



The Island of Dr Moreau

Herbert George Wells





R A I N B O W S

Herbert George Wells

The Island of Dr Moreau

Adaptation, dossiers and activities by
Raffaele Polichetti and Maureen Simmons



edisco

The Island of Dr Moreau

Project editor: Manuela Barbero

Cover: Mauro Borgarello

Design: Manuela Piacenti

Quality controller: Lunella Luzi

Page layout: Studio Pattern, Torino

Audio recording: Ivano Atzori

Printing: Stamperia Artistica Nazionale, Trofarello (To), Italy



All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

Every effort has been made to acknowledge and contact the source and/or copyright holder of material used in this book. The publisher apologizes for any unintentional errors or omissions and will be pleased to make corrections in future editions. All lyrics, music and films quoted are for review, study or critical purposes.

We would be happy to receive your comments and suggestions and give you any other information concerning our material.

Our email address: info@edisco.it

Our website address: <http://www.edisco.it>

Copyright © Edisco Editrice

Via Pastrengo 28

10128 Torino (Italy)

Tel. e fax (+39) 011.54.78.80

Reprint

5 4 3 2 1 0

2024 2023 2022 2021 2020 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

• Herbert George Wells	4
Chapter 1 – The Voyage	7
• Extension: <i>Shipwrecks in Literature</i>	16
Chapter 2 – The Island	19
• Extension: <i>Islands in Literature</i>	30
Chapter 3 – The Hunt	33
• Extension: <i>Science, society and evolution during the Victorian Age</i>	48
Chapter 4 – The Beast-people	51
• Extension: <i>Hybrids and chimeras</i>	66
Chapter 5 – The End	69
• Extension: <i>Cloned monkeys: will human clones soon follow?</i>	84
• SUMMING-UP ACTIVITIES	86
• GLOSSARY	91



The Author

Herbert George Wells



Herbert George Wells (1866-1946) was born in Bromley (Greater London), where his father was an unsuccessful shopkeeper. His difficult early life is reflected in the struggles¹ of the protagonists of his novels. In 1874, he had a serious accident that left him bedridden² for a long time, so he started reading books from the local library. They stimulated his desire to write and made him decide that he would become

a writer. After two unhappy years as an apprentice³, Wells became a student assistant at Midhurst Grammar School. From here, in 1884, he won a scholarship to the Normal School of Science, London. Before taking a degree in Zoology in 1890, he had started the life of a school teacher again. His first full-length works were biology and geography textbooks. In 1891 he began an unhappy marriage to his cousin Isabel; his second marriage in 1895 to Amy Robbins lasted all his life.

He was, like his friend George B. Shaw, an active member of the Fabian Society⁴ and a man deeply concerned with⁵ the political problems of his time. A brilliant, highly imaginative and productive writer, he published about fifty novels that can be divided into three groups, corresponding approximately to three distinct phases in his literary career.

The first group includes his scientific or fantastic romances, in the manner of Jules Verne, but on a higher level of artistic realization. His literary career began with the publication of his first major novel, *The Time Machine* (1895), followed by *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896),

1. *struggle*: fight, effort to achieve something.
2. *bedridden*: having to stay in bed because of illness or injury.
3. *apprentice*: a young person who works for an employer for a fixed period of time in order to learn the particular skills needed in their job.
4. *Fabian Society*: a British socialist organisation whose purpose is to advance the principles of democratic socialism. As founders, of the Labour Party in 1900, it has influenced British policy to the present day.
5. *concerned with*: involved in, interested in.

The Invisible Man (1897), *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899), *The First Men in the Moon* (1901). These novels are about the impact of alien races or advanced science on established society and their heroes are often nameless and powerless in the face of natural forces. Because of their satire and their implicit note of warning, these works can be considered an early sign of Wells's later worries about the social and political situation.

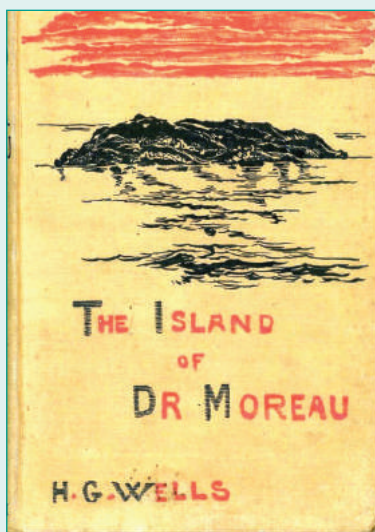
The second group includes comic novels, such as *Love and Mrs Lewisham* (1900), *Kipps* (1905) and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910).

The third and last group is made up of the novels of ideas, which showed the didactic tendency in Wells: *A Modern Utopia* (1905), *Tono-Bungay* (1909), *The New Machiavelli* (1911), *Mrs Britling Sees It Through* (1916), *Men Like Gods* (1923), *The World of William Clissold* (1926).

There is no doubt the best of Wells can be found in the scientific romances and the comic novels, while his novels of ideas are today out of date and generally neglected⁶.

At the end of his life, his contemporary political impact was limited. In his last book, *Mind at the End of Its Tether* (1945), he considered favourably the possibility that humanity could be replaced by another species. He also called the era "the age of frustration".

Wells died on 13th August, 1946. A commemorative plaque in his honour was erected at his home in Regent's Park, London.



First edition cover

6. *neglected*: forgotten, not receiving attention.



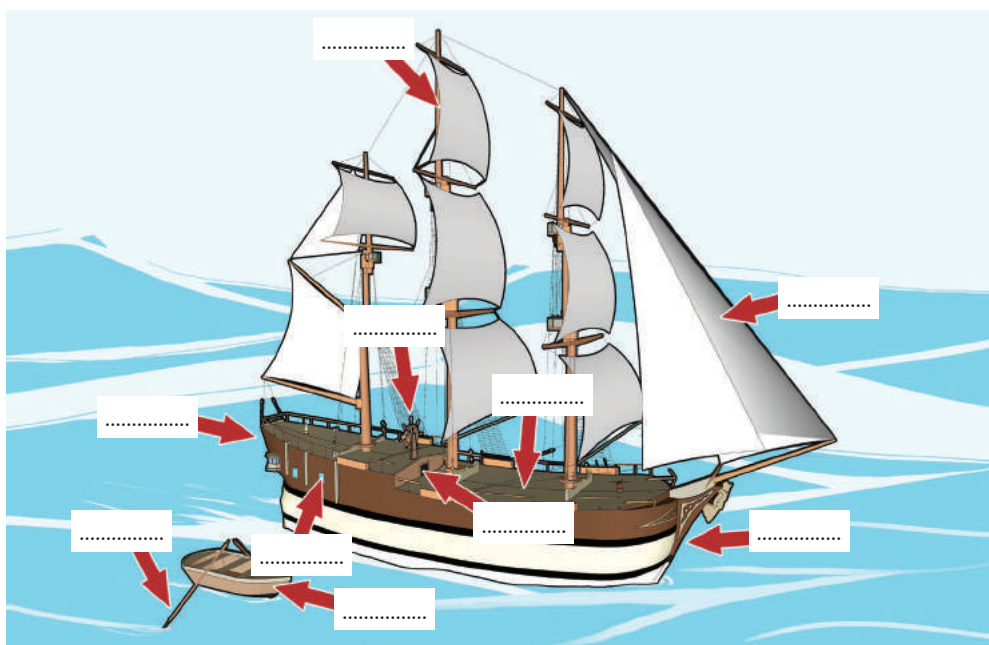
BEFORE READING

1 The story you are going to read takes place on a small island in the 'South Seas', that is, the Pacific Ocean. What do you think the island is like? Check your guess as you read the text.

- a. Stony, dry, mountainous with scarce vegetation. ☐
- b. Sandy, humid, hilly with luxuriant vegetation. ☐
- c. Icy, cold, flat with no vegetation. ☐

2 Complete the following drawing of a ship with the right terms choosing from the following:

bow • cabin • deck • hatch • helm • lifeboat •
mainmast • oar • sail • stern



3 The following literary works – except one – deal with shipwrecks and islands. Surf the Internet and tick the one which does not.

- ☐ *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare
- ☐ *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe
- ☐ *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift
- ☐ *MS Found in a Bottle* by Edgar Allan Poe
- ☐ *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway
- ☐ *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel

The Island of Dr Moreau

The Voyage

Chapter 1

Ten days after the departure from Callao in Peru, the ship on which I was sailing, the *Lady Vain*, hit a wreck¹. I, another passenger, called Helmar, and a sailor, whose name I do not know, were the only survivors – we were able to jump on a boat tied to the ship. There we found some water and some biscuits with which we hoped to survive until a ship would see us. The sea was very rough² and our fragile boat nearly capsized³ because of the high waves. After a few days, the sea got better but the scarce water and the few biscuits finished. We began to stare⁴ at each other with wild⁵ eyes. On the sixth day, as we were terribly thirsty and hungry, Helmar made us a horrible proposal – one of us had to be sacrificed, so that the other two could survive! I opposed his idea with all my strength. However, on the eighth day, all of us accepted.

“Here are three small pieces of wood; as you can see, one is shorter than the other two,” said Helmar. “Whoever picks up the shorter stick will be the unlucky one.”

It was the sailor who took the shorter one. But as he was the strongest of us, he did not accept his destiny and started to fight against Helmar. The two were locked in a desperate struggle. While I was trying to help Helmar, they slipped and fell into the sea and disappeared in the deep waters. I was left alone. I was desperate and had no strength left!

I do not know how much time passed; I only know I had lost all hope and was waiting for death as a liberation. Then, I saw a ship in the distance coming slowly towards me. My memories are confused. I only remember the large side of the ship, a big red-haired man and another one with wild eyes and dark skin who were looking at me. Soon after, I lost consciousness.

1. *wreck*: a ship that has been very badly damaged.
2. *rough*: very bad with big waves.
3. *capsized*: turned upside down.

4. *stare*: to look for a long time with the eyes wide open.
5. *wild*: as if mentally ill.

I found myself in an untidy, small cabin. There was a fair-haired young man beside me. He had a moustache and grey eyes which showed no expression. He was holding my wrist⁶. Then just overhead, I could hear strange noises and the angry growling⁷ of some large animal. The man asked me,

“How do you feel now?”

“Not too bad now... I can’t remember anything.... Where... where am I?” I answered in a whisper⁸.

“You were found almost dead in a boat. The name of the boat was the *Lady Vain* and there were spots of blood on the side of the boat. Have some of this, you’ll feel better.”

He gave me a glass with a red liquid which tasted like blood.

“I’m a doctor. I’m a passenger myself. You’re on a ship called *Ipecacuanha*. The captain is a brute and this ship is really filthy⁹.”

Meanwhile, new blows, barking¹⁰ and angry voices were coming from the deck.

“You were unconscious for thirty hours. Have a piece of this meat, then you will tell me your story.”

I started eating and suddenly the man rushed out of the cabin. I could hear him quarrelling¹¹ furiously with someone who answered him in a strange and incomprehensible language.

“Well, your story then?” said the man coming back into the cabin rather agitated.

“My name’s Edward Prendick. Before sailing, I studied Natural History; my life used to be quiet, with no worries and rather boring.”

I briefly told him about myself, then I asked who he was.

“My name’s Montgomery. I’ve done some science myself, I got a degree in Biology ten years ago. I’m going to the island where I live.”

6. *wrist*:



7. *growling*: (of animals, especially dogs) a low sound in the throat, usually as a sign of anger.

8. *whisper*: a way of speaking very quietly, using the breath but not the

voice, so that only the person close to you can hear you.

9. *filthy*: very dirty and unpleasant.

10. *barking*: the short loud sound made by dogs and other animals.

11. *quarrelling*: having a strong disagreement.



«I was thrown onto the small boat of the *Lady Vain*...» (by M. Fabiani Guillén, 2016)

While he was talking, I could hear the strange noises overhead again. Montgomery asked me if I felt like walking a bit. So we went to the deck. Here I saw a strange, black-faced man – he was deformed, short and clumsy¹², and had a hairy neck; his hair was thick and black. He wore a long shirt of rough¹³ cloth. I asked Montgomery,

“Who’s that fellow¹⁴ over there?”

But Montgomery did not answer and shouted to him,

“M’ling! Go away! You can’t stay here! You must stay forward at the bow!”

“But they don’t want me there...”, said the strange man.

“They don’t want you?!” replied Montgomery in a threatening¹⁵ way. “I order you to go there!”

The man went away grumbling¹⁶. I had never seen such a repellent person before.

The deck was very dirty – pieces of carrots, vegetables gone bad, filth of every kind, nauseating odours and, tied to the mainmast, some dogs which were barking terribly. There were also a few cages of different sizes in which a lama, a puma and some rabbits were locked up. The only human being on the deck was a sailor at the helm.

“What are these beasts for? Does the captain want to sell them somewhere in the South Seas?” I asked.

“Perhaps,” answered Montgomery brusquely.

Right at that moment, I heard a cry, a series of swear words¹⁷ and suddenly the black-faced man came out of the hatch. He was chased by a big, red-haired man who hit him and made him fall down; then he pushed him in front of the dogs. The dogs started to bark furiously trying to jump at him but they could not because of the chains. The sailors excited the dogs even more by clapping their hands hard. The noise was really terrible. But the strange man was able to roll back in the dirt beyond the range¹⁸ of the dogs. Montgomery shouted,

12. *clumsy*: awkward in movement and manner.

13. *rough*: simply made and not finished in every detail; plain, basic.

14. *fellow*: (informal) man.

15. *threatening*: menacing.

16. *grumbling*: complaining about

someone/something in an annoyed way.

17. *swear words*: rude or offensive expressions often used to express anger.

18. *range*: the distance over which someone/something can be seen or heard or hit.



«...and suddenly the black-faced man came out of the hatch.»
(Classics Illustrated, Papercutz, 1990)

“That’s enough, Captain! Stop hitting him and ill-treat him! That man’s a passenger. You all, keep your hands off him!”

“Go to hell!” said the captain loudly. “I do what I like on my own ship, all right? Oh, why did I take you on my ship? You and your damned animals! Mine was a nice and clean ship. Look at it now! Before you came, my men were clean and respectable, too.”

“Your men started to bother¹⁹ that poor fellow as soon as he came aboard!” replied Montgomery.

“That... that... fellow is a demon, a dirty devil! My men can’t stand²⁰ him and I can’t stand him either. If I find him around again, I’ll kill him! I’m the law here, I tell you. The agreement was that I had to take a man and his servant to Callao, and from there bring back some animals. I never agreed to carry a mad devil and a stupid doctor!”

The captain went away insulting all and giving Montgomery and me an angry look.

That same evening, we saw an island.

“That’s my island!” exclaimed Montgomery.

While we were approaching the island, I said to Montgomery,

“Thank you very much, you saved my life!”

“Thank no one. I was bored and wanted something to do, that’s all.”

At that moment, the captain shouted at us,

19. *bother*: to annoy, worry or upset someone.

20. *stand*: tolerate.

The Island of Dr Moreau

“Overboard²¹! All of you, that demon, those dirty animals and all your filthy things!”

Meanwhile, a boat with an old white-haired man and some dark-skinned men had come near the ship. The cages and all the material were unloaded onto the boat. The old man and Montgomery talked for a while and then Montgomery said to me coldly,

“You can’t come with us.”

And he jumped onto the boat which soon went towards the island. With a lost expression, I turned to the captain who shouted, “Prendick, I don’t want you on my ship, is that clear?”

“But Captain...”

“Go to hell! Come on, put this man on his boat and let’s sail away!”

I was thrown onto the small boat of the *Lady Vain* and saw the two craft²² leaving in opposite directions. I was still very weak and got frightened – the boat was full of water and there were no oars!

I began to sob²³ and tears ran down my cheeks.

21. *overboard*: over the side of a boat or ship and into the water.

22. *craft*: a vehicle for travelling on water or through the air.

23. *sob*: to cry noisily, taking in deep breaths.



WORKING ON THE TEXT

1 Answer the following questions.

- What did the survivors of the *Lady Vain* find on the boat?
- What was Helmar's "horrible" proposal?
- Why was Prendick left alone on the boat?
- Why was Montgomery holding Prendick's wrist?
- What noises coming from the deck did Prendick hear?
- What did the strange man look like?
- What was on the deck?
- Why did Montgomery say that the sailors ill-treated his servant?
- How did the captain behave?
- Who and what did the boat going back to the island carry?

2 Decide whether the following statements are true or false. Now correct the false statements.

- | | T | F |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| a. The collision of the <i>Lady Vain</i> was against a rock. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Helmar took one of the two longer sticks. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. Montgomery is a scientist. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. The captain is a nice and friendly person. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. The strange deformed man is tall. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f. The dogs jump on Montgomery's servant and bite him. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g. Both the ship and the sailors used to be clean and decent. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h. The sailors began to torment the strange man from the moment of departure. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| i. Montgomery saved Prendick as an act of human solidarity. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| j. Prendick was thrown onto one of the <i>Ipecacuanha's</i> lifeboats. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



WORKING ON VOCABULARY

- 3 Find the opposites of the following words on the first page of this chapter.

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| a. abundant: | i. lucky: |
| b. arrival: | j. many: |
| c. calm: | k. refused: |
| d. fast: | l. shallow: |
| e. hopeful: | m. strong: |
| f. life: | n. weakest: |
| g. longer: | o. weakness: |
| h. low: | p. worse: |

- 4 Complete the descriptions of three characters from Chapter I using the following words/phrases:

big • black-faced • brute • clumsy • deformed • fair-haired • grey eyes • hairy neck • moustache • red-haired • repellent • short • thick and black hair • young man

CAPTAIN	MONTGOMERY	STRANGE MAN
<i>big</i>	<i>fair-haired</i>	<i>black-faced</i>
.....
.....
.....

WORKING ON GRAMMAR

- 5 **Noun + past participle.** This construction forms a compound adjective from a noun and a past participle. E.g.: *A fair-haired man means a man with fair hair.* Turn the following phrases into the construction explained above.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| a. A person with red hair: | |
| b. A man with a black face: | |
| c. An old woman with white hair: | |
| d. Men with dark skins: | |
| e. A sailor with blue eyes: | |

WORKING ON SKILLS

Listening



Listen to the recording and fill in the blanks.

While we were approaching the (1)....., I was thinking of Montgomery's studies, his very strange (2)..... and the animals locked in the (3)..... . All this was disquieting but at the same time stimulated my (4)..... . It was the atmosphere for sentiment and I said to Montgomery,

"If I may, I want to express my (5)..... – you have saved my life."

"Chance. Just chance. Thank chance."

(*smiling*) "Well, I prefer to make my thanks to a (6)..... being..."

(*brusquely*) "Thank no one. You had the (7)..... and I had the knowledge. And I (8)..... you as much as I might do with a specimen. I was (9)..... and wanted something to do, that's all."

"In any case, I"

"... It's chance, I tell you. As everything is in a man's (10)..... . Only asses don't (11)..... it! (*angrily*) Why am I here now, an outcast from civilisation, instead of being a happy man (12)..... all the pleasures of London? (*sadly*) Simply because (13)..... years ago... by pure chance... I found myself in a (14)..... where I lost my head for ten minutes... It was a (15)..... night and..."

"Yes?"

(*roughly*) "That's all!"

Speaking

7

PAIR WORK. Student A: describe the illustration on p. 11 to Student B; Student B: describe the illustration on p. 12 to your partner.

Writing

8

With the aid of the illustration on p. 11, write a text of 120-150 words describing the deck of the ship.

SHIPWRECKS IN LITERATURE

Shipwrecks and islands have been present in literature and the arts since ancient times. They may occur as plot¹ elements, as parts of literary or film representations, as symbols in paintings, as themes in songs, or as concepts in philosophical theories; in any case, they have always been a source of fascination to authors and artists.

The following are some of the most famous **shipwrecks** in English-speaking literature.

Twelfth Night (1602) by William Shakespeare

As a result of a shipwreck, Viola finds herself in a strange country, where she becomes involved in the love affairs of the noble residents.

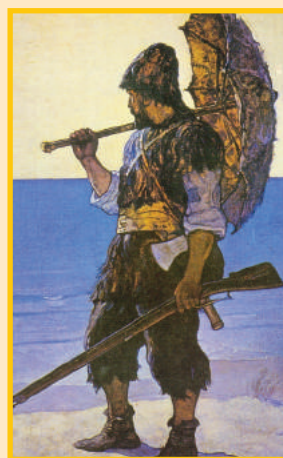


Miranda (J. W. Waterhouse, 1916).

The Tempest (1610)

by William Shakespeare

Miranda asks her father Prospero to put an end to the terrible storm which has hit a ship carrying King Alonso and his entourage. He reveals to her that he caused the shipwreck with his magic arts.



Robinson Crusoe (1719) by Daniel Defoe

Crusoe and three animals are the only survivors when his ship is wrecked. He fetches² arms, tools and other supplies from the ship before it sinks³.

1. *plot*: the story of a book, film, play
2. *fetch*: to go to where something is and bring it/them back.
3. *sink*: to go down below the surface or to the bottom of a liquid or soft substance.

***Gulliver's Travels* (1726)**

by Jonathan Swift

Gulliver describes how a shipwreck carries him onto the coast of Lilliput. When he wakes up, he realises he is tied to the ground and surrounded by very small people.



***Don Juan* (1824) by Lord Byron**

Juan and his tutor, Pedrillo, are shipwrecked and find themselves on a raft with some sailors. As food and water get low, the crew decide to draw lots⁴ in order to choose who will be eaten. Juan's tutor Pedrillo is chosen after Juan's dog has also been eaten. However, those that eat Pedrillo go mad and die. Juan is the only survivor of the journey.



***MS Found in a Bottle* (1833) by Edgar Allan Poe**

The narrator is rescued⁵ from a wreck by a black galleon. The ship is strangely old and its crew seem not to notice him. He begins writing the account which he puts in a bottle. As his story ends, the black ship is caught in a whirlpool and goes down.

***A Night to Remember* (1955) by Walter Lord**

A non-fiction novel that describes the collision with an iceberg and consequent sinking of the RMS *Titanic* on 15 April 1912. The book was very successful

and is still considered a definitive resource about the *Titanic*. W. Lord interviewed many survivors and utilised their drawings, memoirs and articles.



***Life of Pi* (2001) by Yann Martel**



16-year-old Pi is the son of a zoo owner who sells the animals to a Canadian zoo and emigrates there with his family. Animals and humans are on the same ship, which is wrecked in the mid-Pacific. Pi survives for seven months on a lifeboat in the company of a tiger.

The 2012 movie version of *Life of Pi*, directed by Ang Lee.

4. *draw lots*: to make a decision by choosing from a set of objects, such as pieces of paper or sticks, that are all the same except for one.
5. *rescue*: to save somebody from a dangerous situation.
6. *whirlpool*: a place in a river or the sea where currents of water spin round very fast.



The Island of Dr Moreau

The Island of Dr Moreau (1896) is H.G. Wells' second scientific romance. The story centers on the depraved Dr Moreau, who conducts horrible experiments – men transformed into animals or animals changed into men? – on a remote tropical island. Prendick, an Englishman whose misfortunes bring him to the island, is witness to the Beast-people's strange civilization and their final terrifying regression.

The novel deals with and anticipates ethical issues such as vivisection, genetic manipulation and the role of science, which are some of the inserts developed in the book.

beginner

• **A1** (Breakthrough)

elementary

• **A2** (Waystage)



pre-intermediate

• **B1** (Threshold)

intermediate

• **B2** (Vantage)

post-intermediate

• **C1** (Effectiveness)

Levels of accredited examination boards:

Cambridge English:	Preliminary (PET)
Trinity:	Grade 5, 6 / ISE I
City & Guilds (Pitman):	Intermediate
ESB:	Intermediate 1, 2
Edexcel:	Elementary



Teacher's Resources available on line:
Answer Key, Audioscripts, Summing-up Activities.