

Comprehension Workbook 1

Mole

(Wind in the willows)

Mole

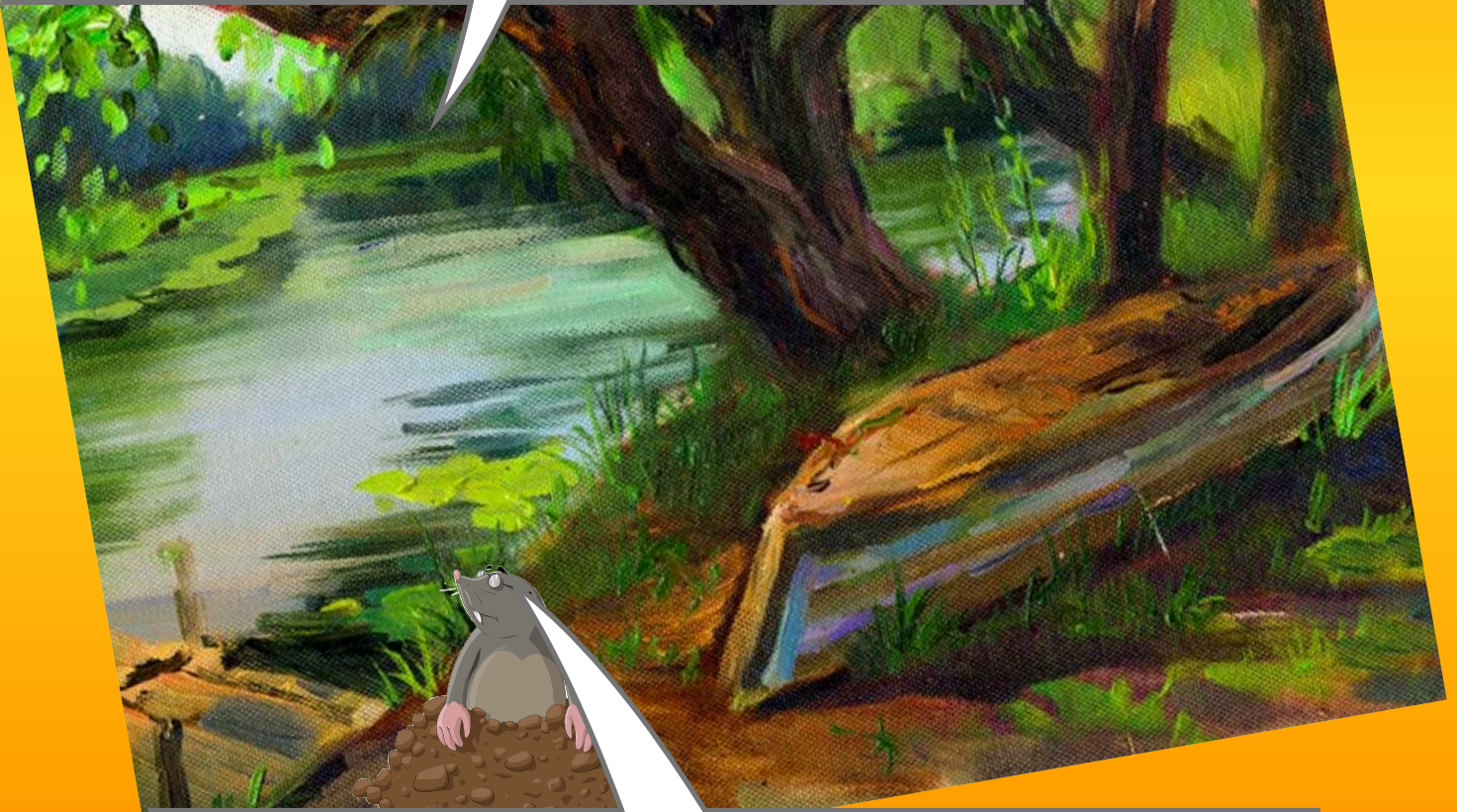


Mole's tunnels

Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

Mole by the riverside

Mole was new to rivers. In fact, he was more or less new to everything...



As Mole sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a nice riverside home, above flood level and away from noise and dust.

As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star.

But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely place; it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

A brown little face, with whiskers.
A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice.
Small neat ears and thick silky hair.
It was the Water Rat!

Then the two animals stood and looked at each other cautiously.

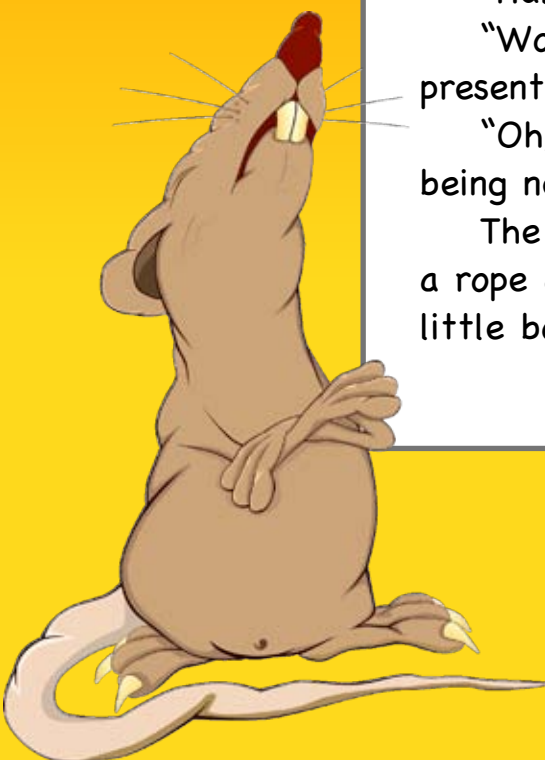
"Hullo, Mole" said the Water Rat.

"Hullo, Rat!" said the Mole.

"Would you like to come over?" enquired the Rat presently.

"Oh, it's all very well to talk," said the Mole, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

The Rat said nothing, but stooped and unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then lightly stepped into a little boat which the Mole had not observed.





Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word '**vanished**'.

b From that sentence, suggest what '**vanished**' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word '**vanished**'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to '**vanished**'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think '**vanished**' means.



Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: considering	thinking

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Summarising

(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

1 Write a heading for your summary.

2 Now write the main idea in one sentence.
e.g. "This story tells us..."

3 Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.

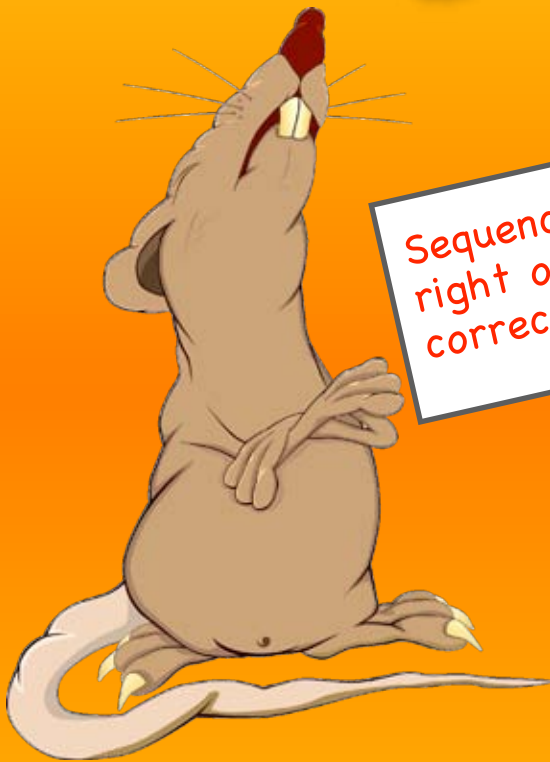
**Finally,
can you rewrite your
summary to make it better?**

- 1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.**
- 2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.**
- 3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.**
- 4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?**

**There is
nothing wrong
with rewriting; even
the best authors
rewrite their
work.**

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Sequencing



Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.



Rat stepped into a boat that Mole had not seen.

Mole saw an eye twinkle in a hole on the far bank.

The two animals stared at each other curiously.

"Would you like to come over?" asked Rat.

Mole sat on the grass by the riverbank.

It was Rat.



Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.



Write a sentence to answer each of these questions:

- (a) Where is Mole sitting?
- (b) What does the word 'grave' mean in the story?
- (c) What kind of fur did Water Rat have?
- (d) What tells you that Mole and Rat were friends?
- (e) What was the boat fastened with?



Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.

1 Why did Mole think the hole would make a nice home?

2 If you were Mole and you saw an eye, what would you think?

3 What do we know of the character of Water Rat from the description of his face?

4 What did Mole mean by "Oh, it's all very well to talk."



Opinions matter

Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.

- 1 Do you think the author describes seeing Mr Rat's eye well? Explain why.
- 2 What do you think will happen after Mr Rat arrived at Mr Mole's bank? Is there a hidden meaning in this story?
- 3 Write a letter to Mr Rat from Mr Mole, thanking him for a lovely boat ride and visit to the other bank.
- 4 What sort of personality do you think Mr Mole had?
- 5 If you were Mr Mole, would you have been looking forward to a boat ride?
- 6 Put yourself in the role of a mole, like the one in Kenneth Grahame's story, and imagine what it must be like to live in a burrow, a nice, comfortable, warm burrow.





Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.

Discussion topic: Living in a tunnel

Many animals live in tunnels, or burrows. This is a mole tunnel. Some birds nest in riverside tunnels, and animals like water voles and rats crawl up into them. Consider what the advantages and disadvantages of a riverside burrow might be.

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



Mole's new glasses

Mole was very short-sighted, you know. He would bumble along, burrowing underground and then popping up occasionally to find out where he was.

"I can't see much," sighed Mole, and he went back to do more tunnelling. As he tunnelled, he thought "Wouldn't it be good to have some glasses, or one day I might tunnel through the river bank and fall into the water!"

(Now you complete the story...)

Mole by the riverside

From Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame

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