

Teacher's notes

Round the World in Eighty Days

by Jules Verne



SUMMARY

Phileas Fogg, the hero of this story, is a very precise English gentleman. He does exactly the same thing at the same time every day. Until, that is, he decides to accept a challenge to travel round the world in eighty days.

This story takes place before the days of aeroplanes, and Phileas Fogg therefore makes the journey by land and sea. He takes with him his emotional new French servant, Passepartout. Their adventure begins and ends in London, taking them via Egypt, India, Hong Kong, China and the United States. Along the way they meet plenty of excitement and danger.

What is more, as Fogg and Passepartout race to get round the globe, a police detective called Mr Fix is trying to stop them. A thief who looks remarkably similar to Phileas Fogg attempted to rob a bank just before they left on their journey. Mr Fix therefore follows Phileas Fogg, believing that he is the thief and refusing to let him out of his sight!

ABOUT JULES VERNE

Born in Nantes in France in 1828, Jules Verne showed an early interest in a life of travel and adventure. As a child he loved to read adventure stories. He first studied to become a lawyer, like his father, but soon turned to the alternative career of writing.

In 1857, Verne married Honorine Morel, a widow with two small children. He began to publish travel articles at about this time and was soon persuaded by a magazine publisher to turn his travel adventures into fictional stories. The first of these was *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, published in 1853, exploring the idea of travel by gas balloon. Verne wrote this novel at his club, to escape the cries of their new baby son. The next year, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* was published, based on an expedition into a volcano by a French geographer. Space travel, exploration of the poles, and the newly invented steam submarine provided ideas for his next series of novels.

In 1873, Verne published what was to become his most popular and best-known work, *Around the World in Eighty Days*. The story appeared in weekly magazine instalments, and his readers could hardly wait for the next episode.

Towards the end of Verne's life, his novels became darker and less optimistic. He explored the bad side of scientific invention, where new ideas are exploited by humans for evil

purposes. His family life was unhappy and although he was rich by now, his publisher was apparently even richer,

Jules Verne is today considered to be a father of science fiction, along with the English writer, H G Wells.

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

Jules Verne lived at a time when science seemed to offer endless possibilities for progress to the human race. Man's view of the universe was being re-examined during Verne's lifetime, particularly after the publication in 1859 of Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Verne's popular tales of adventure were written in a spirit of optimism. They became classics because of his incredible ability to predict future scientific achievements. His story about reaching the moon in a rocket was remarkably similar to what actually happened in 1969, nearly 100 years later, when men first reached the moon.

The idea for *Around the World in Eighty Days* came from an actual journey round the world made in eighty days in 1870 by a very rich American, appropriately called George Francis Train. Another American, William Perry Fogg, made and wrote about a similar journey in 1872, and Verne gave his name to his fictional hero.

After Jules Verne's story was published, several people took up the challenge to get around the world in eighty days. The quickest time before the arrival of the aeroplane was 54 days. It is an idea that still appeals today, and in 1999 was made into a very popular British television series in which Michael Palin attempted to follow in Phileas Fogg's footsteps. Palin took the same route as Fogg and the same deadline, and found the deadline as challenging as Fogg had done.

Phileas Fogg represents a stereotypical English gentleman of the Victorian age. Fogg lived when England was beginning to build up a huge geographical empire, with colonies as far afield as Hong Kong and Singapore. In the story, Mr Fix's warrant for the arrest of the 'thief', Phileas Fogg is valid on the other side of the world, in Hong Kong. Mr Fogg is able to succeed in his journey largely because of his money which can buy him nearly everything he needs. However, he is generous at the same time and one cannot dislike him for his rather arrogant use of his wealth.

In Phileas Fogg, Jules Verne enjoys exaggerating the typical English gentleman, and in Passepartout, he enjoys

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exaggerating the typical emotional Frenchman. Verne makes Fogg extremely precise about his daily routine and completely unemotional. No matter how much Fogg is affected by danger on the journey, by disappointment when he thinks he has failed, by love for Aouda and by gratitude for the never-ending loyalty of Passepartout, he never shows any feelings! He has a strong sense of his own dignity as an Englishman and the respect that others should show him. He even defends himself with his fists when he is confronted by a disrespectful American!

Fogg's character is sharply contrasted with that of his emotional and passionate French servant, Passepartout. These two allow the author to create a humorous tension and to show us different reactions to the same situation. Different readers will identify with different characters. As teachers read through each adventure, they can ask their students whether their own reactions would be like those of Fogg or of Passepartout.

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 discussion and pair/groupwork questions, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

After students have read the Introduction in their books, put them into small groups and ask them to think about inventions that have changed the world. Ask them to write down the three inventions that they think have been most important to the world. If they can't agree, they can produce separate lists. Compare choices with the whole class.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Chapters 1–5

Tell students to imagine that they have five minutes to collect five things from their home to take on a journey around the world. Then put students into groups to tell each other what they have chosen. Have a whole-class feedback session.

Chapters 6–10

Put students into pairs. Ask them to look through pages 45–48 again and make brief notes. They then close their books. Ask them to role-play Passepartout's conversation with Mr Fix in the bar. Ask some of the pairs to act out their conversation in front of the class.

Chapters 11–15

Phileas Fogg and his friends can't wait for the next train to Omaha. They therefore have to think of a way of going 200 miles to Omaha from where they can catch a train to New York. The countryside is flat and covered in snow. Put students into pairs or groups. Ask them to think of the best and quickest way to get to Omaha.

Chapters 16–20

Put students into groups of five people. One is a reporter from a London newspaper. The others are Mr Fogg, Passepartout, Aouda and Mr Fix. The reporter interviews the four, asking each in turn these questions or their own questions:

What was the most exciting moment of your journey?

What was the most frightening moment?

Was there a time when you thought you would fail?

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

Put students into pairs or groups. Ask them to think of exciting achievements that people today could attempt. Each pair or group chooses its best achievement. Compare ideas across the class. The class can vote for the best overall achievement and then talk about the difficulties involved.

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 1–5

acrobat (n) someone who entertains people by doing 'difficult' physical actions

arrest (v) to be taken away by the police because they think you are guilty of a crime

canal (n) a long narrow area of water made for ships and boats to travel along

carriage (n) a vehicle with wheels that is pulled by a horse

consul (n) an official who lives in a foreign country and whose job is to help citizens of their own country who are there

steamer (n) a ship that uses steam power

telegram (n) a message sent by electrical signals

tightrope (n) a rope or wire high above the ground that a person walks along

warrant (n) an official document that allows the police to arrest someone

Chapters 6–10

bail (n) money paid so that someone can leave prison until their trial

bay (n) a place where a curve in the coast partly surrounds an area of sea

boiler (n) a large container for boiling water to provide steam for an engine

cabin (n) a small room on a ship

cannon (n) a large gun, fixed to the ground or on wheels

deck (n) the flat top part of a ship that you can walk on

mast (n) a tall pole on which the sails of a ship are hung

roar (n) to make a deep, very loud noise

Chapters 11–15

buffalo (n) a type of cattle

pyramid (n) a shape which is square at the bottom and pointed at the top

revolver (n) a type of small gun

Chapters 16–20

balloon (n) a large bag which is filled with hot air or gas and travels through the sky with a basket below it

Reverend (n) used in the title of a Christian priest

rudder (n) a flat part at the back of a boat that is moved to change the direction of the boat

sledge (n) a vehicle used for travelling on snow



Student's activities

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**Photocopiable**

These activities can be done alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only activities are marked.

Activities before reading the book

- Work with another student.
Look up *statue* in your dictionaries. Then look at the picture on the front cover of the book. How many of the buildings and statues can you identify? Where are they? Make a list. Compare your list with other pairs' lists.
- Read the Introduction in the book and answer these questions. Look up *inspire* in your dictionary.
 - What did Jules Verne do as a young boy that suggested he might later become a keen sailor?
 - One particular 19th century invention inspired Jules Verne's stories. Which one?
 - Why does Phileas Fogg suddenly give up his comfortable life as an English gentleman?

Activities while reading the book**CHAPTERS 1-5****Chapters 1 & 2**

- Choose three adjectives to describe Phileas Fogg's character. Compare them with another student's adjectives.
- Before he begins his adventure, Phileas Fogg leads a very exact life as a London gentleman. What is he always doing at these times?
 - 11.35 in the morning
 - 12.27 in the afternoon
 - 2.03 in the afternoon
 - 3.46 in the afternoon
 - 6.36 in the evening
- Answer these questions.
 - What does Mr Fix learn from his conversation with Passepartout that makes him feel sure that Phileas Fogg is the bank robber?
 - What does Phileas Fogg do that suggests he is not the bank robber?
 - Why is it no longer necessary to go around India and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) by sea?
- Draw or find an empty map of the world. Put London, Calais, Brindisi and Suez on it. Draw a line showing Fogg and Passepartout's journey, including their methods of transport. Put the date on which they arrive in Suez. Keep this map and add to it later.

Chapters 3-5

- Answer these questions.
 - Why does Passepartout get a beating inside the great temple of Malabar Hill?
 - Why does everybody have to get off the train at the village of Kholby?
 - Why does Aouda's brother-in-law want her to die?
 - Why does their first plan to rescue Aouda fail?
- Work in groups of four.
Imagine you are hiding in the trees near where Aouda is a prisoner. Think of a plan to free Aouda. Explain your plan to other groups. Whose is the best?
- Update your map of the journey. Put Bombay, Kholby and Allahabad on it. Write notes about what happens to the travellers on this journey. Put the dates of their arrival in Bombay and Allahabad.

CHAPTERS 6-10**Chapters 6-8**

- By the end of Chapter 6, Phileas Fogg has spent more than £5,000. Apart from tickets and food, what has he spent it on?
- Describe the different reactions of Phileas Fogg and Passepartout to their journey. Which one are you more similar to?
- Answer these questions.
 - Who does Passepartout think is paying Mr Fix's wages?
 - What does Mr Fix offer Passepartout to help him keep Phileas in Hong Kong for a few days?
 - Even if Phileas is a thief, Passepartout refuses to help Mr Fix. Why?
- Update your map. Add Benares, Calcutta, Singapore and Hong Kong. Write the dates on which the travellers arrive in Calcutta and Hong Kong. Make notes on what happens in each place.

Chapters 9 & 10

- How many people set sail on the Tankadere? Who are they?
- The journey from Hong Kong to Shanghai is 800 miles. The steamer for San Francisco leaves Shanghai at 7.00pm on the 11th. How many miles have they covered by 7.00pm on the 11th?

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- Update your map. Mark Shanghai and the date of Fogg's arrival. How many days has Fogg taken to get this far? How many days has he got left?

CHAPTERS 11-15

Chapters 11 & 12

- Answer these questions.
 - Which country is known as the Land of the Rising Sun?
 - Who are the Long Noses?
 - Phileas Fogg has used up 52 of his 80 days. He is only halfway round the world. Explain why he is not worried.
 - What is the time difference between Passepartout's watch and the ship's clock?
 - Mr Fix now wants to help Fogg get to London quickly. Why has he changed his plan?
- Talk to another student.
How do you think the story will end? Do you think Fogg will make it back to the Reform Club on time?
- Update your map. Mark Yokohama and the dates on which Passepartout and Fogg arrive and leave.

Chapters 13-15

- Use one word to complete these sentences:
 - The crowds in San Francisco are excited about an
 - Mr Fogg thinks should be treated with respect.
 - The train is delayed by three hours because there are on the line.
 - Mr Fogg's friends want to keep him in the so that he doesn't meet Stamp W Proctor.
- What are the three ways of getting across the deep river valley at Medicine Bow?
- Mark on your map San Francisco, Reno, the Rocky Mountains, Plum Creek Station and Fort Kearney Station.
When do Fogg and his friends arrive and leave San Francisco? Make notes on what happens on this part of the journey.

CHAPTERS 16-20

Chapters 16-18

- When they go to a hotel for the night after missing the China steamer to Liverpool, Mr Fogg is the only one who sleeps. Why?

- Mark on your map Omaha, Chicago, New York, Queenstown, Dublin and Liverpool. Make notes on this part of the journey. When did the travellers arrive in and leave New York, and arrive in Queenstown and Liverpool? How much time has Fogg got left?
- Talk to another student.
Do you think Fogg will win his bet? Why/Why not?

Chapters 19 & 20

- Talk to another student.
 - Imagine you are at the prison with Phileas Fogg. Have a conversation. Ask him why he is there and how he is feeling.
 - Did you guess the ending of the book? If so, how?
- Match the form of transport to the part of the journey. There may be more than one form of transport for each part.
 London to Bombay
 Bombay to Calcutta
 Calcutta to Hong Kong
 Hong Kong to Shanghai
 Shanghai to San Francisco
 San Francisco to New York
 New York to Liverpool
 Liverpool to London
 Tankadere sailing boat, train, Henrietta steamer, American steamer, elephant, fast ship, sledge with sails, train, express train, Mongolia steamer, train, General Grant steamer, Rangoon steamer
- Work in a group.
Imagine you were filming the last moments at the Reform Club as the clock ticks round to 8.45. How would you do it? Make notes.

Activities after reading the book

- Talk to another student.
- Phileas Fogg is an 'English gentleman'. Passepartout is his French servant. What do you think the author may consider to be the main differences between the English and the French? How does he make this amusing?
 - What helped Phileas Fogg to win his bet?
 - Did you enjoy this book? Why/Why not? Which is your favourite character? Why?

