

Unit of Work for

Alex Jackson:

Grommet

By Pat Flynn

Introduction

Welcome to the world of Alex Jackson. A world created for young readers to laugh and learn as they enter via their imagination, a place where both boys and girls are welcome. And, of course, their teachers! This unit of work has been written to help teachers provide students with positive reading and learning experiences.

The unit is divided into 5 sections. Chapters 1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20 and 21-26. Each section has three-level chapter questions, a listening comprehension quiz, two spelling lists, fill-in-the-blanks vocabulary, language lessons, and a major activity.

The language sections cover apostrophes, direct and indirect speech, their/there/they're, run-on sentences, and descriptive writing. The major activities include role-plays, designing a poster, writing an email to a character in the book, understanding and writing specialised words, and writing a book review.

This unit of work is published both in hard copy and on the internet at www.patflynnwriter.com. The hard copy can be ordered through University of Queensland Press Sales by calling 07 33652440. Fax—07 33651988. This version includes an answer section at the back. The teacher section will be updated on the website, so keep an eye out for improvements and add-ons.

Parts of this unit are interactive, including writing an email to Becky and sending the book review to the author. To obtain a reply make sure students write the correct words in the subject of the email. Expect about 1-2 weeks for replies to these activities. It would be a good idea if the teacher emailed the author (author@patflynnwriter.com) before the unit so he is prepared. If students don't have access to the net and would like to send letters, please include stamped addressed envelopes to Pat Flynn, PO Box 6042, St Lucia, QLD, 4067.

Thank you for entering Alex's world. I hope you enjoy reading about his adventures and that this unit of work makes learning enjoyable for both students and teachers.

Themes

Alex Jackson: Grommet has a number of themes which can be explored. It is primarily about the journey Alex is taking from boyhood to manhood. Included in this journey is his need to be accepted by his peers; his first love— Becky; and how he handles conflict. He is becoming his own person, relying less on his parents for support— although their advice is crucial to his sense of right and wrong.

The climax to four of the major themes are brought to a head late in the book. Chapter 19 sees “Dr Mum” express that it is often just as difficult for a parent of an adolescent to cope with the changes occurring as it is for the child. She reminds Alex not to forget the importance of family as he begins to seek independence. Chief provides what is probably the main message of the book in Chapter 20. An ex-boxer, he gives Alex a poignant anti-violence message. He says that boxing is a sport, but *fighting* is an attitude, and that being a man doesn't mean that you have to fight with your fists.

In Chapter 22 Casey helps Alex realise the importance of being his own person, and not worrying too much about what others think of him. In Chapter 23 Alex writes “I think I love you” to Becky. Though it is not a mature love, it is his first intense feeling for a member of the opposite sex— an important step on his journey to becoming a man.

Chapters 1-5

Questions

Do You Get It?

1. Which girl has a crush on Alex? (Chapter 1)
2. Why is Alex feeling nervous at the end of Chapter Two?
3. Why does Mrs Blake send Alex to see the Year 8 Coordinator? (Chapter 3)
4. What sport is Chief involved in? (Chapter 4)
5. What is an 'ollie'? (Chapter 5)

What's It Mean?

1. At the end of Chapter Three, Letch changes the way he treats Alex. Why is this and which character does it involve?
2. Which parent is Alex more afraid of when it comes to finding out that he is in trouble at school? What does the parent do to him that he'd rather avoid? (Chapter 4)
3. Why doesn't Chief want to move out of Beeton? (Chapter 5)

Chapters 1-5**Listening Comprehension—Quiz 1**

1. Which teacher has a mullet? (p.5)
 - a. Mr Mackle
 - b. Mr Scott
 - c. Mr Relf
 - d. Miss Pinzon

2. Alex and Jimmy became best friends after they had an argument during a game of: (p.3)
 - a. Tennis
 - b. Touch Football
 - c. Cricket
 - d. Nintendo 64

3. Who claimed to have puked on Snow White's shoes while visiting Disneyland? (p.8)
 - a. Emma Barney
 - b. Becky Tonella
 - c. Billy Johnstone
 - d. Zane Beard

4. What is Letch's favourite way of beginning a yelling session? (p.15)
 - a. LISTEN!
 - b. HOW DARE YOU!
 - c. RIGHT!
 - d. SHUT UP!

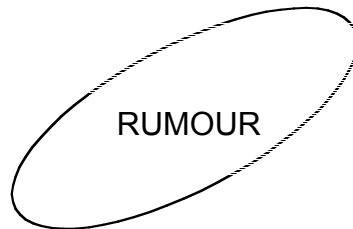
5. Casey Marshall is sponsored by: (p.23)
 - a. SkateBiz
 - b. Globe
 - c. Juice
 - d. Hardcore

Chapters 1-5

Spelling

When we first learnt how to spell it was often helpful to sound out words. MAT. M—A—T. However, as words get more difficult, sounding out doesn't always help. For example, school could be spelt skool, liquid could be lickwud, etc. Fortunately, our brains are incredible computers, and after seeing a word a few times it can usually remember how to spell it. Successful spellers are very good at having a picture of the whole word in their head, rather than simply trying to sound the word out. They will then write it down and see if it looks right on paper. One way to practise this is to imagine the word in your head written across your favourite skateboard, bicycle, T-shirt, etc. This helps you to remember it better.

Exercise: There are ten lists of words from the book in this unit. For words you aren't sure of, imagine them written across something you know well, perhaps as a sticker. Make sure you can see the word clearly in your head. One way to test this is to close your eyes and spell the word backwards, as well as forwards.



List 1

naughty, assigned, surprised, patiently, believe, exchanged, psyching, motion, skateboarding, touching, ceiling, gazing, interrupted, throughout, stomach, squeamish, accidentally, confidence, communication, discreet

List 2

engrossed, unfortunately, intimidate, twitching, dissipated, behaviour, favourite, visible, brawler, senseless, worshipped, ironical, battered, trampoline, reviewing, tremendous, exhilaration, centimetre, caution, momentum

Chapters 1-5

Vocabulary

Place the correct words from List 2 into the following sentences.

1. The skateboard was wobbling as he picked up _____ down the incline and Alex knew there was no way he could land it from this position. (Chapter 5)
2. He was so _____ in thinking up something, original, intelligent and halfway witty to write that he didn't notice Mrs Blake until she snatched the note out of his hand. (Chapter 3)
3. A small tattoo of a pair of crossed boxing gloves was _____ on his rather large right bicep. (Chapter 4)
4. Plus, he knew that most of the boys in the club _____ the ground he walked on. (Chapter 4)
5. Except for Sharon, nearly everyone called him Chief. Alex thought it was _____ seeing as his mum was so obviously in charge at home. (Chapter 4)

List 2

engrossed, unfortunately, intimidate, twitching, dissipated, behaviour, favourite, visible, brawler, senseless, worshipped, ironical, battered, trampoline, reviewing, tremendous, exhilaration, centimetre, caution, momentum,

Chapters 1-5

Language Lessons— Apostrophes

Apostrophes have two main purposes:

1. To indicate that one or more letters have been left out (eg, I'll = I will, don't = do not, you've = you have).
2. To show ownership of something (Ben's feet are smelly = The feet that Ben own smell!). The general rule is to add an apostrophe and an S to words that do not end in S (tree's branches— meaning the branches of one particular tree) and to just add the apostrophe to words that end in S (trees' branches— meaning the branches of more than one tree). An exception is singular nouns that end in S. For these you add an apostrophe and an S (Eg, Jess's book, the Jones's car).

Exercises

1. Place the apostrophe in the correct position then write out the missing letters underneath. (Eg, wouldn't– would not)

☞ He thought hed cruise to lunch

☞ "Well... Zane reckons hes been there, and, umm, my mate Casey told me that skateboarding was invented in California, and thats in America."

☞ "If you cant sit on your chair properly Ill move you to the front."

☞ "Cant Chief, Im heading to the skatepark."

☞ Alex was glad they were at different schools this year so she couldnt tell Mum things such as what Sarah Sceney thought about his bum (she liked it), or how hed got a detention for kicking a soccer ball through a window.

2. Add the apostrophe to represent ownership in the appropriate place.

☞ "Adrian Dorry reckons he'll run all the way to his dads house in Sydney," Jimmy said excitedly.

☞ Then Alex caught a glimpse of Beckys leg, and he didn't hear another word Mrs Blake said.

☞ Alex flipped his battered Union Standard skateboard under his arm, grabbed a piece of his mums famous banana cake and headed out the door.

☞ As he sat in Mr Letchers office, Alex tried to mentally prepare himself to be killed.

☞ "You got your mums brains and my left jab, and you're not using either of them," Chief complained.

Chapters 1-5

Activity—Role Play

In groups of 3 to 6, present a short roleplay of one of the following scenes to the class. Make sure you read the passage from the book that the roleplay is based on, and add material of your own.

1. Characters: **Alex, Becky, Sarah, Billy, Miss Pinzon, Johnno**. In this scene (p.2-3) Alex sees a grasshopper fly into Becky's hair, but before he can get her attention Billy Johnstone walks past and takes it out, leaving Alex feeling foolish.
2. Characters: **Alex, Jimmy, Mrs Greaves**. Replay the scene from primary school (p.3-4) when Alex and Jimmy get into a fight after a game of touch football. After the fight Mrs Greaves makes them sit next to each other in class.
3. Characters: **Mr Scott, Peter Callaghan, Emma Barney, Zane Beard**. Peter Callaghan questions the existence of God to Mr Scott, which leads to a class discussion on the subject (p.7-11).
4. Characters: **Alex, Mrs Blake, three to five other students**. Alex waits at the front of the line to go into Life Skills class. He is distracted and nervous about his future encounter with Becky. Other students in the line are talking and misbehaving, until Mrs Blake comes, quiets them down and tells them to go inside. Unfortunately, Alex isn't listening (p.12).
5. Characters: **Mrs Blake, Alex, Becky**. Mrs Blake is teaching the children about listening skills (p.13-15), but Alex is more interested in communicating with Becky. After he gets into trouble for talking and leaning back on his chair, he starts writing notes. However, things don't go as planned!
6. Characters: **Alex, Mr Letcher**. Alex sits in Letch's office waiting to be killed, or at the very least, yelled at. Luckily for Alex, things don't go quite as badly as he thought they would (p.15-16).
7. Characters: **Alex, Chief**. Alex shows his Dad the note from George Letcher, and asks him to sign it before his Mum gets home (p.18-20).
8. **Casey Marshall, Alex**. Casey tries to mentally prepare Alex to grind down the railing at the skatepark. Unfortunately, it doesn't go well! (p.25-27).
9. Characters: **Sam, Mandy**. Sam and Mandy are jumping on the trampoline at Mandy's house and gossiping about life at Beeton Primary. Sam tells Mandy that she's heard from a girl whose sister goes to St Joseph's that Alex has the hots for Becky Tonella. They talk about how this will affect Sarah Sceney, the girl who's liked Alex for 5 years.

Chapters 6-10

Questions

Do You Get It?

1. What aspect of technology does Becky talk about in her speech? (Chapter 6)
2. Why does Jimmy think Alex is 'stuffed'? (Chapter 6)
3. What gets Jimmy into trouble with Billy Johnstone? (Chapter 7)
4. What does Miss Pinzon ask Alex to do? (Chapter 7)
5. What Internet name does Jimmy use to talk to Becky? (Chapter 8)
6. What does Sarah write across the bottom of the minutes from the Skateboarding exhibition meeting? (Chapter 9)

What's It Mean?

1. When Billy got up after being knocked over by Alex, he "didn't even look angry. In fact, he had a slight smile on his face" (p.35).
Why do you think he was looking forward to fighting Alex?
2. At the end of Chapter 9 the reader is given a clue as to what state of mind Becky is in. What is it and how does the reader know?

Chapters 6-10**Listening Comprehension—Quiz 2**

1. Sarah Sceney's nickname for Alex was: (p.28)
 - a. Michael
 - b. Al
 - c. Jack
 - d. Snuggles

2. Clair Carney's nickname is: (p.32)
 - a. Claire Bear
 - b. CC
 - c. Claire the Lair
 - d. Barney

3. Jimmy's mum says she has to make an important phone call. Jimmy says, "who to, your..." (p.40)
 - a. Bridge partner
 - b. Tennis partner
 - c. Alice, your best friend.
 - d. Sister

4. The two types of skateboarding competitions are: (p.43-44)
 - a. Big boards and small boards
 - b. Pro and amateur
 - c. Flat and ramps
 - d. Street and Vert

5. When Alex fell off the rail for the second time (in Chapter 10), Casey said: (p.48)
 - a. "You're a goner, Jackson."
 - b. "Next time land on your feet."
 - c. "You've got issues, boy."
 - d. "Try it again."

Chapters 6-10

Spelling

List Three

technology, continuing, applauded, generously, embarrassing, relatively, designs, finale, stationary, impression, hammered, rumour, religious, sauntered, weight, familiar, interrupting, organise

List Four

recognisable, hopefully, tomorrow, suspicion, idiot, exhibition, possibility, concentrate, practically, annoyed, conviction, achieved, smoothly, imagining, propelled

Vocabulary

Place the correct words from List 4 into the following sentences.

1. Alex sat down beside Jimmy and saw a computer screen with lots of weird names and barely _____ messages. (Chapter 8)
2. To avoid _____ Jimmy was using a girl's name, Juliette, as his handle. (Chapter 8)
3. Whatever the reason, Alex was stoked that Becky had come and he was finding it hard to _____ on running a meeting. (Chapter 9)
4. "Yeah I saw it," his friend mumbled without _____. (Chapter 9)
5. Instead of landing smoothly on all four wheels he speared the nose of the board on the ground, and was _____ forward like he was shot out of a cannon. (Chapter 10)

Chapters 6-10

Language Lessons— Direct and Indirect Speech

Direct Speech is when the actual words that are used by a person are written down, or quoted. Indirect speech is a translation, or paraphrase, of what the person said.

- "Mate, I think you're stuffed," said Jimmy. (Direct Speech)
- Jimmy told Alex that he thought he was stuffed. (Indirect Speech)

Capital letters are used at the start of Direct Speech, but not Indirect Speech.

- Sarah asked, "Is anyone taking minutes at this meeting?"
- Sarah asked if anyone was taking minutes at the meeting.

Notice that different words are often needed when changing a sentence from Direct to Indirect Speech, or vice versa, so that the sentence makes sense. For example, in indirect speech the subject will usually go at the start of the sentence. In direct speech the words are often said in present tense.

- Alex told his Mum that he would be okay because it only took 10 minutes by skateboard to get there. (Indirect Speech)
- "I'll be right Mum, it only takes 10 minutes on me skateboard," said Alex. (Direct Speech)

Chapters 6-10

Exercises—Direct and Indirect Speech

Rewrite the following sentences changing them from Direct to Indirect speech.

1. "So what sort of stuff are you into?" Jimmy asked Becky.
2. "Mum leave us alone, will ya?" said Jimmy.
3. "What's a Vert ramp?" asked Becky.
4. "I have to go, but can I email you?" asked Juliette.
5. "There are two types of skateboarding comps," explained Jimmy.

Rewrite the following sentences changing them from Indirect to Direct Speech. Remember to put the punctuation inside the Quotation Marks.

Example:

- "Who says I can't skate vert"? said the year 10 boy, his voice getting loud. (Wrong)
- "Who says I can't skate vert?" said the year 10 boy, his voice getting loud. (Right)

1. Becky said she would design some posters.
2. Adrian said that Claire Carney and Billy had already gone together six times in primary school.
3. Becky said that when she chats on the Internet she feels like she can say anything.
4. Alex told Jimmy that he was too embarrassed to talk to Becky while she was standing with a big group of girls.
5. Jimmy asked Alex how he knew that Becky liked to chat on the Internet.

Chapters 6-10

Activity—Design a Poster

At the meeting to organise the upcoming St Joseph's day skateboarding demonstration (Ch.9), Becky agrees to design some posters to help publicise the event. Design your own poster to publicise the demonstration. Remember that the main aim of a poster is to catch the reader's attention, which can be done with a colourful picture and a large headline. You also should include all the important details, such as when and where the event is taking place.

Chapters 11-15

Questions

Do You Get It?

1. What bands do Becky like? (Chapter 11)
2. Who slipped her hands over Alex's eyes while he was just about to read Becky's email? (Chapter 12)
3. What advice does Chief give Alex about fighting Billy? (Chapter 13)
4. Who was running a bet on how fast Billy would knock Alex out? (Chapter 14)
5. Why was Billy Johnstone crying in Chapter 15?

What's It Mean?

1. Why do you think Alex tells Becky in an email that his favourite actor is Leonardo Di Caprio? (p.50)
2. When Alex reads Becky's email in Chapter 12, it says he wished "he could give himself amnesia." What does this mean and why does he feel like this?
3. The last sentence of Chapter 15 states: "But as Alex sat there basking in his new-found glory, he wondered whether he was all that different from Billy Johnstone." What does this mean?

Chapters 11-15**Listening Comprehension—Quiz 3**

1. Becky said her family had to move to Logan City because: (p.53)
 - a. Their new house had a better view
 - b. Their old house was too small
 - c. Her dad got a new job
 - d. Her dad was having trouble with his business

2. In primary school, Sarah wrote the following phrase on the screen saver of every school computer: (p.59)
 - a. Sarah loves Alex
 - b. Sarah loves Jack
 - c. Alex is a spunk!
 - d. Jack is hot!

3. Which song did Alex sing to Sam at the end of Chapter 13, to make her feel better? (p.64)
 - a. Smells like teen spirit
 - b. Khe Sanh
 - c. Summer of 69
 - d. Staying Alive

4. Jimmy bet on Alex lasting more than 10 seconds in the fight against Billy. How much money did he bet? (p.65)
 - a. 50 cents
 - b. 1 dollar
 - c. 10 dollars
 - d. He didn't bet

5. What did Alex do when Becky put her hand on his leg? (p.77)
 - a. Shivered in pleasure
 - b. Held her hand
 - c. Kissed her
 - d. Told her to move it

Chapters 11-15

Spelling

List 5

guilty, literary, masterpieces, persona, swearing, lyrics, swimming, gymnasium, excitable, flattered, business, suburb, gossip, deliriously, assignment, nervously, casually, coincidence, algebra, bulge,

List 6

amnesia, betraying, anonymously, persecuted, opponent, coolly, accurately, muscles, signalled, perimeter, vantage, suspicious, ecstatic, accuracy, thread, expectantly, awkward, murmur, summoned, handkerchief, subtleties, whispering

Vocabulary

Place the correct words from List 6 in the following sentences.

1. He read the two pages quickly, then wondered if he could give himself _____ or somehow unread the letter by turning the pages upside down and reading it backwards. (Chapter 12)
2. "You'll kick his butt, mate," Jimmy assured Alex, his tone of voice _____ the fact that he didn't give him a hope in hell. (Chapter 14)
3. During religion in period 2, Mr Scott told them how the Romans _____ the early Christians by throwing them to the lions. (Chapter 14)
4. Normally, he would have been _____, but he didn't feel that good about life at the moment. (Chapter 14)
5. Afraid of being _____ as witnesses and forced to spill their guts, the Year 8s scattered like ants before rain. (Chapter 14)

Chapters 11-15

Language Lessons—There, Their, They're

Some words sound the same but have different meanings. There, Their and They're are three such words.

Their is a possessive pronoun, which means it represents ownership of something by more than one. Unlike the possessives you practised earlier in this unit, it doesn't need an apostrophe and 's'. Sam and Mandy took **their** shoes off and started jumping on the trampoline.

They're is short for they are. They think **they're** so cool, but **they're** not.

For all other uses There is correct. It often means in or at a place or location.

 Alex went **there** on his skateboard.

It can be used in other ways. Mr Letcher said **there** is no fighting allowed.

There is a boy named Jimmy who can't control his mouth.

Exercise

Place the correct there, they're, or their in the following sentences.

1. Anyone who says () cool probably isn't, and if they say () uncool they probably are!
2. () is a boy named Billy Johnstone who's cute but up himself.
3. Alex and Casey sat on () skateboards and talked.
4. () is one nice boy at school named Alex Jackson, but I still don't trust men as () all two-faced liars.
5. Alex was to fight Billy in the corner of the school. He and Jimmy put () books in () bags and began the long walk ().
6. Be () or be a Square!
7. () must be a 100 of 'em here, thought Alex.
8. Afraid of being summoned as witnesses and forced to spill () guts, the year 8's scattered like ants before rain.
9. But as Alex sat () basking in his new-found glory, he wondered whether he was all that different from Billy Johnstone.
10. Alex and Billy got caught fighting by Mr Letcher. () in a lot of trouble.

Chapters 11-15

Activity— Write an Email

1. Alex found out a lot about Becky by corresponding with her by email. Pretend that you have just met Becky in an Internet Chat room, and you decide to write an email telling her about yourself. Include your hobbies, what you think of school, your favourite bands and television shows, and other important and interesting details about yourself. You should also ask some appropriate questions about her life, such as her interests, hobbies, etc.

Make sure in the subject of the email you write the words, 'To Becky'. Send this email to becky@patflynnwriter.com and wait for Becky's reply!

2. Write a similar email or letter to another student in the class without disclosing who you are. Does the person know it is you? Do you know who your letter is from?

Chapters 16-20

Questions

Do You Get It?

1. What was the first place Alex and Becky went on their after-school date? (Chapter 16)
2. What happened in Chapter 17 when Alex tried to grind down the rail?
3. Why did Alex fight Billy again? (Chapter 18)
4. Who cried at the hospital while talking to Alex? (Chapter 19)
5. What lesson was Chief trying to teach Alex during their talk? (Chapter 20)

What's It Mean?

1. Alex thought that it was strange that Becky wasn't nearly as open to him—her boyfriend, as she was to Juliette — her email friend. *I guess there's more to lose with a real-life person*, he thinks (p.80). What does he mean?
2. Chief says that boxing is a sport, but fighting is an attitude (p.104). Explain what he means.

Chapters 16-20**Listening Comprehension—Quiz 4**

1. Becky slipped her hand onto Alex's leg in the audiovisual room while they were watching: (p.81)
 - a. A video on Ancient Egypt
 - b. A documentary on frogs
 - c. A video on The history of the Catholic Church
 - d. A video called, Human Biology: Part One

2. At the train station: (p.88)
 - a. Alex and Becky kissed
 - b. Alex told Becky that he loved her
 - c. Becky broke up with Alex
 - d. A conductor asked for their tickets

3. When the identical twins, Kirsten and Kerra Medhurst, spoke, everything sounded: (p.90)
 - a. loud
 - b. soft
 - c. like they were mad
 - d. like a question

4. Because of the fight, Alex got: (p.100)
 - a. a get-well card from school
 - b. suspended
 - c. a detention
 - d. expelled

5. Chief gave Alex a talk about fighting: (p.102)
 - a. at home
 - b. in hospital
 - c. in the boxing ring
 - d. in the car

Chapters 16-20**Spelling****List 7**

advice, hilarious, pressure, audiovisual, Catholic, goose bumps, trampoline, singlet, pleasantries, disagree, hassled, eloping, emotional, beginner, impressed, surrender, unstoppable, immediately, sprawled, forehead, kneeling, eventually, approaching, rhythm

List 8

whispering, beautiful, tentatively, million, vicinity, squash, doubtful, proceedings, automatically, imaginable, adrenalin, enveloped, detached, rebelled, humungous, barely, conscious, concussion, bearings, maintenance, glistening

Vocabulary

Place the correct words from List 8 into the following sentences:

1. Billy's hands _____ Alex's biceps and lifted him clean up off the ground, as if he was made of helium. (Chapter 18)
2. Alex floated outside of himself as if he was suddenly a _____ observer. (Chapter 18)
3. At that moment identical twins Kirsten and Kerra Medhurst _____ approached Becky. (Chapter 18)
4. It's a load of bullcrap!" he said loudly, making sure everyone in the _____ heard. (Chapter 18)
5. The doctor said that you have a mild _____. (Chapter 19)

Chapters 16-20

Language— Run-on Sentences.

Many people write similar to the way in which they speak. Writing and speaking use different structures— writing is often more formal so the meaning can be expressed clearly. One problem many students have in their writing is run-on sentences, which is having two or more sentences in one. This is often the way we talk. Run-on sentences can often be avoided by wording your sentences in a more clear way.

- Alex was surprised that Sarah Sceney showed up, the place she showed up to was the skateboarding meeting. (wrong)
- Alex was surprised that Sarah Sceney showed up at the skateboarding meeting. (right)

You should also make sure you only have one idea per sentence, and that you use the full-stop at the end of that idea.

- Alex felt like he was living in the body of someone far cooler than himself, girls smiled at him like he was someone important boys wanted his advice on how to make a spitball how to land a 180 kickflip it was if they thought that by hanging around him some of his luck would rub off onto them. (wrong)
- Alex felt like he was living in the body of someone far cooler than himself. Girls smiled at him like he was someone important. Boys wanted his advice on how to make a spitball and how to land a 180 kickflip. It was as if they thought that by hanging around him some of his luck would rub off onto them. (right)

Chapters 16-20**Exercise**

Rewrite the following run-on sentences.

1. Alex was surprised Sarah Sceney showed up she had left him alone since their talk in the library not smiling at or embarrassing him once he wouldn't admit it to anybody but he kind of missed her bugging him.

2. Billy hadn't so much as looked at Alex Alex was sure it was because of the pressure from Letch but all the same he was glad Billy's group of friends no longer hung off his every word and there was even a rumour Claire Carney was going to dump him.

3. Alex and Becky were getting along great, they were getting along great because they had hardly spoken to each other.

4. When they arrived they watched Casey doing handplants on the top of the vert and Becky was impressed who wouldn't be?

5. Does the hero of the movie ever get wiped out of course not.

6. Alex walked slowly and gingerly with Becky to the station at the station they kissed.

7. Chief drove Jimmy and the girls home but before Jimmy left Alex asked him about Becky Jimmy hadn't seen her.

8. Alex noticed his mum having a quiet word to Chief as she was leaving she looked serious.

Chapters 16-20

Activity— Inventing Words

People are interested in many different things. Some people like sports such as cricket, others enjoy playing computer games. When a subject becomes popular people often make up new words to describe things about it. Words such as “slips”, “fine leg”, and “third man” would mean very different things to people who know nothing about cricket. Those who play computer games use words like “console”, “X-box” and “joystick”. These type of specialised words are known as **jargon**.

Exercise

Match the following list of specialised words to the subject on the right hand side.

Thoroughbred	Computers
Prosecute	Tennis
Stethoscope	Poetry
Cleft	Medicine
Calculus	Music
Combat	Horses
Stanza	Religion
Deuce	Law
Download	Mathematics
Theology	War

Exercise

Write down the skateboarding terms that match the following descriptions. Use the glossary at the back of the book to help.

1. The metal rod running through the hanger on which the wheels are screwed.
2. Main platform area of a skateboard.
3. Snapping the board into two pieces.
4. Exciting.
5. An impressive move or trick.

Chapters 16-20

Exercise—Inventing Words

Think of a subject you know something about. For that subject, write down three specialised words and their meanings. Now, invent two new words and make up some imaginary meanings for them. You should have a total of five words and their meanings— three true, the other two made up. Swap your list with a partner and see if they can correctly identify the real three words and their meanings.

Chapters 21-26

Questions

Do You Get It?

1. What happened to Becky's dad? (Chapter 21)
2. What two things did Casey give Alex in Chapter 22?
3. Who did Jimmy start going out with? (Chapter 25)
4. Where did Becky and her mum move to? (Chapter 25)
5. What did Becky say to Alex at the end of her email? (Chapter 25)

What's It Mean?

1. What is Casey's advice in Chapter 22?
2. Becky's dad tells her that he wished his work was played on clay courts, because maybe then he wouldn't have been able to cheat so much (p.125). Explain this analogy.

Chapters 21-26**Listening Comprehension—Quiz 5**

1. After Claire Carney dumped Billy Johnstone, she started going out with:
(p.105)
 - a. Jimmy
 - b. Alex
 - c. Adrian Dorry
 - d. Joel Foster

2. How much money did Becky's dad steal? (p.108)
 - a. \$500,000
 - b. One million dollars
 - c. \$100,000
 - d. He was innocent

3. After talking with Casey, Alex was in a hurry to go: (p.113)
 - a. Home
 - b. To the library
 - c. To school
 - d. To Becky's house

4. Other than Jimmy, only one person seemed happy to see Alex when he returned to school after his suspension. It was: (p.118)
 - a. Letch
 - b. Sarah Sceney
 - c. Miss Pinzon
 - d. Billy Johnstone

5. Even though they only lived a five-minute walk from each other's houses, Jimmy and Sarah Sceney emailed each other: (p.123)
 - a. Never
 - b. Every day
 - c. Twice a day
 - d. Three times a day

Chapters 21-26

Spelling

List 9

apparently, worrying, unreliable, ridiculous, disappear, opposite, prodded, exaggerations, differently, arrested, lawyer, companies, sentenced, practising, acknowledged

List 10

squeaky, occurrence, consequences, spreading, experience, gossip, librarian, genuinely, exhibition, advertising, gnarly, slippery, successful, colourful, whooping, cement, violence, especially, existence

Vocabulary

Place the correct words from List 10 into the following sentences.

1. From the _____ boot Casey pulled out a brand new, top of the line World Industries Everlasts board. (Chapter 22)
2. "Then try and make it right. And be man enough to accept the _____." (Chapter 22)
3. "I hope you'll be okay for the skateboarding _____ on Friday!" (Chapter 24)
4. There was lots of _____ and hollering from the Year 8s, and polite applause from the older kids. (Chapter 24)
5. If you were here now I'd be tempted to slap you, even though I'm opposed to _____ in any form. (Chapter 25)

Chapters 21-26

Language—Painting Pictures With Words

An important part of writing stories or poetry is **description**— trying to create an image in the reader’s minds. Often writers describe things by comparing one thing with something else.

- He was as fast as a cheetah.
- He towered over the Year 8s like a skyscraper overlooking a cubby house.

When you compare one thing to another and you use the words “like” or “as” it is called a **simile**.

When you say something **is** something else (when it isn’t really), it is called a **metaphor**.

- She was a dolphin in the water.
- He was dead meat.

Out of the two above similes, the first one has been used often, making it a **cliché**. The second simile is more original. When you write similes or metaphors, you should try and use your imagination and write your own comparison, rather than one which has been used lots of times before.

Exercise

Finish the following similes or metaphors from the book, then circle whether it is a simile (S) or metaphor (M). Note that some of the sentences are worded slightly different to how they are written in the book.

1. You needed the guts of _____. (p.110) S or M
2. He would have been as happy as a _____ at an _____ . (p.46) S or M
3. I gotta _____ waiting to kill me.
(p.68) S or M
4. Alex Jackson, skateboarder and _____ .
(p.121) S or M
5. Billy’s hands enveloped Alex’s biceps and lifted clean up off the ground, as _____. (p.93) S or M

Chapters 21-26

Exercise—Painting Pictures With Words

Write an ending to the following phrases. Remember to make your comparisons original.

1. She was as sad as _____.
2. When the going got tough, Jack ran away. He was a _____ in the face of conflict.
3. Steve was a _____, getting more food on his face than in his mouth.
4. He ran after the ball as graceful as a _____, lobbing it back 3 metres over the wicketkeeper's head.
5. Jane waltzed into the school social looking like _____.

Exercise

Everyone in the class is to place their name in a hat on a piece of paper about 5cm x 5cm. Students choose a name at random, and they write a short, positive description about that person on the piece of paper. Remember to use original images to describe that person's looks or personality. The teacher can pass the descriptions back to the students.

Chapters 21-26

Activity—Book Review

The main task of a book review is to tell the reader whether the book is worth reading.

In a Review you should:

- Give your opinion clearly.
- Support your opinion by referring to specific good and bad things about the book. For example, you might cover the effectiveness of the characters, plot (what happens in the story), style (humorous, fast-paced, etc) and major issues or themes covered.
- Draw your ideas together in a clear and concise conclusion.
- Mention at least some positive points.

In a Review you should not:

- Simply describe the item without saying why you liked or disliked different parts.
- Tell the reader the ending of the book.
- Make negative comments without giving a good reason.

Exercise

Check the authors website www.patflynnwriter.com and read reviews of Alex Jackson: Grommet.

Exercise

Write your own review of Alex Jackson: Grommet, and if you wish, send it to the author, Pat Flynn (author@patflynnwriter.com). He'll be interested to hear your comments and will send you a reply. Make sure in the subject of the email you write 'Review'.

Answers

Chapters 1-5

Do You Get It?

1. Sarah Sceney
2. Because he is going to try and talk to Becky
3. For writing notes in class
4. Boxing
5. 'Jumping' on a skateboard

What's It Mean?

1. Letch treats Alex better because Alex mentions the fact that he is trying to be friendly to Becky.
2. His mum. She makes him feel guilty.
3. Because he grew up there and he wants to be a good role model for the children of Beeton.

Listening Comprehension

1. C
2. B
3. D
4. B
5. A

Vocabulary

1. momentum
2. engrossed
3. visible
4. worshipped
5. ironical

Answers

Chapters 6-10

Do You Get It?

1. Internet chat rooms
2. Because Billy and Becky walk off together
3. His mouth
4. To organise a skateboarding exhibition
5. Juliette
6. I love Jack 4 ever

What's It Mean?

1. So he could show off in front of his friends.
2. She is upset. Because it says her eyes are sad.

Listening Comprehension

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. D
5. C

Vocabulary

1. recognisable
2. suspicion
3. concentrate
4. conviction
5. propelled

Answers

Chapters 11-15

Do You Get It?

1. LimpBizkit and Sunk Loto
2. Sarah Sceney
3. Skip in close, hammer him with jabs and uppercuts and get away before he crushes you in a bear hug
4. Peter Callaghan
5. Because Letch yelled at him

What's It Mean?

1. So she thinks he is a girl.
2. Amnesia is when you can't remember anything. He feels like this because he feels guilty from reading Becky's personal information that he obtained under false pretences.
3. That Alex was enjoying being popular, just as Billy enjoys being popular.

Listening Comprehension

1. D
2. B
3. D
4. A
5. A

Vocabulary

1. amnesia
2. betraying
3. persecuted
4. ecstatic
5. summoned

Answers

Chapters 16-20

Do You Get It?

1. To Alex's house
2. He fell off and his skateboard snapped
3. Because Billy spread nasty rumours about Becky
4. Sharon Jackson
5. That fighting is wrong

What's It Mean?

1. That it is sometimes easier to talk to a stranger than it is to a family member or friend
2. You can compete in boxing without hating your opponent. Fighting is an attitude based on hate and violence. It is wrong.

Listening Comprehension

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. B
5. C

Vocabulary

1. enveloped
2. detached
3. tentatively
4. vicinity
5. concussion

Answers

Chapters 21-26

Do You Get It?

1. He went to jail after stealing money through fraud
2. Advice and a new skateboard
3. Sarah Sceney
4. Italy
5. That she loves him

What's It Mean?

1. Not to care about what others think of you, but to do what you know is right.
2. On clay courts the ball makes a mark so it is hard to cheat. He was able to get away with cheating in his work so he did. He wished he never had the opportunity to cheat in the first place.

Listening Comprehension

1. D
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. D

Vocabulary

1. squeaky
2. consequences
3. exhibition
4. whooping
5. violence