

# Garden Birds

Whether you live in a village, town or city, you will have seen British garden birds in your garden, school grounds or local park. The UK is lucky enough to have many **native** garden birds. Let's find out about some of them...



## Robin

**Latin Name:**  
*Erithacus rubecula*

With their bright red breast and face, robins are easy to spot, despite being only around 13cm long. You will often hear them singing into the evening with their high 'tic tic tic' song.

Robins can be seen in gardens throughout cities, towns and villages. They will nest almost anywhere, including inside old watering cans or sheds, in a cup-shaped nest made mainly from moss. They will lay 4-6 eggs (white with sandy or red freckles) between May and July.

Their usual diet includes:

- insects and their larvae;
- spiders;
- worms;
- weeds;
- seeds;
- fruit;
- berries;
- nuts.



Robins may even become very tame and feed out of your hands!

## Blackbird

**Latin Name:**  
*Turdus merula*



Male blackbirds are usually jet-black with an orange beak, whereas females are dark brown with a brown beak. They are larger than robins, at around 25cm long, but can also be heard singing in the evening with their tuneful song.

Blackbirds are found in a wide variety of habitats, including woodland, fields, gardens, towns, cities and countryside. Originally, blackbirds were woodland birds; still usually found nesting in bushes, shrubs or trees. They use grass, horsehair and fine roots held together with mud to form their nests, which are usually lined with grass, and lay their bluish green eggs in them.

Blackbirds mostly eat insects but have been known to have a very varied diet, including nuts, berries, cheese, fruit, newts and shrews – one of the reasons they thrive in the wild. Blackbirds are also able to catch worms if the grass is soft enough for them to dig with their beaks.





Wren

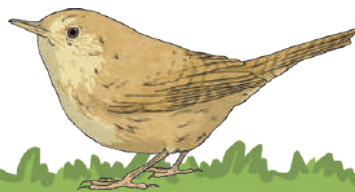
**Latin Name:**  
Troglodytes troglodytes

Despite their miniscule size, at only 9-10cm long and weighing 8-13g (the same weight as a £1 coin), wrens are not actually Britain's smallest native bird – a title held by the goldcrest, at just 9cm long and 6g in weight. However, wrens are Britain's most common native bird. To spot an adult wren, look out for brown **plumage** and a short tail which constantly flicks.

Wrens are good at hiding in amongst trees and bushes, where they build their nests from grass, moss and leaves and line them with feathers.



Within these nests, adult wrens will lay 5-8 white eggs with brown speckles. When born, young wrens are almost identical to their parents except that they don't have prominent pale eyebrows. Wrens have a varied diet but mainly choose to feed on insects and spiders.



### Did You Know...?

Although it is so small, the wren has the loudest song of our native birds; they can be heard making a loud "teck teck teck" call ending in a **trill**.



### Threats to Garden Birds and How You Can Help

There are things that we use in our gardens which could harm garden birds, such as:

**Netting** – People use nets in their gardens to stop birds getting to their vegetables, but birds can become tangled in them. If nets are needed, it is best to use fine mesh nets made of natural material.

**Outside lights** – Outside lights can confuse birds causing them to collide with windows as they use the light to **navigate**. If you have outside lights, put them on a timer so they do not stay on at night.

**Artificial Grass** – **Artificial** turf destroys habitats for birds and the insects they eat so it is best to use natural grass wherever possible.



### Did You Know...?

Although they are not always **resident** in the UK, nightingales are special summer visitors to parts of southern England. They are very secretive and hard to spot but their melodic song can be heard through the day and night. They are some of the loudest, fastest singers of the bird world!

## Glossary

**artificial:** Something made by humans; not natural.

**native:** Born in a particular place.

**navigate:** To find its way.

**plumage:** A bird's feathers.

**resident:** Living somewhere permanently.

**trill:** A quavering sound.



# Questions

1. How long are blackbirds? Tick one.

- 9cm
- 9-10cm
- 13cm
- 25cm

2. Draw **three** lines to match each bird to the description of their egg.

robin

wren

blackbird

bluish green eggs, spotted with brown

white with sandy or red freckles

white with brown speckles

3. Name **two** habitats that blackbirds can be found in.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

People use nets in their gardens to stop birds getting to their \_\_\_\_\_, but birds can become \_\_\_\_\_ in them. If nets are needed, it is best to use fine mesh nets made of \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text that shows that nightingales do not live permanently within the UK.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Summarise the information about nightingales in 30 words or fewer.

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7. Why do you think that robins can become so tame that they feed out of people's hands?

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8. Why do you think that nightingales are described as a 'special summer visitor'?

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9. Why has the author included a glossary? Choose one other word to include and write a definition for it.

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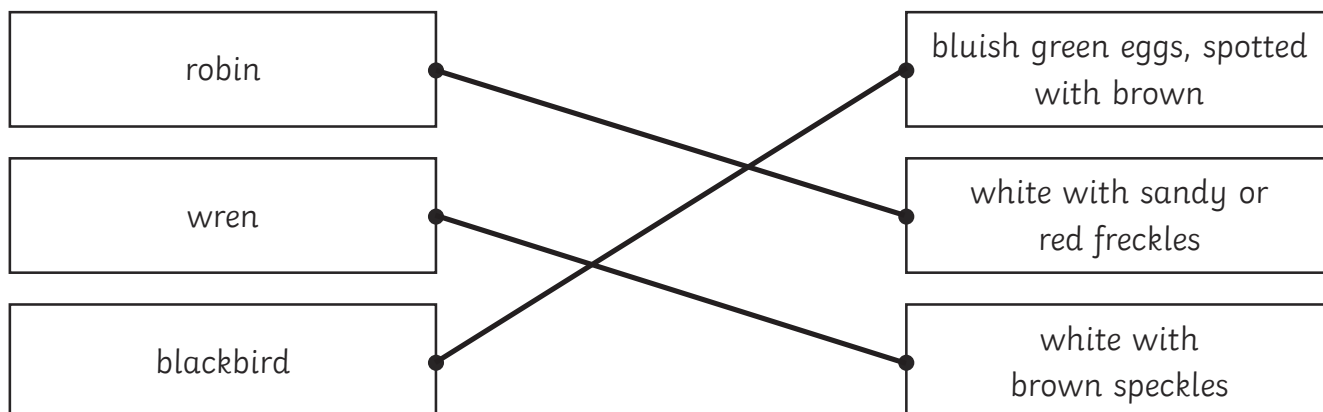
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# Answers

1. How long are blackbirds? Tick one.

- 9cm  
 9-10cm  
 13cm  
 **25cm**

2. Draw **three** lines to match each bird to the description of their egg.



3. Name **two** habitats that blackbirds can be found in.

**Accept any two of the following: fields; gardens; towns; cities; countryside.**

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence:

People use nets in their gardens to stop birds getting to their **vegetables**, but birds can become **tangled** in them. If nets are needed, it is best to use fine mesh nets made of **natural materials**.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text that shows that nightingales do not live permanently within the UK.

**(they are) not always resident (in the UK)**

6. Summarise the information about nightingales in 30 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Nightingales are special summer visitors to southern England that are secretive and hard to spot but their loud, fast song can be heard day and night.**

7. Why do you think that robins can become so tame that they feed out of people's hands?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Because robins live in areas such as towns and cities, they are used to humans being around and, if humans feed them regularly, they will begin to trust them enough to feed directly out of their hands.**



8. Why do you think that nightingales are described as a 'special summer visitor'?
- Pupils' own responses, such as: Nightingales visit the UK during the summer months and people think they are special because of their beautiful and rare song.**
9. Why has the author included a glossary? Choose one other word to include and write a definition for it.
- Pupils' own responses, such as: The author has included a glossary to explain the meanings of some of the more tricky words.**
- natural: Not made by humans; from nature.**

# The Story of Theseus and the Minotaur

King Minos of Crete, who believed that Athens was responsible for the loss of his son, would periodically attack the city. Wanting to prevent the attacks, the King of Athens, Aegeus, struck a deal with King Minos. Each year, he would send over seven Athenian boys and seven Athenian girls as an offering to King Minos's bloodthirsty beast – the Minotaur. In return, Minos would leave Athens alone.



Hands shaking, Theseus walked towards the door and went over the speech in his head. The days of Minos telling Athens what to do had gone on for long enough; it was time to take a stand. Hesitantly, he knocked. Aegeus called him inside and looked up proudly at the tall, muscular warrior his son had become.

Before Aegeus could greet him, Theseus began his speech. "This pact with Minos has gone on for long enough. Families are terrified that their children will be picked next. It's no way to live! We should be protecting our people – not offering them to a beast! Tomorrow, when the boat comes, I am going to take the place of one of the boys. Then, I will slay the Minotaur and put an end to this nightmare."



Aegeus was shocked. He knew that his son was strong but the Minotaur was so fierce that it had to be guarded deep within a complex maze. Aegeus pleaded with Theseus to find another way but he had already made up his mind. Eventually, Aegeus had to admit defeat.

"I will not rest until I know that you are safe," he told Theseus. "The moment that your ship crosses the horizon, I want to know that you have won. If you are successful, replace your ship's black sails with white ones. Then, I will know that you are coming home safely. I shall watch the sea from now until the moment I see those sails heading home." Theseus nodded and promised that his sails would be white.

Later that day, Theseus climbed into the ship alongside 13 panic-stricken children. The journey to Crete was smooth and, before long, they had arrived. When the boat pulled up to the shore, they were greeted by Minos and his



daughter, Ariadne. As Minos led the children to the palace to be prepared for the Minotaur, Ariadne pulled Theseus to one side. Desperate to escape from her father's anger, she told Theseus that she would help him if he promised to take her away from Crete.

Agreeing to help, Theseus and Ariadne approached Daedalus - the inventor of the labyrinth that the Minotaur was being kept in. Seeking a chance to be a hero, Daedalus agreed to help. Later that night, the three met at the entrance to the labyrinth.

Revealing a ball of string, Daedalus explained his plan. "This labyrinth has been designed to be so complicated that I can't even escape it. However, if you trail this string behind you, you will be able to use it to retrace your steps. Ariadne and I will stay here to secure it and ensure that nobody else enters. Good luck."



With that, the doors to the labyrinth closed and Theseus set off to find the Minotaur. Trailing the string behind him, he searched through the narrow, dim passages until, at last, he was face to face with the beast. The Minotaur was stronger but Theseus was quicker and smarter. After a mighty battle, Theseus emerged victorious: the Minotaur had been defeated.

Theseus immediately made his way to the shore with Ariadne. He had done it! No more children would ever have to meet the Minotaur. At last, Athens had been freed from Minos's deal. Feeling tired but content, Theseus hoisted the black sails of his ship and headed for home, forgetting all about the promise that he had made to his father.

# Questions

1. Which word best describes Theseus's journey to Crete? Tick one.

- rough
- gentle
- unsettled
- rocky

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.

- Minos began attacking the city of Athens.
- Theseus promised to take Ariadne away from Crete.
- Theseus set sail for Athens.
- Aegeus struck a deal with Minos.

3. Look at the paragraph beginning **Aegeus was shocked**.

Find and copy one word or phrase which shows that Aegeus had given up.

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4. Why did Ariadne help Theseus?

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5. Name one way in which Theseus was better than the Minotaur.

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6. Summarise Theseus's plan using 20 words or fewer.

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7. Compare the characters of Theseus and Aegeus.  
How are the two different?

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8. **...forgetting all about the promise that he had made to his father.**  
Why do you think that the author has chosen to end the story like this? Explain your answer.

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9. Do you think that Theseus was right to go and slay the Minotaur? Explain your answer fully.

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# Answers

1. Which word best describes Theseus's journey to Crete? Tick one.

- rough
- gentle**
- unsettled
- rocky

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they occurred.

- 1** Minos began attacking the city of Athens.
- 3** Theseus promised to take Ariadne away from Crete.
- 4** Theseus set sail for Athens.
- 2** Aegeus struck a deal with Minos.

3. Look at the paragraph beginning **Aegeus was shocked**.

Find and copy one word or phrase which shows that Aegeus had given up.

**Aegeus had to admit defeat.**

4. Why did Ariadne help Theseus?

**Ariadne helped Theseus because she wanted him to take her away from Crete.**

5. Name one way in which Theseus was better than the Minotaur.

**Accept either Theseus was quicker than the Minotaur or Theseus was smarter than the Minotaur.**

6. Summarise Theseus's plan using 20 words or fewer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Theseus planned on replacing one of the seven boys so that he could go to Crete and defeat the Minotaur.**

7. Compare the characters of Theseus and Aegeus.

How are the two different?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Theseus is brave but Aegeus is a coward. I think this because Aegeus chose to make a deal with King Minos that put children in danger whereas Theseus chose to put his own life in danger to save those children.**

8. **...forgetting all about the promise that he had made to his father.**

Why do you think that the author has chosen to end the story like this? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author has chosen to end the story like this to make you wonder what happened next. This is because Theseus had promised that he would display white sails if he had been successful but he forgot about this and sailed with black sails instead.**

9. Do you think that Theseus was right to go and slay the Minotaur? Explain your answer fully.

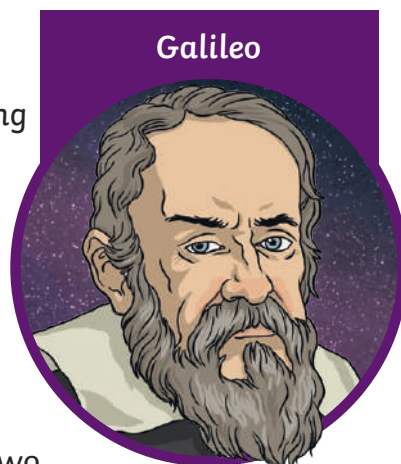
**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Theseus was right to slay the Minotaur because it stopped defenceless children from getting hurt. It wasn't fair for the kings to make a deal like that and Theseus stopped it from happening any more.**

# Stephen Hawking

Stephen Hawking was an English scientist, **cosmologist**, teacher and author. He is best known for discovering how the universe was formed and predicting what might happen to it in the future.

## A Star Is Born

Born on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1942, Stephen William Hawking was born exactly 300 years after the death of the famous **astronomer** Galileo – a fact that Stephen was very proud of. He was born during the Second World War, in Oxford, England, where his parents, Frank Hawking and Isobel Walker, had moved to from London to ensure Stephen's safety.



His parents went on to have three more children: two girls named Philippa and Mary and an adopted boy named Edward. They were a family who placed a high value on education and his parents studied at the University of Oxford; his father studied medicine and became a medical researcher while his mother studied **philosophy** and **politics**.

## Childhood

Stephen's fascination with science, particularly space, began at an early age, when he would enjoy spending time with his mother; lying together on the grass in the garden to watch the stars.

When Stephen was a child of eight, the family moved to St Albans in Hertfordshire, a town about 20 miles north of London. At school, Stephen was often referred to as 'Einstein' by his classmates. After taking the eleven-plus exam a year early, Stephen attended St Albans School. He remained there throughout his secondary education and made close friends, with whom he enjoyed playing board games and making model aeroplanes and boats. With the help of his maths teacher, Dikran Tahta, Stephen and his friends built a computer from clock parts, an old telephone switchboard and various other recycled parts.

## University

Inspired by Mr Tahta, Stephen wanted to study maths at university, despite his father advising him to study medicine. Stephen compromised and chose to study **physics** and **chemistry** at the same college that his father had attended. He took the entry exams a year early, meaning that he was only 17 years old when he started university.



## Stephen Hawking

Stephen became a lively, witty and popular member of his class, interested in classical music and science fiction. He also joined the college boat club, where he became **cox** for a rowing crew – he was said to be a daredevil because of the risks he took in the boat!

Following the completion of his first degree, Stephen attended Cambridge University where he studied **cosmology** and made some incredible discoveries.

It was at Cambridge that Stephen first developed problems with his health. He became very clumsy, regularly falling or dropping things. His speech became slurred and hard to understand.

Doctors diagnosed Stephen with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or **ALS**, and he was given just two years to live. However, his disease progressed more slowly than doctors had imagined, meaning he was able to return to his studies. In later years, his ALS meant that he used a wheelchair and communicated using a computer voice synthesiser.

### Scientific Discoveries



While at Cambridge University, Stephen studied black holes. At the time, people thought that black holes were a place where gravity pulled so strongly that it pulled all matter down into it and even light couldn't escape. Stephen, however, discovered that a type of **radiation** was able to elude black holes. This particular type of radiation was named after him and, using what he had discovered about black holes, Stephen was able to show that Einstein's general **theory of relativity** implied that space and time began with the Big Bang and would end in black holes.

Stephen taught at university and wrote books which have been read in many countries around the world. Due to his amazing work and incredible sense of humour, he inspired millions of people to become interested in science.





## Glossary

**ALS** – A motor neurone disease that causes muscle weakness, paralysis and respiratory failure. It is a degenerative disease, which means it gets worse over time. There is no cure.

**astronomer** – A person who studies the positions of the sun, moon, stars and planets.

**chemistry** – The branch of science concerned with the substances which make up everything.

**cosmologist** – A person who studies cosmology.

**cosmology** – The science of the origin and development of the universe.

**cox** – The person who directs the rowers in a boat.

**philosophy** – The study of how we exist and how we know things.

**physics** – The branch of science concerned with the properties of matter and energy.

**politics** – The study of how countries are led and what governments do.

**radiation** – Waves of energy that come out of or off something.

**theory of relativity** – The idea that as something approaches the speed of light, mass and energy change.



# Questions

1. What nickname did Stephen have in school? Tick one.

- Einstein
- St Albans
- Galileo
- Edward

2. Number the following statements from 1-5 to show the order in which they happened. The first one has been done for you.

- Stephen was diagnosed with ALS.
- Stephen made a computer with his friends.
- Stephen discovered a type of radiation that can elude black holes.
- Stephen was a cox for a rowing crew.
- 1 Stephen took the eleven-plus exam a year early.

3. Name **two** things that Stephen did 'a year earlier' than was expected.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence.

He remained there throughout his \_\_\_\_\_ and made close friends, with whom he enjoyed playing \_\_\_\_\_ and making \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that Stephen agreed to do something different at university following his father's advice.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Sum up Stephen's scientific discoveries.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Why do you think Stephen was so popular?

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8. How is Stephen similar to another famous explorer or scientist?

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9. Why do you think Stephen was inspired by his maths teacher?

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# Answers

1. What nickname did Stephen have in school? Tick one.

- Einstein**
- St Albans
- Galileo
- Edward

2. Number the following statements from 1-5 to show the order in which they happened. The first one has been done for you.

- 4** Stephen was diagnosed with ALS.
- 2** Stephen made a computer with his friends.
- 5** Stephen discovered a type of radiation that can elude black holes.
- 3** Stephen was a cox for a rowing crew.
- 1** Stephen took the eleven-plus exam a year early.

3. Name **two** things that Stephen did 'a year earlier' than was expected.

**Accept any two of the following answers: took the eleven-plus; took university entrance exams; went to university.**

4. Fill in the missing words from this sentence.

He remained there throughout his **secondary education** and made close friends, with whom he enjoyed playing **board games** and making **model aeroplanes and boats**.

5. Find and copy a phrase from the text which shows that Stephen agreed to do something different at university following his father's advice.

**Accept: 'Stephen compromised' only**

6. Sum up Stephen's scientific discoveries.

**Accept any reasonable summary linked to the text, e.g. Stephen discovered a type of radiation that is able to escape from black holes, despite the fact that nothing else can; he used this knowledge to show that space and time began with the Big Bang and would end in black holes.**

7. Why do you think Stephen was so popular?

**Children's own responses, e.g. He was popular because many people are fascinated by space; Stephen tried to answer the questions that are often asked about the universe and was a funny man.**

8. How is Stephen similar to another famous explorer or scientist?

**Accept any reasonable comparison to another scientist of the child's choice.**

9. Why do you think Stephen was inspired by his maths teacher?

**Accept any reasonable explanation linked to the text, e.g. His maths teacher took the time to work with him on things that interested him (building computers) and so Stephen would have been inspired to be like this man.**



# Alice in Wonderland

This extract comes from the beginning of Chapter 2.  
In an attempt to reach a small golden key, Alice has consumed a piece of cake and is now growing upwards at an alarming rate.

“Curiouser and curiouser!” cried Alice, quite surprised that she had somehow forgotten how to speak properly. “Now, I’m opening up like an enormous telescope!” Alice looked down and noticed that her feet were so far away that they were nearly out of sight. “Oh, my poor little feet! I wonder who will put shoes and socks on you now. I know I won’t be able to for I am too far away; you must manage yourselves.” At this point, a thought reached Alice and she reasoned that if she were to abandon her feet altogether then they may well do the same to her. Worried about the possibility of her feet taking her in the wrong direction, Alice vowed that she would send them a present every Christmas in an attempt to win their favour. As she continued planning, she thought to herself how odd the address would look:



Just then, her head struck against the roof: in fact, she was now more than nine feet high. At once, she grabbed the little key and hurried over to the locked door. Poor Alice! Although tall enough to get the key, she was now far too large to make it through the unlocked door. As she lay on her side, one eye peering through the seemingly miniscule door, she began to cry.



“You ought to be ashamed of yourself,” she admonished. “A great girl like you to go on crying in this way. Stop this moment, I tell you!” Unsurprisingly, scolding herself had done nothing to stem the flow of tears and there was soon a large pool surrounding her; it was around four inches deep and reached halfway down the hall.





After some time, Alice heard the faint pattering of feet in the distance and hastily dried her eyes to see what was coming. It was the white rabbit returning, splendidly dressed, with a pair of white gloves in one hand and a large fan in the other. He came trotting along in a great hurry, muttering to himself as he came, "Oh dear! Oh no! Oh, she won't be happy if I've kept her waiting!"

Alice was so desperate by this point that she was willing to ask for help from anyone, whether human or rabbit. Therefore, when the rabbit came near, she began in a timid voice, "Please sir, if you wouldn't mind..." The rabbit, shocked to see that he was in the presence of another, dropped the gloves and fan and immediately ran away.

Alice lifted the now sodden fan and gloves from the floor. As the room was exceedingly hot, she began to fan herself while commenting out loud on the day's events. "Dear, dear. How strange everything has been today. Yesterday, things just went on as usual but now they are all in a muddle. I wonder if I've been changed during the night. Let me think: was I the same when I woke up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. Although, if I'm not the same, the next question is... who in the world am I? That's the great puzzle!" She began thinking of all the children she knew who were the same age as her to see if she could have been changed for any of them.

"I'm sure I'm not Ada," she said, "for her hair grows in such long ringlets and mine isn't doing that at all!" Alice ran one hand through her hair to check before continuing, "I can't be Eva for she is so small that reaching the heights I am now would be an impossibility!" As she ran through a list of several other names, all producing similar results, Alice had to accept that she was likely now a different person altogether and not an Ada, an Eva or even an Alice.



# Alice in Wonderland Questions

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order they occurred.

- Alice comes up with a plan to make sure her feet still obey her.
- The rabbit is scared by Alice.
- Alice eats a piece of cake.
- Alice tells herself off.

2. Why were the gloves and fan **sodden**? Tick one.

- The rabbit was scared.
- They had been dropped in Alice's tears.
- They were both very old.
- They had been stolen from Alice.

3. Look at the paragraph beginning, "**You ought to be ashamed...**"  
Find and copy one word which means **stop**.

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4. Why does the rabbit drop the fan and gloves?

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5. What does Alice mean when she says "**Reaching the heights I am now would be an impossibility!**"

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6. Many people believe that the events in this extract are not really happening because Alice is only dreaming. Do you agree? Tick one.

- Yes                       No

Fully explain your answer using evidence from the text.

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7. Compare how Alice is feeling at the beginning of the text with how she is feeling at the end of the text.

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8. Alice tells herself off for crying. Do you think this is fair? Tick one.

 Yes No

Fully explain your answer.

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9. Alice is currently stuck with nobody to help her. What would you suggest she does next to try and get herself out of this situation?

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10. Discuss what is unusual about Alice's initial reaction to growing really tall.  
Fully explain your answer using evidence from the text.

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# Alice in Wonderland Answers

1. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order they occurred.

- 2 Alice comes up with a plan to make sure her feet still obey her.
- 4 The rabbit is scared by Alice.
- 1 Alice eats a piece of cake.
- 3 Alice tells herself off.

2. Why were the gloves and fan **sodden**? Tick one.

- The rabbit was scared.
- They had been dropped in Alice's tears.**
- They were both very old.
- They had been stolen from Alice.

3. Look at the paragraph beginning, "**You ought to be ashamed...**"

Find and copy one word which means **stop**.

**stem**

4. Why does the rabbit drop the fan and gloves?

**Accept answers which refer to the rabbit being shocked/surprised by Alice being there, such as: The rabbit dropped the fan and gloves because he was shocked to be in the presence of another.**

5. What does Alice mean when she says "**Reaching the heights I am now would be an impossibility!**"

**Accept answers which refer to Eva being small and unable to be as tall as Alice, such as: Alice means that Eva could never be as tall as she is in that moment.**

6. Many people believe that the events in this extract are not really happening because Alice is only dreaming. Do you agree? Tick one.

Yes

No



Fully explain your answer using evidence from the text.

**Accept either yes or no providing that a full explanation is given in support of the choice, such as: Yes, I think that Alice is dreaming because a lot of strange things happen that wouldn't happen in real life. For example, Alice starts growing really tall after eating a slice of cake and doesn't seem very surprised.**

7. Compare how Alice is feeling at the beginning of the text with how she is feeling at the end of the text.

**Pupils' own responses provided that a valid comparison has been made, such as: At the beginning of the text, Alice isn't worried that she is growing and is laughing about sending a Christmas present to her feet. By the end of the text, Alice is feeling scared and worried because she has realised that something is wrong with her.**

8. Alice tells herself off for crying. Do you think this is fair? Tick one.

Fully explain your answer.

**Accept either yes or no providing that a full explanation is given in support of the choice, such as: I do not think that it is fair because a lot of strange and frightening things have happened to her and it seems as if there is no way out of the situation. Therefore, she should be allowed to cry.**

9. Alice is currently stuck with nobody to help her. What would you suggest she does next to try and get herself out of this situation?

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I would suggest that Alice tries calling for help because she hasn't tried that yet and there might be somebody outside who has a potion that can help her to shrink again.**

10. Discuss what is unusual about Alice's initial reaction to growing really tall.

Fully explain your answer using evidence from the text.

**Pupils' own responses provided that the answer makes appropriate references to the text, such as: Initially, Alice doesn't seem afraid which is unusual because she has just eaten cake and it is making her grow really fast. Instead of being concerned, Alice makes a joke about sending Christmas presents to her feet.**

# Oliver Twist

## Scene Two - An Offer for Oliver

**(Narrator stands in front of the closed stage curtains, lit solely by a spotlight.)**

**Narrator:** For a week after the sinful offence of asking for more supper, Oliver remains a prisoner in the dark and lonely room which he has been locked in by Mr Limbkins. Oliver cries bitterly all day and, when the long, dismal nights arrive, he spreads his hands in front of his eyes to shut out the darkness. He crouches in the corner and tries to sleep, despite trembling from the cold. Gloom and loneliness surround him.

As Oliver drifts in and out of sleep, Mr Gamfield arrives at the workhouse on his donkey. Taking the opportunity to rid themselves of the trouble that Oliver has caused, a man in a white waistcoat swiftly heads outside to greet the unsuspecting chimney sweep.

**(Curtains open as Narrator exits to stage right. The man in the white waistcoat casually crosses the stage to approach Mr Gamfield and his donkey, who are stood outside of the workhouse gate at stage left. The man has his hands behind him and a smug expression on his face. Both characters smile at one another as a greeting.)**

**Mr Gamfield:** This boy, sir... the one that the parish wants to apprentice...

**Man:** **(smiles patronisingly)** Yes, my man. What about him?

**Mr Gamfield:** Well, if the parish would like him to learn a very pleasant trade in a good, respectable chimney sweeping business, I want an apprentice. I'm ready to take him – just like your advert asks.

**Man:** Walk in. **(waves towards the workhouse)**

**(The man in the white waistcoat walks towards the workhouse entrance at stage right. Mr Gamfield dawdles behind him. After leaving the donkey outside, Mr Gamfield enters the workhouse. He joins the gentleman who is whispering to Mr Limbkins by the table downstage.)**

**Mr Limbkins:** It's a nasty business.

**Man:** Young boys have been smothered in chimneys before now.

**Mr Gamfield:** That's because they dampened the straw before they lit it in the chimney. That's all smoke and no blaze! Smoke isn't any use in making a boy come down the chimney; it only sends him to sleep. There's nothing like a good, hot blaze to make them come running!

**(The gentleman in the white waistcoat chuckles but quickly stops upon a stern look from Mr Limbkins. The two whisper between themselves for a few moments.)**

**Mr Limbkins:** We have considered your offer and we do not approve of it.

**Man:** Not at all. Decidedly not.

**(Mr Gamfield looks rejected. With a hunched back, he walks away from the others but pauses by the door and looks back.)**

**Mr Gamfield:** So, you won't let me have him, gentlemen?

**Mr Limbkins:** No. To say the least, it's a nasty job. We think you ought to take something less than the money we advertised.

**(Mr Gamfield's mood brightens; he straightens up with a smile on his face. He quickly heads back towards the table.)**

**Mr Gamfield:** What will you give me to take him, gentlemen? Don't be too hard on a poor man! What will you give?

**Mr Limbkins:** I should say that three pounds and ten shillings is plenty.

**Man:** That's ten shillings too much!

**Mr Gamfield:** **(eagerly)** Come on! Say four pounds, gentlemen. Say four pounds and you've got rid of him for good!

**Mr Limbkins:** **(firmly)** Three pounds ten.

**Mr Gamfield:** **(with desperation)** Come on! I'll split the difference, gentlemen. Three pounds and fifteen shillings.

**Mr Limbkins:** **(sternly)** Not a farthing more.

**Mr Gamfield:** **(looking sorrowful)** You're desperately hard on me, gentlemen.

**Man:** Nonsense! He'd be cheap with no payment at all! Take him, you silly man. He's just the boy for you. He needs discipline – it will do him good. Keeping him doesn't have to be expensive – he's been underfed since he was born! **(chuckles)**

**(Mr Gamfield looks backwards and forwards between the two men's faces; they are both smiling. After a pause, he smiles himself. He reaches out his hand and both men shake it, sealing the deal.)**

**Mr Gamfield:** I'll be back to collect him this afternoon!

**(Lights dim except for one spotlight, which shines on Narrator as they enter from stage right and stand in front of the curtains as they close.)**

**Narrator:** The deal has been made. At once, Mr Bumble instructs that Oliver is released from his bonds and orders him to put on a clean shirt. "Eat your food and be thankful!" he tells Oliver. "You're leaving." And so it is: Oliver Twist is to become a chimney sweep's apprentice.

**(Spotlight fades. Narrator exits to stage left.)**



# Questions

1. Who says the phrase, "Eat your food and be thankful!" Tick one.

- Mr Gamfield
- Mr Limbkins
- Narrator
- Mr Bumble

2. **This boy, sir... the one that the parish wants to apprentice...**

Which of these is the closest definition for the word apprentice? Tick one.

- to send someone to learn a trade
- to pay someone to do more work
- to agree that someone cannot work
- to keep someone imprisoned

3. How much money was Mr Gamfield paid to take Oliver?

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4. Find and copy **two** words or phrases from the stage directions which show that Mr Gamfield really wanted more money.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

5. **(smiles patronisingly)**

What does this imply about the way that the man in the white waistcoat smiled?

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6. How is Oliver made to seem desperately unhappy by Narrator at the start of the extract? Discuss **two** points, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

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7. What sort of person do you think Mr Limbkins is? Give a reason for your answer.

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8. **For a week after the sinful offence of asking for more supper...**

Do you think that Oliver had committed a sinful offence? Explain your answer.

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9. Briefly summarise the deal that was made between Mr Gamfield and the other gentlemen.

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# Answers

1. Who says the phrase, "Eat your food and be thankful!" Tick one.

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2. **This boy, sir... the one that the parish wants to apprentice...**

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- to send someone to learn a trade**
- to pay someone to do more work
- to agree that someone cannot work
- to keep someone imprisoned

3. How much money was Mr Gamfield paid to take Oliver?

**Mr Gamfield was paid three pounds and ten shillings to take Oliver.**

4. Find and copy **two** words or phrases from the stage directions which show that Mr Gamfield really wanted more money.

**Accept any two of the following: eagerly; with desperation; looking sorrowful.**

5. **(smiles patronisingly)**

What does this imply about the way that the man in the white waistcoat smiled?

**It implies that the man's smile was not friendly or sincere.**

6. How is Oliver made to seem desperately unhappy by Narrator at the start of the extract? Discuss **two** points, using evidence from the text to support your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Narrator says that Oliver 'cries bitterly all day' which is something you only do if you're very unhappy. Also, Narrator says that 'gloom and loneliness surround him' which must be a very unhappy situation to be in.**

7. What sort of person do you think Mr Limbkins is? Give a reason for your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Mr Limbkins is an unfair person because he says that he won't pay Mr Gamfield what he is asking for even though he will be taking Oliver from their care.**

8. **For a week after the sinful offence of asking for more supper...**

Do you think that Oliver had committed a sinful offence? Explain your answer.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: No, I do not think that Oliver has committed a sinful offence; he did not do anything immoral by asking for more food when he is hungry from being underfed.**

9. Briefly summarise the deal that was made between Mr Gamfield and the other gentlemen.

**Pupils' own responses, such as: Mr Gamfield was paid three pounds and ten shillings by two gentlemen at the workhouse in order to give Oliver an apprenticeship.**