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# SHARED READING

## Extract 1

- Display Extract 1 which is from Chapter 5, where the squire tries out and christens the colt.
- Investigate the forms of address. Ask: *Who speaks first?* (Squire Gordon) *How does he address the other person?* Circle 'John'. *How does John address Squire Gordon in paragraph two?* Circle the two examples of 'sir'. Discuss why they address each other so differently. Emphasise that they are employer and employee, a more formal relationship in the nineteenth century.
- Read John's speech aloud. Circle 'fleet'. Ask: *What characteristic do the colt and deer share?* (speed) Underline 'as fleet as a deer'. Ask: *What literary device is this?* (a simile) Circle other complimentary adjectives used by John about the colt: 'fine', 'quiet', 'pleasant'.
- Circle 'counsel' in paragraph four. Can partners define it to each other? (advice) Refer to Duchess's conversations with the colt in the meadow or in double harness together.
- Comment on Squire and Mrs Gordon's polite language. Underline 'my dear', and circle the concerned question marks as she asks about name preferences. Underline the final sentence, as the squire checks 'If you like'. Highlight 'Black Beauty'. Ask: *What suggests that the colt will keep this name?* (It is the book's title.)
- Count the paragraphs. Ask: *Why are new ones begun so frequently?* Point out that most of the passage is dialogue, with a separate paragraph for each piece of speech. Direct the children to the brief paragraphs eight, nine and ten. Ask: *What is the advantage of separate paragraphs?* (The speakers' names are unnecessary.)

## Extract 2

- Display Extract 2, which covers a defining incident in the book from Chapter 25.
- Underline the landlord's words. Ask: *What is suggested about Mr Smith?* (He has drunk too much.) Circle 'oath'. Ask: *What does it mean?* (a swear word) Circle 'I' in the first paragraph. Ask: *Who is 'I'?* (Black Beauty) *Is the book written in the first or third person?* (first)
- Remind the children that Smith, previously, was gentle and clever with horses. Ask: *Which words indicate that he has changed?* Underline 'frequently giving me a sharp cut... at full speed'.
- Circle 'turnpike'. Describe it as a gate to stop carts until a toll is paid. Circle 'sensible' and ask for a synonym in this context. (aware) Ask: *How should Smith know that Black Beauty's shoe has gone?* (His pace is wrong.) Underline 'he was too drunk to notice anything'. Ask: *What do the words confirm? What has changed Smith?* (alcohol)
- Read paragraph three aloud. Identify increasing speed and pain. Highlight 'gallop', 'utmost speed', 'still faster'. In a different colour, highlight 'forced', 'cutting into me with his whip', 'suffered dreadfully' and 'terribly cut'. Circle 'quick'. Ask: *Which part is it?* (tender, sensitive flesh below the skin of a nail)
- Underline 'This could not go on'. Suggest that this indicates that the situation is reaching a climax. Ask: *What is the climax for Black Beauty? Do you think the fall will affect Black Beauty's future?* Indicate and underline 'both my knees'.
- Consider Smith's fall. Underline 'with great force' and 'a heavy groan'. Ask: *What outcome is suggested? Has Smith died?*



## Extract 2

The landlord stood at the door and said, "Have a care, Mr Smith!" but he answered angrily with an oath; and almost before he was out of the town he began to gallop, frequently giving me a sharp cut with his whip, though I was going at full speed. The moon had not yet risen, and it was very dark. The roads were stony, having been recently mended; going over them at this pace, my shoe became looser, and as we neared the turnpike gate it came off.

If Smith had been in his right sense, he would have been sensible of something wrong in my pace; but he was too drunk to notice anything.

Beyond the turnpike was a long piece of road, upon which fresh stones had just been laid – large sharp stones, over which no horse could be driven quickly without risk of danger. Over this road, with one shoe gone, I was forced to gallop at my utmost speed, my rider meanwhile cutting into me with his whip, and with wild curses urging me to go still faster. Of course my shoeless foot suffered dreadfully; the hoof was broken and split down to the very quick, and the inside was terribly cut by the sharpness of the stones.

This could not go on; no horse could keep his footing under such circumstances; the pain was too great. I stumbled, and fell with violence on both my knees. Smith was flung off by my fall, and, owing to the speed I was going at, he must have fallen with great force. I soon recovered my feet and limped to the side of the road, where it was free from stones. The moon had just risen above the hedge, and by its light I could see Smith lying a few yards beyond me. He did not rise; he made one slight effort to do so, and then there was a heavy groan.



# PLOT, CHARACTER & SETTING

## 1. Starting off

### Objective

To make comparisons within and across books; to predict what might happen from details stated and implied.

### What you need

Copies of *Black Beauty*.

### What to do

- After reading Chapter 1, ask: *What is the main tense used? How can you tell?* Identify past-tense verbs, for example: 'was', 'gave', 'lived'. Ask partners to compare this with their current reading books. Ask: *What tense are they written in?* Suggest that most novels are written in the past tense.
- Ask the children to consider the content of this chapter. Ask: *How old is the colt? Is he the animal telling the story? Is he describing his present, past or future?* Share ideas and agree that the storyteller is a horse looking back on his early life. Ask: *Is this confusing for the reader?*
- Suggest that the book needs a short introduction in which old Black Beauty describes the environment he lives in after the book has finished. Point out that at this stage the children can only imagine what that place is. This introduction must be written in the present tense.
- Investigate the first paragraph of Chapter 1. Point out descriptive details of the colt's setting: 'clear water', 'shady trees', 'running brook'. Suggest that the children model their introduction on this paragraph's style, but make the setting different.

### Differentiation

**Support:** Suggest where the adult horse might be living now and what descriptions to include.

**Extension:** Encourage a longer introduction with further details modelled on the second paragraph of Chapter 1.

## 2. Keeping a record

### Objective

To summarise the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph, identifying key details that support the main idea.

### What you need

Copies of *Black Beauty*, photocopiable page 29 'Story journal'.

### What to do

- After reading Chapter 3, comment that this story might become complicated to follow. Share ideas on why: considerable length; an animal storyteller; horses talking to one another; numerous human characters; changes of setting.
- Suggest that the children would benefit from creating a story journal in which they write comments at regular points during the book. Advise them that the end of Chapter 3 is a good place at which to start writing comments.
- Display the headings from photocopiable page 29 'Story Journal'. Invite paired, then class discussion on the first three chapters, relating the discussion to these headings. Encourage confidence in their own opinions.
- Give out photocopiable page 29 'Story journal' for the children to complete. Suggest that they use the photocopiable sheet and its headings as a template for further writing when they stop at regular stages of the book.

### Differentiation

**Support:** Let partners work together, but encourage a personal reaction to the story.

**Extension:** Encourage longer entries and individual thinking.



# Story journal

- Use this sheet to help you keep track of what is happening in the story.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Where I have stopped: \_\_\_\_\_

What has happened since my last entry:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Character developments

Animal: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Human: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Notable vocabulary and points of

interest: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where the story is set:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Star rating:



My reaction to the story so far:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What I think will happen next:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_