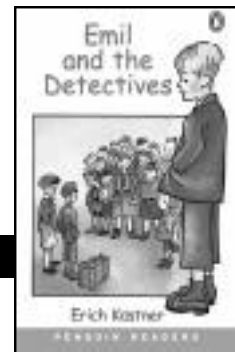


Teacher's notes

Emil and the Detectives

by Erich Kästner



SUMMARY

Emil Fisher is a small boy from the village of Newton. He is going off to the city for the first time on his own, to stay with his aunt. He is carrying quite a lot of money which his mother warns him not to lose but, inevitably, the money is stolen from him even before he has arrived on the train, despite the fact that he pinned the notes to his pocket.

In desperation, Emil gets off the train one stop early and looks for the man he suspects. He sees him leaving the station and follows, first on foot, then on a tram, where a kind man buys him a ticket. He tracks the thief to a café, where the man sits down to have a meal.

Emil doesn't feel he can go to the police, because he committed a crime in his village – he put red paint on the nose of the statue in Newton. He feels sure that the police will arrest him for this crime rather than help him get his money back.

Whilst Emil is trying to decide what to do, he is joined by Paul, a city boy with a lot of friends. When Paul hears Emil's story, he summons his friends, and together they follow the thief to a hotel and stake it out, while they make plans to get Emil's money back.

After a couple of setbacks, the boys decide the only way to deal with the problem is to surround the thief when he leaves the hotel and embarrass him into giving back the money. The first part of the plan works well, but then the thief goes into a bank and tries to get the stolen notes changed. Emil and his friends enter, and Emil is able to prove that the notes belong to him because they have pin marks in them.

The next day the story is in the newspapers and it turns out that Emil's thief is a wanted bank robber with a price on his head. Emil gets a reward of £50.

ABOUT ERICH KÄSTNER

Kästner began his literary career as a journalist, then produced light but ultimately serious poetry, against the backdrop of the rise of Nazism in Germany in the inter-war years.

Kästner was opposed to Hitler and his inexorable rise to supreme power. 'The only people who attain power,' he

said 'are those who crave it.' Craving power, by implication, is in itself wrong and dangerous.

Kästner's 1931 novel, *Fabian*, charts the collapse of one man's world at a time when the world of the Weimar Republic was collapsing. The novel was eventually publicly burned by the Nazis. Kästner himself was lucky to escape with only an interdiction on his publishing until after the war.

His writings for children are characterized by a willingness to see children as thinking creatures. Indeed, he appeared to equate childlike qualities with basic humanity. He is quoted as saying:

'Only the one who becomes a grown-up and keeps on being a child is a human being.'

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

Emil and the Detectives has all the ingredients of the child's adventure novel. The heroes of the story are all children, who overcome impossible odds to defeat evil and in the end receive a surprise reward. Describing the plot in that way makes it sound like one of William Brown's adventures from the classic stories by Richmal Crompton. But this novel is more than just an exciting plot.

Firstly, it is a rite of passage story, about a young, frightened country boy, lost and penniless in a big city, who faces up to his situation and deals with every problem that he is faced with. By the end of the story, Emil is no longer a wide-eyed innocent. He has learnt several lessons which will last him throughout life – you can't believe everything that strangers tell you. The author has another lesson for his readers, which he puts in the mouth of the grandmother. 'Life is difficult sometimes but there are many kind people in the world and a true friend comes when you need help.'

Secondly, it is a story which raises moral issues, the central one being – is it right to steal something back from the person who stole it from you?

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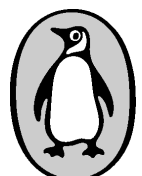
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PRE-INTERMEDIATE

EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES



Teacher's notes

Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the Reader and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopiable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of the discussion and pair/groupwork activities, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

Give students this imaginary situation:

You are travelling to a strange city. You have some money, but on the way, the money is stolen. You see the man who stole the money.

Put students into groups to discuss what they would do in this situation. Ask them to think of several possible actions and what might happen in each case.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Chapters 1–3

- Put students into groups to discuss these questions.
 - What mistakes did Emil make in the first part of Chapter 2 (to *then he fell asleep* page 8)
 - What clever things did Emil do in the first part of Chapter 2
- Put students into three to role play the conversations between Emil, the ticket seller and the man with a newspaper.
- Put students into pairs to role play as follows:
 - A conversation between Polly and her grandmother at East Station when Emil doesn't arrive – they discuss the possible reasons and what to do. At the end, Emil's grandmother decides to telephone Emil's mother
 - The conversation between Emil's grandmother and Emil's mother on the telephone
- Put students into groups to discuss what Emil should do. Elicit ideas and make a note of them. Come back to these ideas and compare them as the students read the next section.

Chapters 4–6

- Remind students that the boys have a discussion about stealing. Write this question on the board:
Is it wrong to steal something back from a thief?
Put students into groups to discuss the question. Ask them to think about the legal and the moral aspects of this problem.
- Put students into pairs with the following instructions:
Student A. You are the thief. What did you do in Chapter 5? Read again then tell Student B.

Student B. You are Emil. What did you do in Chapter 5? Read again then tell Student A.

Chapters 7–9

Put students into pairs to role play a conversation between the thief and the police chief. The police chief asks the thief a lot of questions. At first he says he didn't do anything, then he says he the money fell out of Emil's pocket, then he tells the truth about that crime, then finally he tells the truth about the bank robbery as well.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

In the story, the man on the tram (who gives Emil the money for a ticket) is a reporter. Ask the students to imagine that the man is in fact a detective. Ask them to write a different ending to the story, from the moment that ticket seller comes up to Emil.

Glossary

It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practised in the 'Before You Read' sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

Chapters 1–3

alarm (n) something such as a bell, loud noise or light that warns people of danger

behave (v) to do or say things in a particular situation

bell (n) a metal object that makes a ringing sound when it is hit

cap (n) a soft hat with a curved part sticking out at the front

carriage (n) one of the connected parts of a train or tram where passengers sit

corridor (n) a long narrow area between two rows of rooms or at the side of a train carriage

organization (n) a group that a lot of people, countries, etc. belong to

pin (n) a short thin piece of metal with a sharp point at one end, used especially for holding pieces of cloth together

robbery (n) the crime of stealing money or property from a bank, shop, etc.

sew (n) to use a needle and thread to join pieces of cloth together or fasten something to a piece of cloth

statue (n) a stone or metal object that is made to look like a person or animal

tram (n) an electric vehicle for carrying passengers, which moves along the street on metal tracks

Chapters 4–6

captain (n) someone who is in charge of a ship or plane

courtyard (n) an open space surrounded by walls or buildings

fingerprint (n) the mark made by the pattern of lines at the end of someone's finger

horn (n) a musical instrument that is wide at one end which you play by blowing

manager (n) someone who is in charge of a bank, shop, etc.

mark (n) a sign or shape that is written or printed

prick (v) to make a small hole in the surface of something, using a sharp point

Chapters 7–9

reward (n) something, especially money, that is given to someone for doing something good, providing information etc.



Student's activities

Emil and the Detectives



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PRE-INTERMEDIATE

EMIL AND THE DETECTIVES

Photocopiable

Students can do these exercises alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only exercises are marked.

Activities before reading the book

Work in pairs. Find these things in one or more of the pictures in the book.

- a building
- a café
- a case
- a crowd
- a hat
- a newspaper
- a photographer
- a cap
- sewing
- flowers
- an office
- a window
- a tram
- a train carriage
- a shoe
- a seat

Activities while reading the book

Chapters 1-3

- Use a verb from the box to complete each of these sentences of Emil's mother in Chapter 1. You can use the same verb more than once.

Be	Don't forget	Don't leave	Don't lose
Don't sit	Don't throw	Get	Give
Look after	Wait	Write	

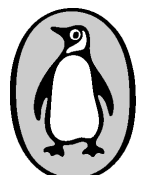
- ... ready.
 - ... dressed.
 - ... a minute.
 - ... to write to me.
 - ... my love to your aunt.
 - ... yourself.
 - ... good.
 - ... your grandmother sixty pounds.
 - ... the other seven pounds when you go out.
 - ... the money.
 - ... anything on the train.
 - ... on the flowers.
 - ... to say please.
 - ... paper on the floor of the carriage.
 - ... to me.
 - ... nice to your cousin, Polly.
- Work in pairs. Look at the picture on page 6. Find:
 - Emil
 - Mr Green
 - Mrs James
 - The man with the big nose
 - The other woman
 - Who in Chapter 2 said or thought ...?
 - Good afternoon.
 - Boys are not usually so polite.

- Would you like one?
- Thank you very much.
- Does Mr Smith still own the clothes shop in Newton?
- Do you know him?
- Are you going to the city?
- My grandmother's meeting me at the East Station ticket office.
- If you have no money, you can get fifty pounds from the bank.
- Stop telling the boy stupid stories.
- Tell Mr Smith what I said.
- Have I been asleep?
- You painted my nose so you must go to prison.
- I've been careless.
- You stopped the train. Now you will have to pay twenty-five pounds.
- I do not believe that his money was stolen.
- Was it the thief?
- I'll get you.

- Complete these sentences about the information in Chapter 3. Use a preposition or adverb from the box in each case.

about	after	at	behind	for	from
inside	into	next	of	off	on
over	past	with			

- Emil wanted to run ... the man and shout, 'Give me my money.'
- A very fat lady was walking in front ... Emil.
- He hid ... her.
- He followed the thief ... of the station.
- The man walked ... the station square.
- An electric tram turned into the road ... the right.
- The man got in and sat down ... to the window.
- Emil jumped ... the tram.
- Cars hurried ... the tram.
- There were wonderful windows filled ... books, gold watches, shoes and food.
- Emil wanted to look ... everything, but there was no time.
- 'The man with the money will get ... the tram and escape into the crowd.'
- Emil thought ... his grandmother.
- She was waiting ... him in East Station.
- The tram stopped, a crowd of new passengers got on and one man fell ... Emil's case.
- A man ... the tram was selling tickets.



Student's activities

Chapters 4-6

- Work in pairs. Answer these questions about the information in the first part of Chapter 4 (to *The rest went to the square with Emil and the Captain*)
 - Why did Emil thank the man with the newspaper?
 - Why did Emil get off the tram?
 - Why was the doorway a good place to hide?
 - Why couldn't Emil stay in the shop doorway?
 - Why did Emil suddenly jump and turn round quickly?
 - Why didn't Emil want to tell the policeman about the thief?
 - Why didn't Paul think the thought would leave yet?
 - Why did Emil feel much happier after talking to Paul?
 - Why did three of the children keep the money?
 - Why didn't they have a meeting outside the café?
- Match an adjective from the first column with a word or phrase from the left to make an expression from the second part of Chapter 4.

(a) loud	(i) detectives
(b) little	(ii) dog
(c) telephone	(iii) number
(d) twenty	(iv) pieces
(e) important	(v) ticket
(f) police	(vi) Tuesday
(g) brave	(vii) voice
(h) tram	(viii) word
(i) secret	(ix) work
- Tell the story of the second part of Chapter 4. Use the expressions from Exercise 2.
- Put in order these events from the first part of Chapter 6.
 - A large crowd of boys made a circle around the thief.
 - All the boys ran through the gateway and left Polly alone.
 - Emil and the Captain changed their plans.
 - Paul sounded his horn.
 - Polly jumped on her bicycle and rode after the boys.
 - Polly rode into the courtyard with food and coffee.
 - The boys ate Polly's food.
 - The thief got dressed.
 - The thief left the hotel.
 - The thief saw a large crowd of boys in the street below.
 - The thief tried walking faster but he couldn't escape.
- Put in order these events from the last part of Chapter 6.
 - A policeman came with Polly and took the thief away.
 - Emil and the other boys ran into the bank.
 - Emil said the man stole his money.

- Emil told the bank manager about the mark of the pin on the notes.
- Paul sounded his horn.
- The bank manager asked Emil if he could prove that the money was his.
- The bank manager found the mark of the pin on the notes.
- The bank manager said he must keep the money.
- The Captain hit the thief in the stomach.
- The Captain said the money was stolen.
- The thief asked the bank assistant to change seventy pounds for him.
- The thief hit the Captain in the face.
- The thief said it wasn't true.
- The thief tried to run away but the boys stopped him.
- The thief went into a bank.

Chapters 7-9

Which is the odd one out in each of these groups. Explain your answer to your partner.

1	Green	Fisher	Turner	Miller
2	Emil	Gerald	The Captain	Robert
3	reporter	bank	policeman	doctor/assistant
4	grandmother	aunt	mother	uncle
5	Polly	Mr Green	Emil	The Captain
6	taxi	bicycle	train	plane
7	Greenfield	The West End Hotel	East Station	Bridge Street
8	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9	reward	statue	pounds	notes
10	business	thief	steal	criminal
11	save	eat	steal	pay back
12	phone	horn	bell	newspaper
13	dinner	cake	food	coffee
14	newspaper office	room	police station	bank
15	photograph	money	fingerprints	telephone

Activities after reading the book

- Look up these words in your dictionary:
brave silly clever
- Work in pairs. Discuss the questions.
 - What *brave* thing(s) did Emil and other people do in the story?
 - What *silly* things did Emil and other people do?
 - What *clever* things did people do?
 - What *bad* things did people do?

