



Word Analysis

1. On page 26 is the phrase “*odds and ends*”. What do you think this means?
2. On page 27 Billy reflects that “*trying to reason with Tosher was like trying to fly up a chimney.*”
 - a) This means it was:
Useful Exciting Impossible Expensive
 - b) Give a reason for your answer to part (a).
3. On page 31 the word “*squalid*” is used to describe the boys’ home. What does this tell us about their home?
4. Find a simile that is used to describe Archie Miller. Make up three more similes you could use to describe him.
5. “*The moon was barricaded behind iron-grey clouds, and the city was smothered in the usual shroud of smog.*” What descriptive technique is used in this sentence, and what effect does it have? (Ask your teacher if you are not sure.)
6. Read pages 30 and 31, starting at “*The south bank of the Thames*” and ending at “*his padlocked clothes trunk.*” List all the adjectives you can find, and sort them into groups according to the five senses: sight, smell, taste, hearing and touch (or feeling).

Inference

1. What is the “*suspicious red stain*” under the arm of Archie’s coat, and what does this tell you about where Archie got the coat from?
2. Read the first paragraph on page 27. Where is Clara from, and what do you think she did before she came to England?
3. Why do you think Billy was worried about Archie finding out about the silver spoon?
4. On page 31 we read that the people in Billy’s neighbourhood have “*fear of living, [and] fear of dying.*” What does this tell you about their lives?



Word Analysis

1. Collins Dictionary: “a disorganized group of things of various kinds”
2. a) Impossible
b) Any reasonable explanation that involves reference to flying up chimneys being impossible
3. Reference is made to the home being dirty, unclean, unhygienic, unhealthy, poor or run-down.
4. a) like a bull; hands as large and flat as a pair of shovels
b) Any reasonable similes to describe Archie’s appearance
5. Personification (the moon barricaded like a prisoner; the city being smothered). It serves to enhance the image and to make the reader feel oppressed; any reference to a negative sensation.
6. Teachers may assess the success of this activity.

Inference

1. Reference is made to blood or stabbing, and the idea of violent robbery.
2. Clara is from the Caribbean, and may well have been a slave. This can lead into further discussion about the slave trade and how Clara may have escaped. (N.B. Slavery in the US was abolished in 1865. ‘Out of the Smoke’ is set in the ‘1860s’.)
3. Reference is made to Archie being a bully, a thief himself, a gang boss, and in charge of criminal activity in that area of London. Can lead to discussion of bullies in general, and right decisions when it comes to stealing or handling stolen goods.
4. Reference is made to the impossible situation of grinding poverty, being caught between an insufferable existence and the natural fear of death. Can lead to further discussions on poverty, the reasons for it, and the mental and emotional toll it can take on people.