



# 1. THE TRAPPER

The content for 'The Trapper' consists of three episodes - each about 6 minutes long - which can be listened to individually or sequentially. A synopsis of each episode clip is below.

## Lesson plan

### Learning intention 'We are learning to...'

We are learning to understand what life was like for children working in a mine in the Victorian era.

### Assessment criteria 'What I'm looking for...'

As an outcome I am looking for a labelled picture that shows three key features of a mine where children worked in Victorian times.

Share and discuss a listening focus for each episode by asking the key question and instructing the children to make the following notes.

Resources needed: note-making paper and pencil.

## 1. Jimmy's first day

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- No electricity. In a coal mine during the Victorian era there were no electric torches or lights on the ceiling, only candles and lamps that burnt oil.

Discussion question: 'What would it be like to be underground with no electric light?'

During listening: one question to focus on

- Key question: 'What different parts of the mine are named in the programme?'

- Instruction: 'Make a note of names for different parts of the mine.'
- (Answers: cage, seam, trapdoor.)

## 2. Jimmy falls sick

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- *Firedamp*. One big danger in the mine was 'firedamp,' gasses that could build up and explode if lit by candles or oil lamps.

Discussion question: 'What else would you worry about if you were working down a mine?'

During listening: one question to focus on

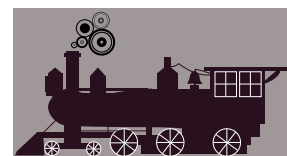
- Key question: 'Why does Jimmy want go to work even though he is ill?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of reasons you think Jimmy wants to go to work.'
- (Answers: to earn money for food; to look after the family.)

## 3. Danger in the mine

Before listening: one key fact to discuss

- *Trappers*. Children worked as 'trappers', opening and closing doors that controlled the circulation of air in the mine tunnels. They often sat completely alone for up to 12 hours.

Discussion question: 'How would you feel if you were left on your own in the dark for hours?'





During listening: One question to focus on

- Key question: 'What are the dangers of working down the mine?'
- Instruction: 'Make a note of the dangers of working down a mine.'
- (Answers: Firedamp leading to explosions; collapse, flooding, etc.)

## After listening

Activity: draw what you think the mine looks like above ground and below ground. Three things to include in your drawing:

- cage - lowered from the surface by a big coal powered engine
- seams - where the coal is mined from
- trap-doors - in tunnels away from the seam to control the way the air moves

## Differentiation and teacher support for SEN / Focus group / Whole class

Teacher to model drawing what the mine looks like on a piece of paper or whiteboard to provide hints and starting points for children's own drawings.

### Challenge for gifted and talented learners:

When drawing your mine tunnels can you imagine how the tunnels could be set out so that air could be pumped in from the surface? Where would you need to put trap doors so the air would move?

## Plenary and assessment

In table groups or as a class, share and compare drawings of the mine. Give the children an opportunity to improve their drawings after making comparisons.

## Episode synopses

The content explores the life of a young 'trapper' called Jimmy Turton, working in the coal mines of the North East in the 1840s. There are three episodes, which may be listened to independently of each other.

### 1. Jimmy's first day

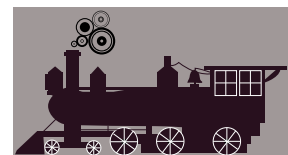
Jimmy Turton introduces himself. He's twelve years old and he's about to start his first day working in the mine as a 'trapper' - working alone in the pitch darkness, opening and closing trap doors to allow coal carts along the tunnel. Jimmy is feeling anxious as he enters the 'cage' with his brother Benjamin and an older miner called William - he's been in the mine often enough before, but not since his father died in an explosion about a year previously.

Jimmy tells us about his work as a trapper, but the episode ends on a sombre note with Jimmy imagining the explosion that killed his father.

### 2. Jimmy gets sick

Jimmy has been working as a trapper for some months when he falls ill and must take some time away from the mine sick. His mother is anxious about how the loss of his earnings will affect the family. She arranges some herbal medicine for him.

Jimmy is so worried about not earning his wages that - in a fever - he wanders to the mine and somehow finds his way down the shaft. Then he is involved in one of the most common types of mining accident: being struck by one of the coal carts. Jimmy's injuries place an additional burden on the family and as soon as he is well enough he must go back down the mine.





### 3. Danger in the mine

Jimmy is becoming accustomed to his life as a trapper. When he hears Benjamin and William approaching with a coal cart he opens his trap door as usual to let them through. Suddenly they hear a trickle of water - a very bad sign - and the shaft begins to flood. They are unable to open the trap door so they have no option but to follow the water towards its source.

Jimmy and Benjamin struggle against the flood until they make it to the surface...where they learn that a sudden summer rainstorm has flooded the mine, drowning many miners including several children.

