduction

Nobody liked Cory Clegg but, when the class found out about what had happened to his mother, they felt really sorry for him. It seemed impossible to help him though, because he was trapped by his circumstances.

(Note: This book covers sensitive issues that students may find difficult to deal with. It is important that the teacher knows the students well and is familiar with the story.)

## Reason for reading

You could use this book with your students to:

- explore the topics of anger, loneliness, dealing with grief, friendship – and/or the issue of personal privacy
- feature as part of a wider unit on drugs and alcohol
- 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.

- Students explore the cover and determine what they think the story is about.
- Brainstorm ideas about anger. What are possible causes of it? What are appropriate and inappropriate ways of dealing with it? How can we support angry friends?
- Students share their experiences of dealing with anger. How did they feel? Why did they feel like that? How did they cope?
- Students share their experiences of grief. Have they experienced the loss of a pet, a family member, or a friend? How did they feel? How did they cope?
- Introduce vocabulary that the students may need to access the text. Refer to the vocabulary worksheets (3, 4a and 4b) for words that are 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 3 – “Why would ‘hanging out’ with Cory make some of the guys think they looked ‘cool’? Why would Cory be quiet for a few days after Ms Ponti has thrown him out of her class?”
- End of page 5 – “Who does Cory live with? Do you think his mum loves him and his little brother? Why do you think his mum’s drinking makes her unable to ‘handle things’?”
- End of page 7 – “How do you think Cory’s mum’s boyfriend feels after the accident?”
- End of page 9 – “Do you think it is important for the class to send Cory a sympathy card? Why or why not? What else could the class have done?”
- End of page 11 – “Do you think Cory’s reaction is acceptable when some of the girls in his class say they are sorry about his mum dying? Why or why not?”

- End of page 15 – “Do you think the relief teacher, Mrs Boyd, knows about what has happened to Cory? If she doesn’t, should she have before reading the story? Why are the class ‘trapped’ by the story?”
- End of page 17 – “Nobody dared to look at Cory. Why?”
- End of page 21 – “Cory’s behaviour is unacceptable but understandable. Does that make it OK? Could Mrs Boyd have handled the situation differently?”
- End of page 24 – “Do you think it’s possible for Cory to ‘find a way to be free’? How might this happen?”

## 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? Did they enjoy it? How do they feel about Cory? In what ways do they identify with him? Can they think of ways to help him? Can they identify with the narrator? What is their opinion of the narrator? Encourage the students to make connections with their own experiences.
- 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: “A time when my pet, friend, or family member died” or “A time I felt really angry”. How did it feel? What happened? How did they cope?

### Exploring character

- Discuss: Does Cory’s character change during the story? Think about how he is feeling at the beginning of the story, then at the end. Does his behaviour change during the story? Do you see him developing strategies to cope with what is happening to him? What are the strategies he uses?
- Discuss: The author writes this story through the “eyes” of a third person. Why? Do you think you have a better understanding of how Cory feels, and of how the narrator feels, as a result of this approach?
- Discuss: Who are the other characters in this story – the teachers, the other students? Think about each one and how you get to know them through the story. In what ways are they “real”? How do they individually cope with Cory’s situation?
- Discuss: How do the illustrations affect your perception of the characters? Do they show how the characters are feeling?

### 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 plot how the tension levels change throughout the story, building to a series of climaxes – first on page 6, then on page 11, and again on page 17. (The plotted line could look similar to that on a heart monitor.)

## 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 group 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.
- Explore aspects of the text that help to build tension and atmosphere, for example, short sentences, dynamic words. Refer to pages 6, 11 and 17.
- Students complete Worksheet 5 – the cloze activity.

## Moving beyond the text

Choose activities that suit your students and reason for reading.

### Reading

- Read *Fab!*, the magazine in the GO for IT series that complements this book.

### Writing

- Set this writing task: “Imagine you are the author. Write a sequel to this story. What happens next to Cory and his little brother?”
- With a partner, students decide who is the narrator and who is Cory. The pair writes the conversation these two characters might have the next day at school after the story ends. They might bring a third person – another student or the teacher – into the conversation.

### Debating

- Hold a class debate on a topic related to the story, such as: “Drugs are the best way to deal with pain” or “The Privacy Act is essential in our society”.

### Research

Students do research on:

- alcohol and drugs, and their effect on society
- the seven stages of grief
- the Privacy Act – what is it and how is it applied?
- where to go for help with and support for family difficulties.

### Art and design

- Students prepare a static image, a poster advertising the effects of drugs and alcohol or the seven stages of grief.
- Students design a book cover that sells *Trapped*.

# WORKSHEET 1

## Trapped – 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>
All the kids like Cory Clegg.	
Cory skips school a lot of the time.	
Cory even misbehaves in Ms Ponti’s class.	
Cory’s mother mostly drank at home.	
Cory’s mother loved him and his little brother.	
Cory’s mother dies in a head-on car crash.	
Everyone goes to Mrs Clegg’s funeral.	
Nobody knows what to say to Cory.	
Ms Ponti isn’t in class because she is writing reports.	
Everyone listens when Mrs Boyd, the relief teacher, reads to the class.	
They all stare at Cory while Mrs Boyd reads the story.	
Mrs Boyd has no idea who Cory is.	
Cory slams the door so hard the glass breaks.	
Cory cries in Ms Ponti’s arms.	

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<b>LEVEL 2</b>	<b>Agree/disagree</b>
Cory Clegg is really cool.	
Cory doesn't come to school because he is bored by it.	
It really upsets Cory when Ms Ponti tells him off.	
Cory and his mother really miss his father.	
Cory's mother dies because her boyfriend was driving drunk.	
Everyone signs the sympathy card because they care about Cory.	
Everyone hopes Cory will change.	
Cory is angry at the girls for speaking to him.	
Nobody likes Mrs Boyd, the substitute teacher, because she is old.	
The class really enjoy the story Mrs Boyd reads to them.	
Cory feels angry and upset because of the story.	
<b>LEVEL 3</b>	<b>Agree/disagree</b>
Cory has every reason to behave the way he does.	
Both of Cory's parents are totally irresponsible.	
Cory should not have to go to school.	
People should never drink and drive.	
Everyone should learn anger management.	

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# WORKSHEET 2

## Trapped – Restore the order

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

Nobody likes Cory Clegg.
A few guys hang out with him because they think it makes them look cool.
Cory is always getting into trouble for swearing at teachers and stuff.
Even Ms Ponti, the coolest teacher in the school, throws Cory out of class now and then.
Cory lives with his mother and little brother because his father has done a runner.
Cory's mother can't handle things because of her drinking.
Cory's mother dies in a car crash.
The boys think being trapped in a burning car would be the worst thing in the world.
Cory and his little brother stay with the neighbours.
Ms Ponti and the principal go to Mrs Clegg's funeral.
Although his classmates don't like Cory, they all feel sorry for him.
All week Cory sits in class and never says a word.
On Friday, some of the girls tell Cory they are really sorry about his mum.

Cory charges into the classroom, kicking all the tables and chairs.

Mrs Boyd, the substitute teacher, reads the class a story.

The story is similar to the story of Cory and his mother.

The class are "trapped" by the story.

Cory yells at Mrs Boyd, then storms across the classroom and slams the door.

Ms Ponti comforts Cory.

The kids in the class think Cory will never change.

Maybe some day, when Cory grows up, he will be able to escape from himself and be free.

# WORKSHEET 3

## Trapped – 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>
act up	misbehave
bawling	crying loudly
brilliant	wonderful, excellent
charged	rushed at a target
coolest	most popular and “with it”
crap	not true
did a runner	left
ducked	moved quickly
garbage	rubbish
have a clue	to know, understand
hung out	spent time with
lost it	reacted wildly, lost his/her temper



<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
make fun of	to mock
pathetic	stupid, nonsense
pub	hotel
shoved	pushed hard
skipped	didn't go to
sneer	a grimace that shows contempt
stoned	high on drugs
stormed	rushed furiously
substitute	relieving, working in place of
swerved	turned sharply off course
weird	unusual, odd

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

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# WORKSHEET 4a – GROUP A

## Trapped – 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 in 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>
act up (p 12)	(p 12)	
brilliant (p 9)	(p 9)	
coolest (p 3)	(p 3)	
did a runner (p 4)	(p 4)	
garbage (p 18)	(p 18)	
hung out (p 2)	(p 2)	
make fun of (p 12)	(p 12)	
pub (p 4)	(p 4)	
skipped (p 2)	(p 2)	

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition (Group A)</b>	<b>Word (Group B)</b>
stoned (p 17)	(p 17)	
substitute (p 12)	(p 12)	
weird (p 8)	(p 8)	

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# WORKSHEET 4b – GROUP B

## Trapped – 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 in 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 terms, 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 B)</b>	<b>Word (Group A)</b>
bawling (p 22)	(p 22)	
charged (p 11)	(p 11)	
crap (p 18)	(p 18)	
ducked (p 22)	(p 22)	
have a clue (p 18)	(p 18)	
lost it (p 20)	(p 20)	
pathetic (p 19)	(p 19)	
shoved (p 11)	(p 11)	
sneer (p 19)	(p 19)	

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition (Group B)</b>	<b>Word (Group A)</b>
stormed (p 20)	(p 20)	
swerved (p 6)	(p 6)	

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# WORKSHEET 5

## Trapped – Fill in the gaps

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

I waited in the hall ..... class while Hayden and Jarrod ..... to check on some sports practice ..... I ..... at some posters on the ..... Then I ..... two people inside a classroom. I stared. Then I ..... away in case they ..... me.

I went to the ..... end of the hall and waited ..... my friends. I ..... tell them ..... I had seen.

“Cory Clegg is never ..... to change,” Hayden ..... as we walked home.

“He’ll ..... be big trouble,” ..... Jarrod.

I didn’t say ..... for a moment. Instead I thought ..... what I’d seen in the ..... It was Cory and Ms Ponti. Cory was ..... his eyes out. Ms Ponti had her ..... around him like he was a little ..... I’d ..... away because I knew that if Cory ..... me watching, he’d ..... about murder .....

“Maybe he’s different inside,” I ..... to Hayden ..... Jarrod. “He ..... change when he ..... up.”