



## Chapter 4 · The Tunnel

Aunt Agatha is deep underground and she is not best pleased about it. What will she find out and will she be any closer to saving the school?

### AUNT AGATHA, SPACE TRAVELLER

David MacPhail

## 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](http://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
- **Writing worksheet:** Dear David – preparing to write to the author
- **Grammar worksheet:** using pronouns



### TALK!

- **Voting options:** discussion points for each voting option
- **Discussion activity:** discuss the questions you would like to ask the author



### EXPLORE!

- **Art activity:** design a cartoon alien



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1

**Why are Annie and Mitch in the tunnel?**

- A. They fell in by accident
- B. They are looking for clues
- C. They are looking for Aunt Agatha

2

**What is Mitch chewing?**

- A. Chewing gum
- B. An apple
- C. His fingernails

3

**What does Mitch find on the floor?**

- A. An arrow pointing right
- B. The police officer's hat
- C. The lid of Tommy Plonk's flask

4

**Where does the tunnel lead the children and Aunt Agatha?**

- A. To a staircase going up
- B. To the school boiler room
- C. To Tommy's spaceship

5

**Why does Tommy Plonk drink the special juice?**

- A. To turn into an alien
- B. To make him look human
- C. To make him very strong



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

6

**What does Mitch think Tommy Plonk looks like?**

- A. A giant chicken
- B. A big digger
- C. Aunt Agatha

7

**What is Tommy Plonk's real name?**

- A. Ziggy-Zaggy the Second
- B. Ziggy-Widdle the Third
- C. Wiggy-Waggy the Best

8

**Why does Tommy Plonk want to remove the pillar?**

- A. To make the room bigger
- B. To make space for his digger
- C. To make the school fall down

9

**Why does Tommy want to stay on Earth?**

- A. He likes it
- B. So he can destroy it
- C. So he can make money

10

**What does Tommy call his tunneller?**

- A. Sam
- B. Digger
- C. Claws



- 1 Together, recap on the events in the last chapter. (The reporters are outside the school, a gadget on Aunt Agatha's arm tells her that there is another alien nearby, there is an earthquake and a news truck and Aunt Agatha fall into the hole, Tommy Plonk keeps drinking from a flask.) Remember together the options from last week (investigate the giant worm or the vat of liquid or follow the children's voices). Ask the children to read the opening of the story. What advice has Aunt Agatha's nephew given? (To follow the voices.) Do they think Aunt Agatha will like this advice?
- 2 Continue reading until *It's the school boiler room*. Ask: What do you think it would be like in the tunnels? Imagine together the noises (the worm, voices, machinery) and the dark with only small areas lit up by torchlight. Ask the children to imagine jumping as they meet Aunt Agatha. Speculate together on how Mitch's chewing gum might be used later in the story. Ask: What does Mitch find on the floor? (The lid of Tommy's flask.) What does this tell him? (That Tommy is nearby.)
- 3 Read up to *You'll regret that*. Ask: What is the importance of the special juice? (It has kept him looking human.) Speculate on whether Tommy's special juice is the vat of liquid Aunt Agatha found in the last chapter. Ask: What happens to Tommy here? (He turns back into an alien.) Ask: What does Aunt Agatha mean by "So YOU are the other alien I detected!" Relate this to Aunt Agatha's flashing machine in the previous chapter. Find other uses of capitals or italics for emphasis in this chapter.
- 4 Ask: Why is the word YOU in capital letters? (for emphasis) Reread the sentence with other words emphasised, for example, "So you ARE the other alien I detected." and discuss the change in meaning. Ask a volunteer to describe or draw Tommy as an alien using the detail in the text. You could use the EXPLORE activity for this. Ask: What is Tommy's real name? Together, make up other silly names for Tommy. Ask: What impression do we have of Tommy here? (He is ridiculous.) Explain the meaning of 'a noble race'.
- 5 Read to the end of the chapter. Ask: What is Tommy's plan? (To knock down the pillar to make the school fall down.) Ask the children to find noun phrases that describe the tunnelling machine. For example: 'a giant machine', 'whirring blades', 'gnashing jaws made out of steel'. Find the adjective and noun in each phrase. Ask: What impression do you have of Sam? (Scary, dangerous, sharp, strong, spinning parts, parts that open like a mouth.) Agree that Tommy doesn't seem so ridiculous now.
- 6 Together, speculate on ways to stop the tunnelling machine. For example: put the chewing gum in the controls, steal the controller, pour the vat of liquid onto the controls, call the intergalactic police to arrest Tommy. Remind the children that next week's chapter is the last one. Ask: What needs to happen to finish the story? (The school needs to be saved and perhaps we need to meet Aunt Agatha's nephew!)



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**1** What advice has Aunt Agatha's nephew given her and do you think she will like this advice?

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**2** What did Mitch find on the floor and why is it important?

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**3** What does Tommy Plonk keep in his flask and what does it do?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**4** \_\_\_\_\_

**What does Tommy Plonk look like when he is an alien?**

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**5** \_\_\_\_\_

**Find and copy two phrases that describe Sam the tunneller.**

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**6** \_\_\_\_\_

**What will happen if Sam the tunneller knocks down the pillar?**

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Here is some of the challenging or potentially unfamiliar vocabulary used in Chapter 4 of *Aunt Agatha, Space Traveller*.

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.

detected

gnashing

jabbed

shrugged

sprouted

whirring



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Post a message to David MacPhail on the book forum for *Aunt Agatha, Space Traveller*. Use these questions to help you plan your message.

1. What is your favourite part of the story so far?

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2. What would you like to happen in the final chapter?

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Explain why: \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What question would you like to ask David about the upcoming final chapter?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

We use pronouns in place of nouns so that we do not have to repeat the noun. Can you write the correct pronoun so that the sentences below make sense?

he

she

it

we

they

1. Mitch and Annie went looking for Aunt Agatha but \_\_\_\_\_ spotted Tommy Plonk first.

2. Tommy Plonk looked like \_\_\_\_\_ was sneaking around.

3. "Which way should \_\_\_\_\_ go?" said Aunt Agatha and Annie.

4. The liquid in the flask looked like tea, but really \_\_\_\_\_ was a special juice to make Tommy Plonk look human.

5. Aunt Agatha realised that Tommy Plonk was really the alien that \_\_\_\_\_ detected.

6. The tunneller made a terrible noise as \_\_\_\_\_ crunched towards the pillar.



## What should Aunt Agatha do?

**A**

### Send the flask flying towards the tunneller

Aunt Agatha is frozen and cannot move, but the flask is lying near her many feet. How might she be able to send the flask flying? Do you think a flask could stop a big tunnelling machine? Do you think this is their best chance to rescue themselves?

**B**

### Ask the children for help

We know that the children are squashed, but we do not know whether they are also frozen. How might two children be able to stop such a dangerous machine, even if they are able to move? Could anything they have with them, such as the torch, be useful?

**C**

### Use one of the special buttons on her arm panel

We know that Aunt Agatha has some useful technology, such as the Alien Tracker. Perhaps she could use her voice or mind to operate the buttons on her arm panel and help them escape. Try to imagine what this button might do and how it could help, if you decide that this should be the winning option.

→ Which option do you think would be the most exciting one for the final chapter of *Aunt Agatha, Space Traveller*?

## Discussion Activity

In pairs or a small group, discuss the questions you would like to ask David MacPhail about the book, or about the plot for the final chapter next week. Look back at your plans for writing on the book forum and compare what you have written with each other's. Have you chosen the same things, or different?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

We have a great description of Tommy Plonk, or Ziggy-Widdle the Third as he is really called. Design an alien cartoon character using the description and adding your own details. Then come up with a name for the kind of creature this is, and where it comes from, and add labels to your drawing.

The \_\_\_\_\_ creature from \_\_\_\_\_

ANSWERS

**READ! Comprehension Questions**

1. Why are Annie and Mitch in the tunnel?  
C. They are looking for Aunt Agatha
2. What is Mitch chewing?  
A. Chewing gum
3. What does Mitch find on the floor?  
C. The lid of Tommy Plonk's flask
4. Where does the tunnel lead the children and Aunt Agatha?  
B. To the school boiler room
5. Why does Tommy Plonk drink the special juice?  
B. To make him look human
6. What does Mitch think Tommy Plonk looks like?  
A. A giant chicken
7. What is Tommy Plonk's real name?  
B. Ziggy-Widdle the Third
8. Why does Tommy Plonk want to remove the pillar?  
C. To make the school fall down
9. Why does Tommy want to stay on Earth?  
A. He likes it
10. What does Tommy call his tunneller?  
A. Sam

**WRITE! Using pronouns**

1. Mitch and Annie went looking for Aunt Agatha but **they** spotted Tommy Plonk first.
2. Tommy Plonk looked like **he** was sneaking around.
3. "Which way should **we** go?" said Aunt Agatha and Annie.
4. The liquid in the flask looked like tea, but really **it** was a special juice to make Tommy Plonk look human.
5. Aunt Agatha realised that Tommy Plonk was really the alien that **she** detected.
6. The tunneller made a terrible noise as **it** crunched towards the pillar.