

# Snakes and Ladders

## VIPERS worksheet

### Before reading

- What does the title of the story refer to?
- What might this story be about?

*For the prediction questions, stop at the indicated point for each question.*

### Vocabulary

1. Give an accurate synonym for 'confounded'.
2. Define 'irrelevant'.
3. Explain what 'disillusioned' means.
4. What does it mean, 'to toe the line'?
5. Find a formal word that means 'to watch over', in the context of exams.
6. Find the phrase that means 'collapsed'.
7. What does 'hysterical' mean?
8. Give a word that means something similar to 'venomous'.
9. Suggest an alternative adjective to describe the artwork, in place of 'awesome'.
10. Define 'traumatic'.

### Inference

1. What is Alfie's dad not saying about the new headteacher?
2. What decision do you think Mrs Weller made at Easter time?
3. Why is Mrs Weller so cheerful on the first day of SATs week?
4. How do you think the snake came to be in the hall? Find evidence in the text to support your answer.
5. What happened to the exam papers for the other SATs tests? How do you know?

### Prediction

- *Stop at the line, 'I guess what happened in SATs week made some sense, given that she was so crazy about wildlife.'*  
What do you think is going to happen?

- *Stop at the paragraph ending, '...which was another reason you'd never have guessed what was going to happen.'*  
Now what do you think will happen?

## Explain

1. Why does the poetry Mrs Weller writes mean that she particularly hates extraneous words?
2. Alfie says Miss Ingleside is middle-aged. Would most adults agree with him?
3. Why is Mrs Weller 'all stiff and polite' towards Mr Johnson, instead of telling him she doesn't like him?
4. Why does she 'beam' at him when he comes to take the class through to the hall for tests?
5. What effect might a get-well card with a picture of Rodrigo have had on Mr Johnson?
6. Why has Mrs Weller gone to Brazil?
7. Why can't Mr Johnson stand anything bright green?

## Retrieval

1. According to Mrs Weller, who is to blame for the children having to do SATs tests?
2. What is the word Mrs Weller uses that means unnecessary or irrelevant?
3. Whose voyages do the children learn about, as a way of studying history and nature together?
4. What is the name of the famous person who has made lots of TV series about animals?
5. What kind of school was Mr Johnson at previously?
6. What will the first SATs paper be testing?
7. What is in the box that Mr Johnson picks up?
8. What kind of snake is Rodrigo?

## Summarise

- Describe Mrs Weller in three words. Explain your choices with evidence from the text.
- Summarise the story in no more than ten words.