



Chapter 3 · The Howling House

When Jazz and Mortimer hear howling coming from Dr Salamander's house, they have to sneak inside. Someone might be in trouble! What will they find?

THE CURIOUS CASE OF DR SALAMANDER

Damian Harvey

CONTENT



READ!

- **Reading comprehension questions:** 10 multiple choice questions to test text retrieval and reading comprehension. These questions may also be completed online at www.fictionexpress.co.uk
- **Guided reading:** teacher's notes and a written response worksheet comprising 6 questions which allow for deeper response to the story, looking at personal response, inference and prediction



WRITE!

- **"Inspire!" words** to encourage children to include them in their own writing
- **"Spotlight!" word list** of the words highlighted and defined online
- **Writing worksheet:** write a scene with clues as to how the plot might develop
- **Grammar worksheet:** use conjunctions to express time and cause



TALK!

- **Voting options:** discussion points for each voting option
- **Discussion activity:** role play your written scene



EXPLORE!

- **Activity:** once upon a picture



Name: _____

1

Why do Mum and Dad put their fingers in their ears?

- ☐ A. A siren from next door is blasting out and hurting their ears
- ☐ B. So the twins cannot tell them what they are going to do
- ☐ C. Mortimer is singing to them and he is a terrible singer

2

Why do Jazz and Mortimer suddenly want to go next door?

- ☐ A. They have seen Mrs Heckle leave on her bike
- ☐ B. They have seen Dr Salamander walk into town
- ☐ C. Dr Salamander and Mrs Heckle are sleeping in the garden

3

Why does Mortimer throw a tennis ball through the window?

- ☐ A. So that he can win the game of cricket
- ☐ B. To give them an excuse to climb into the house
- ☐ C. Jazz has dropped her toy car down the drain

4

Why does Mortimer knock very gently on the door?

- ☐ A. As a signal to Jazz who is on the other side
- ☐ B. Because he only wants Dr Salamander to hear
- ☐ C. So no one will hear it but they can say they tried

5

What is strange about Dr Salamander's kitchen?

- ☐ A. It is full of very strange jars
- ☐ B. It doesn't even have a fridge
- ☐ C. There is a snake in the sink



Name: _____

6

What do the children find in the library?

- ☐ A. A tiger asleep on a rug by the fire
- ☐ B. A book with a large eye on the cover
- ☐ C. A model of the solar system

7

What strange sound do the children hear?

- ☐ A. Music
- ☐ B. Hammering
- ☐ C. Sneezing

8

What do the children see in the living room?

- ☐ A. Rows of empty cages
- ☐ B. Mrs Hall's cat Herbert
- ☐ C. A large box labelled 'Danger'

9

What do the children see behind the stairs?

- ☐ A. A strange carving
- ☐ B. A bag containing feathers
- ☐ C. A door to the cellar

10

What bounces down the stairs?

- ☐ A. Their yellow tennis ball
- ☐ B. A very happy Mrs Heckle
- ☐ C. A bright pink bunny rabbit



1

Ask: Why do Mortimer and Jazz's parents put their fingers in their ears? (So they don't know what the twins are doing, so then they don't have to tell them to stop.) Ask: Do you think they should be more involved? Point out that in any good adventure, you have to get rid of the parents first! Ask: Do you think the children are really in danger? What impression do you get of Dr Salamander? (Is he evil or just strange?)

2

Point out that this chapter is all about Dr Salamander's house. Ask: Why does Mortimer throw the tennis ball into next door's house? (So he and Jazz have an excuse to go into the house.) Ask: Why does he only knock very quietly on the door? (So he can say that he knocked, but no one will actually be able hear to answer it.) Ask: What is strange about the kitchen? (It is clean but empty – not even a fridge.)

3

Ask: What is the library like? Locate the details about the leather armchair, the strange books on the table. Point out the book with an eye, the book in a foreign language and the book with symbols. Ask: What do the books suggest about Dr Salamander? (Perhaps he's a wizard?) Ask: What do the twins hear? (a yowl and music) Ask: What does this suggest? (There are animals and another person in the house.)

4

Move on to the events in the hall. Ask: Why is it creepy when the tennis ball bounces down the stairs? (It means that someone – possibly Dr Salamander – has picked it up and taken it upstairs and knows that the twins are there.) Ask: What do the children see in the living room? (Empty cages and pet food.) Ask: Why do you think there is pet food when the cages are empty? Ask: What surprises Mortimer? (The wheel in the mouse's cage moving.)

5

Ask: How do we know when things happen in the story? Together, locate phrases that tell the reader when things happen: *Once they were back in the garden, Suddenly, Without wasting any more time, As soon as Mortimer had got through the window, For a few moments, Everything seemed to happen at once.* Locate the conjunctions that express time within these phrases: once, soon and so on.

6

Ask: Why is the chapter called *The Howling House*? Who do you think is howling? What do you think the strange music is and where is it actually coming from? Where do you think the missing pets are? What caused the mouse's wheel to move round and round? Discuss the children's ideas and agree that this chapter is full of fun clues and dramatic tension. Ask: What do you think will happen next?

The Curious Case of Dr Salamander · Chapter 3 · The Howling House
Guided Reading Response Questions



Name: _____

1

Why do Mum and Dad put their fingers in their ears?

2

Why does Mortimer throw a tennis ball into the house?

3

What is in the library?



Name: _____

4

What is strange about the cages in the front room?

5

Find and copy three conjunctions that express time.

6

What do you think is making the howls and yowls?



Here is some of the challenging or potentially unfamiliar vocabulary used in chapter 3 of *The Curious Case of Dr Salamander*.

You may wish to explore this vocabulary, to improve children's understanding of the chapter, and inspire and enhance the quality of their own writing. You might like to display the words in the classroom, and encourage children to use new vocabulary as part of the Write! worksheet tasks.

clambered

howling

held their
breath

mischief

puzzled

thud

tiptoed

wrinkling



Find these words in chapter 3. Use the definition to check that you understand the meaning of the sentences you find them in.

admitted – owned up to

barely – hardly at all

blame – think someone has done something wrong

busybodies – nosy people who take too much interest in other people's business

cellar – a room of a house, below ground level, often used to keep belongings in

clambered – climbed or scrambled through somewhere awkwardly, often a tight space, using hands and feet

convinced – sure

crowed – someone who 'crowed' has spoken with gloating satisfaction and pleasure, usually at the expense of someone else

dimly – faintly lit

excuse – a reason to do something or go somewhere

expecting – waiting or believing that something is going to happen

frowned – made a scrunched up facial expression that showed unhappiness

gasp – a sharp intake of breath, often when someone is feeling surprised or shocked

held their breath – didn't breathe for a moment, often an action when someone is afraid or doesn't want to be heard

howling – a cry or wail, often from an animal

human being – another word for 'person'

hushed – another word for 'quiet'

investigate – look into past events to try and find an explanation

leather – a material made from the skin of an animal

mischief – another word for 'trouble', often playful misbehaviour that children do

pale – very light

peeping – looking at something secretly, often through a small opening

plan – an idea of what to do



puzzled – another word for 'confused'

reading lamps – small lights, often placed on tables near chairs, so that someone can see to read easily

recognise – another word for 'know' of something that has been seen before, such as someone's handwriting

reluctantly – unwilling to do something

reminds – makes you think of something else

scientific symbols – numbers and letters arranged in patterns and rows to show the answers to scientific ideas

shrugged – raised shoulders to express uncertainty about something

startled – surprised about an action or event

suddenly – another word for 'immediately' or 'straight away'

suggested – something is put forward to someone else, such as an idea

surprised – a feeling of having been astonished or shocked by something

tentatively – carefully and cautiously

thud – a loud, heavy sound, such as a noise made by an object falling to the floor

tiptoed – crept quietly on the front part of the foot

tossed – another word for 'threw'

trapped – caught and unable to get away from something

tucked away – hidden

ventured – undertook a risky journey or someone who dared to bravely suggest something

wasting – not making good use of

whispered – said in a quiet voice

wide open – eyes that are wide open are fully open, often when someone is shocked

wonder – a feeling of amazement

wrinkling – making creases in

yowling – a loud wailing



Name: _____

Write a scene with clues for the reader to show how the plot might develop in chapter 4 of *The Curious Case of Dr Salamander*. Use the scenario below to help you write your scene. Remember to show and not tell the reader what might happen...

Situation: Someone is trying to get into Dr Salamander's house.

What you need to show but not say: Jazz and Mortimer are afraid.

Hints: How might the twins be talking to each other?

Where could they escape to?

What would their body language be like?

Who do they think it could be?



Name: _____

A **conjunction** is a word that links other words, phrases or clauses together. Conjunctions create fluid sentences and can help give an understanding of time and reason – when and why something happens.

Complete these sentences from chapter 3 by drawing a line to join the sentence to its missing conjunction.

1. Suddenly, Mum stuck her fingers into her ears
_____ started singing at the top of her voice.

until

2. It was hard to tell if it had been made by
an animal _____ a human being.

because

3. Jazz wasn't convinced _____ she didn't want to
wait outside on her own either.

and

4. The twins did their best to hide themselves behind the
desk _____ they listened out for more creaking.

as

5. "We can't go back _____ we find out what's going
on."

but

6. Jazz's eyes were wide open _____ she was staring at
the floor.

and

7. Mortimer didn't have chance to answer _____ at that
moment they heard the sound of creaking floorboards
from the room above.

or



What does Mrs Heckle say?

A

“I’m taking you to Dr Salamander!”

We haven't met Dr Salamander properly yet but look back through the chapters for clues about his character and personality. How do you think Jazz and Mortimer will feel if they are taken to meet him? Excited or scared? What do you think will happen in chapter 4 if this is the winning option?

B

“It’s down to the cellar with you!”

How would this action make the twins feel? Why do you think Mrs Heckle wants to take Jazz and Mortimer into a different part of the house, away from the rooms upstairs? Predict what will happen in chapter 4 if this is the winning option.

C

“I’ve got a new cage here and it’s just the right size.”

Look back through the chapter and infer what this might mean for Jazz and Mortimer. Does this give any clues as to what might be in the cages that the twins have already found in the house? What do you think will happen in chapter 4 if this is the winning option?

→ Which option do you think would be the most exciting one for the next chapter of *The Curious Case of Dr Salamander*?

Discussion Activity

Inference is an important tool for writers. Inference means simply trying to work out from the story what hasn't been explained. You need to look for clues in the author's writing to help you.

In pairs or a small group, role play your scene from the writing activity and discuss what might happen next. Think about the characters' body language and expressions. Did they give anything away? Ask questions such as, 'What time of year is it?' or 'Whose pet will go missing next?' and explain your answers.

Name: _____

Look at these four pictures below. Come up with two retrieval questions and two inference questions for each image. A retrieval question is one where the answer is right there in the story or image. An inference question is one where the answer is found using reason and evidence. For example, for the first picture you could ask: Retrieval question – What is the boy doing? Inference question – Where is he going?









ANSWERS

READ! Comprehension

1. Why do Mum and Dad put their fingers in their ears?
B. So the twins cannot tell them what they are going to do.
2. Why do Jazz and Mortimer suddenly want to go next door?
A. They have seen Mrs Heckle leave on her bike
3. Why does Mortimer throw a tennis ball through the window?
B. To give them an excuse to climb into the house
4. Why does Mortimer knock very gently on the door?
C. So no one will hear it but they can say they tried
5. What is strange about Dr Salamander's kitchen?
B. It doesn't even have a fridge
6. What do the children find in the library?
B. A book with a large eye on the cover
7. What strange sound do the children hear?
A. Music
8. What do the children see in the living room?
A. Rows of empty cages
9. What do the children see behind the stairs?
C. A door to the cellar
10. What bounces down the stairs?
A. Their yellow tennis ball

WRITE! Worksheet: Conjunctions

<p>1. Suddenly, Mum stuck her fingers into her ears _____ started singing at the top of her voice.</p> <p>2. It was hard to tell if it had been made by an animal _____ a human being.</p> <p>3. Jazz wasn't convinced _____ she didn't want to wait outside on her own either.</p> <p>4. The twins did their best to hide themselves behind the desk _____ they listened out for more creaking.</p> <p>5. "We can't go back _____ we find out what's going on."</p> <p>6. Jazz's eyes were wide open _____ she was staring at the floor.</p> <p>7. Mortimer didn't have chance to answer _____ at that moment they heard the sound of creaking floorboards from the room above.</p>	<p>until</p> <p>because</p> <p>and</p> <p>as</p> <p>but</p> <p>and</p> <p>or</p>
--	--

Picture credits:

River boat: AlexRotenberg/Bigstockphoto
Orangutans: EnjoyLife/Bigstockphoto
Train station: Tupungato/Bigstockphoto
Boy running: Anna Berdnik/Bigstockphoto