

Thursday 9th July 2026

Close reading session

Chapter Thirty

It was Holly! Her spiky black-and-white fur burst into the front room. Varjak went to the door to meet her, flushed with victory. But there was a look in her mustard eyes – a look of horror – that wiped the smile off his face the moment he saw it.

‘Varjak, it’s horrible,’ she said. ‘We’ve got to get out of here.’ She looked up at the thick green windows, searching for a way out.

‘What’s horrible?’ said Varjak, confused.

‘It’s the Vanishings . . . this is where they’ve all gone.’ She shuddered. ‘The man’s not here, and I didn’t see those black cats. But there’s a room upstairs with a big cage in it, and hundreds of cats in it, only lots of them aren’t—’ She closed her eyes as if she was trying to block out the memory.

‘Aren’t what?’ he said, afraid of the answer.

‘They’re not alive.’ She looked more shaken than he’d ever seen her in the city.

‘Sorry to interrupt you, Varjak,’ said Mother, ‘but

who is this?’ The Mesopotamian Blues were watching, even Julius, licking his wounds by the fireplace.

‘Holly, this is my family,’ said Varjak. ‘Mother, Father, everyone: meet Holly.’

‘Don’t worry,’ Holly said to them. ‘We’ll find a way out.’

Father frowned, and turned to Varjak. ‘I don’t understand,’ he said. ‘Do you know this cat?’

‘This is Holly – my friend from Outside, who I told you about.’

Father looked disgusted. He turned his back on her. They all turned their backs.

‘This is not Outside,’ said Father. ‘Tell this cat to leave us.’

It felt like a slap in the face. Varjak glanced at Holly. She looked as stunned as he felt.

‘How could you even think of it?’ whispered Mother. ‘You should know better than this, sweet heart.’

‘Didn’t you hear?’ protested Varjak. ‘She’s going to help us get out.’

‘But we don’t want to get out,’ said Mother. ‘Where would we go? Who would feed us?’

‘Wait a minute,’ said Holly. ‘Have you seen what’s happening upstairs? If you’re being fed, it’s not for a good reason.’

Father ignored her; he spoke just to Varjak. ‘V

Why do you think father looked disgusted at Holly and turned his back on her?

How do you feel about this revelation?

Discuss.

This is a HUGE twist in the story!

Why do you think the cats can see no wrong in what the man is doing?

How is the author building tension between Holly and Varjak?

haven't been upstairs, because of the black cats. But we know there are other cats up there too.'

'You do?' said Varjak.

'The Gentleman brings them to the house,' said Father. 'He feeds them. Not like he feeds us, not with caviare, but cheap dry food. There are sacks of it in the kitchen. He keeps them alive until – well, we don't know exactly what happens next – but we all agree that the Gentleman would never harm one of us.'

'You're wrong,' said Holly. 'If it's them today, it'll be you tomorrow.'

'We're different,' Father said to Varjak. 'We're special. We're Mesopotamian Blues. As for those common cats,' he shrugged, 'who cares what he does to them? They're nothing.'

'What?' said Holly, ears and whiskers bristling.

'Less than nothing,' said Aunt Juni, as if Holly wasn't there.

'Come on, Varjak, let's go,' said Holly. 'These idiots deserve everything they've got coming.'

Her words made Varjak shiver. He didn't know what to do or say. He looked at Mother.

'We know what we're talking about, sweetheart,' she said, in a gentle, reasonable voice. 'We're not going anywhere.'

His head was spinning. Maybe they were right and Holly was wrong. The Gentleman hadn't

harmed them yet; perhaps he never would.

'But what about Holly?' said Varjak.

'She is not one of us,' insisted Father.

Varjak looked at Holly. He looked at his family. There was a twisting, tearing feeling in his guts. He looked at Holly. The family. And Holly again. His insides were being ripped in half. It was impossible.

'We need you here,' said Jasmine.

'You need me?' said Varjak.

Father nodded, very serious. 'Of course we need you, son. You're head of the family now. You can just leave us.'

'You beat Julius,' said Jay.

'Julius was terrible,' said Jethro.

'But you're the best, Varjak,' said Jerome.

Varjak felt proud inside, proud to be a Blue.

creeeaaak

It was the front door, opening.

click CLACK

The Gentleman, entering the house. Two sleek black cats by his shoes.

'Come on,' urged Holly. 'Now!'

She cut towards the corridor. Varjak couldn't move. His mouth felt numb, like ice. He wanted to go with her, but how could he? He finally had what he always wanted: he was a proper Mesopotamia Blue at last!

He couldn't ruin it. He couldn't walk away now.

How has this sentence changed Varjak's view of his family from before?

Predict what you think will happen next.

09.07.26

Times tables

8 times tables

8

24

32

96

16

40

64

88

48

56

72

80

09.07.26

TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

3 in 3

1) Find $\frac{2}{10}$ of 100

2) Find 1000 less than 2469

3) $274 + 274 + 274 + 274 =$

Challenge

Find 0.01 less than 10.1

09.07.26

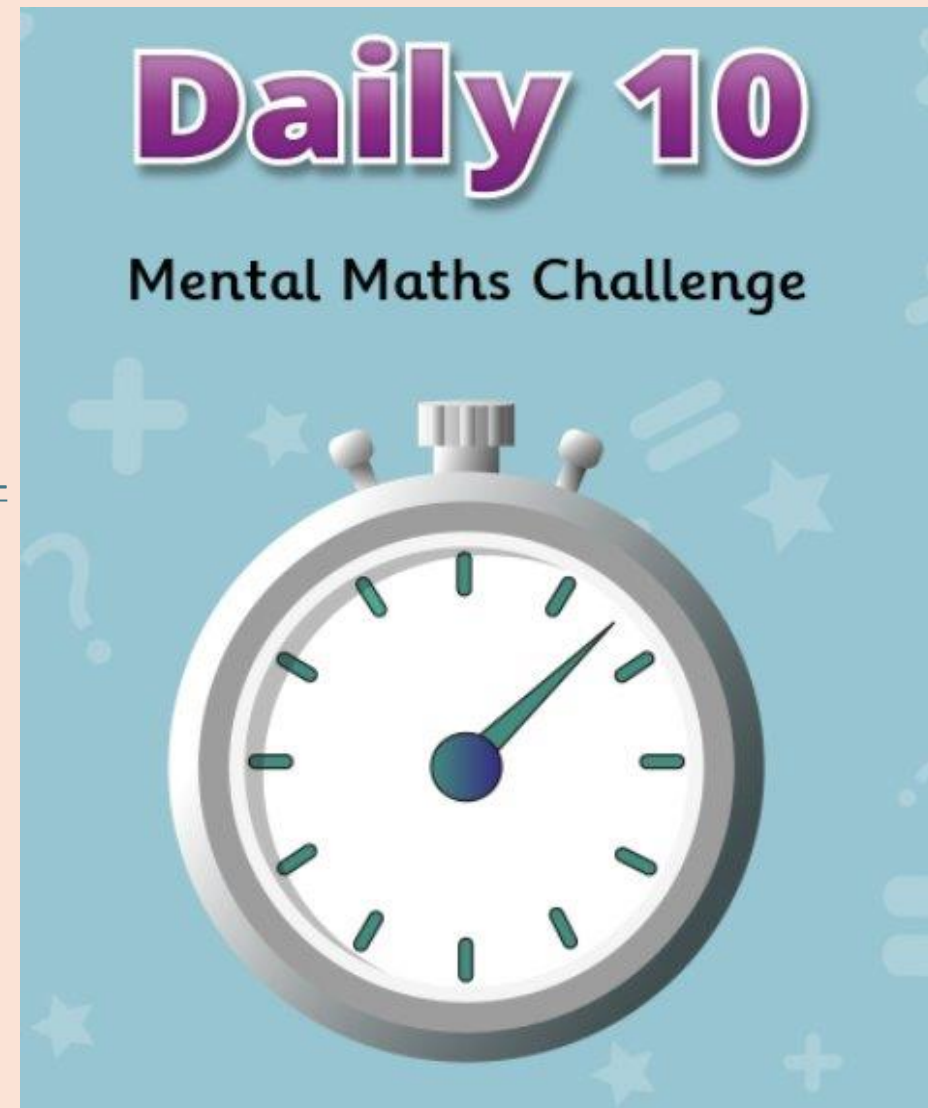
TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Key vocabulary

- **Fraction**- A way of showing equal parts of a whole
- **Numerator**- The top number – tells us how many parts we have
- **Denominator**- The bottom number – tells us how many equal parts
- **Unit fraction**- A fraction with 1 on top (e.g. $\frac{1}{4}$)
- **Non-unit fraction**- A fraction with more than 1 on top (e.g. $\frac{3}{4}$)

[Daily 10 - Mental Maths Challenge - Topmarks](#)

Level 4- 8 times tables



09.07.26

TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Non-unit fractions

A **non-unit fraction** has a numerator **bigger than 1**

e.g. $\frac{2}{3}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{5}{8}$

Fractions of amounts

This means **finding part of a number**

e.g. $\frac{3}{4}$ of 20

09.07.26

TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Turn and talk:

Find $\frac{1}{3}$ of 12

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TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Whiteboards

Find $\frac{5}{8}$ of 48

Challenge: Double your answer

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TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Whiteboards

Find $\frac{2}{7}$ of 70

Challenge: Half your answer

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TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Whiteboards

Find $\frac{3}{4}$ of 100

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TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Whiteboards

Find $\frac{1}{2}$ of 200

**Challenge: Find 0.1 more than
your answer**

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TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Whiteboards

Find $\frac{4}{5}$ of 100

**Challenge: Find 0.1 more than
your answer**

09.07.26

TBAT: find non-unit fractions of amounts.

Find $\frac{3}{4}$ of 60

Find $\frac{2}{4}$ of 80

Challenge: Add both answers together

Independent

$\frac{5}{6}$ of 72?

$\frac{7}{8}$ of 96?

$\frac{4}{5}$ of 85?

$\frac{5}{12}$ of 84?

$\frac{7}{9}$ of 99?

$\frac{11}{20}$ of 80?

$\frac{5}{7}$ of 63?

$\frac{3}{8}$ of 88?

RP- Lily says: “ $\frac{3}{6}$ of 60 is the same as $\frac{1}{2}$ of 60.” Are they correct? Explain your reasoning

Mastery challenge

Tilly has 280 sweets.

- First, she gives $\frac{4}{7}$ of them to another class.
- Then, she gives $\frac{4}{5}$ of the remaining sweets to her group.

How many sweets does she have left at the end?

Challenge

A class has 84 counters.

- $\frac{2}{3}$ are red.
- $\frac{3}{7}$ of the red counters are shiny.

How many shiny red counters are there?

Greater Depth mastery

The answer to a fraction-of-an-amount question is 48.

Write **three different questions** where the answer is 48.

Example:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ of 64 = 48

Can you find three more? 

Thursday 9th July 2026

TBAT: use devices to build tension in writing.

3 in 3

The FIFA World Cup 2026 is one of the biggest football tournaments in the world. It is being hosted by three countries: the United States, Canada and Mexico. For the first time, 48 teams are taking part, giving more countries the chance to compete. Millions of football fans are watching as teams try to win the famous World Cup trophy. The tournament brings people together and celebrates teamwork, skill and sportsmanship.

- 1. Which three countries are hosting the World Cup 2026?**
- 2. How many teams are taking part in the tournament?**
- 3. What qualities does the tournament celebrate besides winning?**

Thursday 9th July 2026

TBAT: use devices to build tension in writing.

Blue – Add an expanded noun phrase to the sentence below to describe the Gentleman's cats.

The _____, _____ cats slunk across the hallway.

Green - Add an expanded noun phrase to the sentence below to describe the wall of the Contessa's house.

The _____, _____ wall surrounded the Contessa's house.

Challenge – Write your own sentence, including an expanded noun phrase, from any part of the story so far.

Using your plan from Thursday 2nd July, you are going to independently write the last paragraph of your adventure story.

This will need to contain the description of travelling from the city to the Contessa's house and some dialogue between the characters.

Quietly read through your bullet point notes for asking for help.

We will take those bullet points and change them into full sentences.

Heading back to the Contessa's house		
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Heading back to the Contessa's house	• Varjak explains about the Gentleman and the black cats. • They leave the city. • Arrive at the bottom of the hill. • A thunderstorm starts. • They climb the hill never giving up. • The wall not as high as he remembers, it's crumbling and old. • Cludge cannot climb the wall.	Confident Determined Worried Restless exhausted
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Success criteria:

- expanded noun phrases
- simile/metaphor
- inverted commas
- emotions
- Short sentences

Talk partners

How can we make this bullet point into a full sentence?

- 3rd person
- Past tense

They leave the city.

Heading back to the Contessa's house	• Varjak explains about the Gentleman and the black cats. • They leave the city. • Arrive at the bottom of the hill. • A thunderstorm starts. • They climb the hill never giving up. • The wall not as high as he remembers, it's crumbling and old. • Cludge cannot climb the wall.	Confident Determined Worried Restless exhausted
--------------------------------------	--	---

Success criteria:

- expanded noun phrases
- simile/metaphor
- inverted commas
- emotions
- Short sentences

WAGOLL

As they hurried out of the city, Varjak explained everything he knew about the Gentleman and the fierce black cats. **"We have to stop them,"** he said determinedly. Together, they reached the bottom of the hill just as a **dark, swirling thunderstorm** rolled across the sky. Rain poured down and the wind howled **like an angry wolf** but they never gave up. **Exhausted but brave,** they climbed higher and higher. At last, Varjak saw the **old, crumbling wall**. It was not as high as he remembered but it looked far more worn and fragile. Cludge stared up at it anxiously. **"I can't climb it,"** he mewed sadly. Varjak's **heart sank as worry washed over him,** but he knew they had to find another way.

Thursday 9th July 2026

TBAT: produce a piece of art that shows my beliefs and values.

Keywords

values

principles and beliefs about the world,
people and communities

belief

an acceptance that something exists or is
true

worldview

a particular philosophy or a conception of
the world

Blue / green: Tell
your partner
what your piece
of artwork is
about.



This is a piece of artwork created by Ruh Al-Alam called 'Falaq'.

It is the first line of Surah Al-Falaq from the Qur'an in a **calligraphy** style.

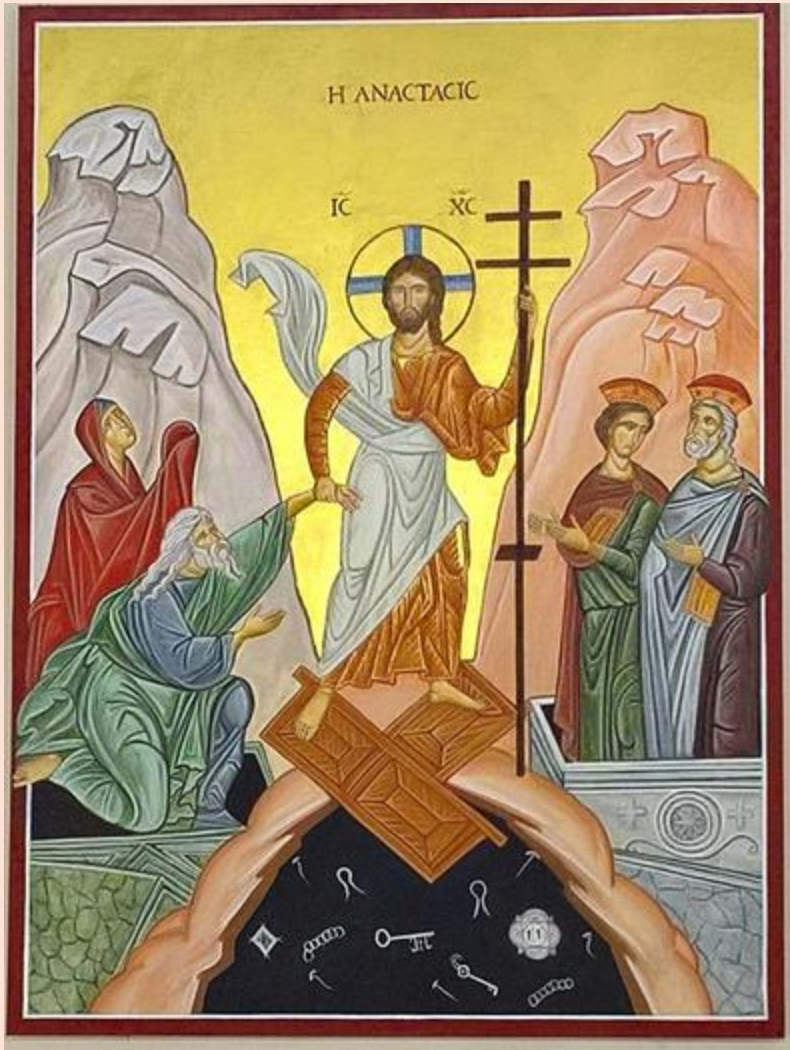
It says, 'I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak.'

The colour choices are trying to make the meaning of this verse memorable.



The artist wants to express through using the style of calligraphy to show his **belief** that life is better when you live it with God (Allah) from the start of the day.

Ruh has used acrylic paints on canvas as his medium. He chose strong colours that express his strong **belief** in God (Allah).



Here is a Greek Orthodox icon of Jesus' resurrection.

It has been painted on wood with special vivid oil paints.

It uses many colours and objects to show **beliefs**.

As you look at this art piece what do you think the artist wants you to feel?

Jesus has a halo and above him is Greek shorthand for Jesus Christ (the Chi Rho).

Adam and Eve are brought back, showing God and humankind no longer separated.

Here are the keys to life: death is broken.



Let's think some more about symbols in this art piece.

Jesus holds a staff, showing he has power over life and death. He is golden showing His divinity.

Jesus has broken the gates of death and stands on them.

In learning cycle 1 you planned your potential piece of artwork expressing your **beliefs** and **values**.

Now we want you to have a go at creating it.

Your artwork and written piece could look like this:



I chose to use watercolours to make my artwork. I wanted colours to melt into one another and capture the fun and brightness of this festival.

I choose to create the artwork around an important festival to me and my family: the festival of Eid Ul Fitr. At this festival we are grateful for all we have and think about people less fortunate than us.

Artwork created by pupil at Elmhurst Primary School

Thursday 9th July 2026

TBAT: carry out research and create food chains.

3 in 3

Scientific research helps us learn new things about the world. Scientists ask questions and investigate to find answers. They make careful observations, carry out experiments and collect information. For example, a scientist might investigate which type of soil helps plants grow the fastest. They test different soils, measure the plants and record the results.

Scientific research is important because it helps people solve problems and make new discoveries. Research has helped create medicines, improve technology, and protect the environment. Scientists share their findings so that others can learn from their work.

1. What do scientists do to find answers to their questions?

2. What might a scientist investigate about plants?

3. Why is scientific research important?

Thursday 9th July 2026

TBAT: carry out research and create food chains.

Blue - Which living thing is the producer in this food chain?

Tree → giraffe → lion.

Green - Which living thing is prey in this food chain?

Plant → caterpillar → blackbird.

Challenge - How could you find out what a bat eats?

Thursday 9th July 2026

TBAT: carry out research and create food chains.

Keywords

food chain

A **food chain** shows how living things depend on each other for food.

producer

A **producer** in a food chain makes its own food.

predator

A **predator** is an animal that hunts, kills and eats other animals.

prey

An animal that is hunted and eaten by another animal is called **prey**.

secondary sources

Secondary sources are texts, images or objects created using information gathered by others.



Andeep and Izzy would like to create their own **food chains**.



Andeep

We can use information about how living things depend on each other for food.

We will create food chains to show what our favourite animals eat to survive.



Izzy

Andeep's favourite animal is a snake called an adder.

I know that a **food chain** starts with a plant, so an adder will not be the **producer** in my food chain. I need to think about what is food for an adder.



Andeep

Do you know?



an adder is a type of snake

Snakes, including adders, are carnivores.

Some snakes eat warm-blooded prey, such as rodents, rabbits or birds, while others eat insects, earthworms, slugs, amphibians, fish or other reptiles.



Andeep

I know that adders eat mice,
so I will include a mouse in my
food chain.



mouse

I will begin to create my **food chain**. I need to include arrows between each living thing. Have I done this correctly?



Andeep

What do you think?



adder



mouse

The arrows in a food chain represent 'is food for'.

Andeep has turned the arrow around.
Is this correct now?



adder

is food for



mouse

This is the correct way to show
that the mouse is food for the
adder.



mouse

is food for



adder



Andeep

Now I need to think about what is food for a mouse. I know that mice are omnivores. They eat seeds, grains and other plant material, and also small animals such as insects.

Andeep adds sunflower seeds to his food chain.



sunflower seeds



mouse



adder



Andeep

I would like to add one more animal to my **food chain**.
I watched a television programme about how adders
can be food for some other snakes, such as the
smooth snake.



sunflower seeds



mouse



adder



smooth snake

Arrange these living things, and add arrows, to create a different food chain to Andeep's including an adder.



badger



grasshopper



grass



frog

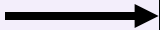


adder

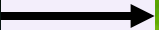
Arrange these living things, and add arrows, to create a different food chain to Andeep's including an adder.



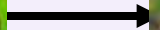
grass



grasshopper



frog



adder



badger

Izzy's wants to create a **food chain** for her favourite animal, which is a dolphin.



Izzy

I have never seen a real dolphin. I don't know which animals are **predators** and **prey** of dolphins.

Talk partners

How can Izzy find out this information?



dolphin



Izzy

I need to start my **food chain** with a **producer** but I don't know what krill is and what plants they eat! I will read a book as a **secondary source** of information to research this.

Krill belong to a group of animals that live in the ocean, including shrimp, crabs, and lobsters.

Krill are known to feed on microscopic marine animals and plants found near to the surface of the ocean.

book about krill

Izzy completes her **food chain**.



marine plants



krill



dolphin



orca



Izzy

Secondary sources of information have helped me to research what food the animals in my food chain need to survive.

Use secondary sources of information to draw and label a food chain for your favourite animal.

Remember to include a producer and consumers, including predators and prey.

Creating food chains

1 What information can be used to create a food chain? (Tick 1 correct answer)

- ☐ How living things reproduce and have babies.
- ☐ Where living things live in different parts of the world.
- ☐ How living things depend on each other for food.

2 Which part of a food chain represents: "is food for"? (Tick 1 correct answer)

- ☐ the plant
- ☐ the animals
- ☐ the arrows
- ☐ the labels

3 What do we call the living thing at the start of a food chain? (Tick 1 correct answer)

- ☐ the producer
- ☐ the protector
- ☐ the predator

4 Match the type of animal in a food chain with its definition. (Write the correct letter in each box)

a	consumer
b	predator
c	prey

	An animal that eats other animals or plants.
	An animal that is hunted and eaten by another animal.
	An animal that hunts, kills and eats other animals.

5 Laura carries out some research to create this food chain: mouse is food for a badger, badger is food for a bobcat. What is missing from her food chain? (Tick 1 correct answer)

- ☐ consumer
- ☐ predator
- ☐ prey
- ☐ producer

6 We can research what food different animals eat to survive using _____ sources of information. (Fill in the blank)

Challenge

Thursday 9th July 2026

NSPCC

Speak out – stay safe

TBAT: understand the different types of abuse.

Success Criteria:

- I can explain the different types of abuse.
- I know abuse is never a child's fault.
- I know I have the right to get help if I need it.
- I know who to talk to if I need help.
- I know the Childline number and how to access support.



NSPCC

Talk partners

Can you remember what Buddy represents?

Buddy is a speech bubble – who represents the right all children have to speak out and be safe.

What else can you remember from the assembly?



NSPCC

Talk partners

Can you remember all 5 types of abuse?

- Emotional abuse
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Bullying

I'm going to read aloud a definition of each type of abuse.

I will give you 30 seconds to talk in pairs and guess which type of abuse is being described. We will share responses with the class.



Getting Help

NSPCC

We are going to talk about how to get help if you are feeling worried or experiencing any type of abuse.

You have 3 sticky notes per talk partners. Listen to the following 3 questions, talk with your partner, then answer the question on your sticky note.

Q1 - How might a child feel if any of these types of abuse were happening to them?

Q2 - How might a worry feel?

Q3 - What might they do? How might they behave?



Safe adults

NSPCC

Talk partners

What are the characteristics of a safe adult?

A safe adult is someone who wants to keep you safe, they are dependable, consistent and friendly.

They do not want to cause you any harm.



Safe adults

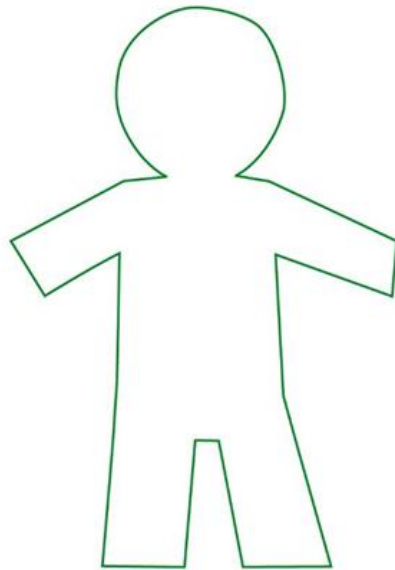
NSPCC

Fill out the sheet, writing how a safe adult makes you feel.

Then, list the safe adults you have.

NSPCC

**A safe adult
makes me feel...**



My safe adults are...