

Penguin Readers Factsheets

Teacher's Notes

Johnny English

By Neal Purvis & Robert Wade
and Will Davies



Level 2 – Elementary Johnny English

Summary

This comedy action story starts with a murder. England's best Secret Service agent is killed. England's next best agents go to his funeral. Agent Johnny English is in charge of security at the funeral. There is a bomb in the coffin and it blows up, leaving only England's worst agent, Johnny English, alive.

So he gets the job of protecting the Queen's crown at a special ceremony at the Tower of London.

Pascal Sauvage is a successful French businessman. Among the many companies he owns is one that operates prisons. He's a friend of the British Prime Minister, but has secret plans to become King of England and turn the country into a giant prison. He pretends he likes the English, but really he despises them. While he is upstairs giving a speech at the special ceremony, his men are downstairs, stealing the crown from underneath. Sauvage laughs at the security, organized by ... Johnny English.

Johnny English and his assistant Bough set out to recapture the crown. They parachute onto Sauvage's company headquarters, where they uncover the truth, but nobody will believe them, including their boss, Pegasus, who throws them off the case.

Meanwhile Sauvage's men force the Queen to abdicate and Sauvage is invited by the Prime Minister to be the next king.

Johnny and Interpol agent Lorna Campbell follow Sauvage to his house in Brittany in northern France. Here they overhear Sauvage describing his plans for England once he is king – to make it into a giant prison.

Unfortunately, he also overhears their plans to capture him. They find themselves locked in a small room. They get back to England just in time to stop the coronation of King Pascal in Westminster Abbey, and by accident, Johnny is crowned king himself.

About the film

The book is based on the film, *Johnny English*, starring Rowan Atkinson as the hopeless Secret Service agent and John Malkovich as the super villain. Lorna Campbell is played by Natalie Imbruglia and the film was directed by Peter Howitt, whose other films include *Sliding Doors*. It is a spoof of the James Bond films, where the handsome James Bond, Agent 007, saves the world from evil men and women with a combination of physical strength, quick thinking, clever gadgets and endless charm. Johnny English likes to think of himself as James Bond, but in reality is an idiot, who only wins through luck and, eventually, courage.

The idea for the film began with a series of television advertisements for a UK bank in the 1990s, and was later developed into a full-length screenplay. In the ads, a hopeless secret agent, played by Atkinson, regularly failed his assignments.

Rowan Atkinson's rubbery face is best-known from his Mr Bean character, seen on television and in films around the world. Johnny English has some Mr Bean characteristics, although he is much less of an idiot than Mr Bean.

John Malkovich's character is Frenchman Pascal Sauvage. Malkovich lived in the south of France for many years and speaks fluent French.

Background and themes

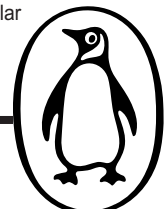
The story is set in London, with action taking place at well-known locations, including the Tower of London, where the crown jewels are kept; Westminster Abbey, where coronations take place; Buckingham Palace, the Queen's central London home; 10 Downing Street, the Prime Minister's official home and office. There are car chases through the streets of the capital and parachute drops onto city skyscrapers.

Elizabeth II is the current Queen of England. Her coronation was in 1953. Her heir is her oldest son, Prince Charles, followed by his oldest son, Prince William. Charles will inherit the crown when his mother dies and become King Charles III. Their family – the Windsors – has been ruling since 1917, when they took over from Queen Victoria's family, the Hanovers. All the royal families of Europe are interconnected and it would not be impossible for a Frenchman to become king of England, as in this story, if the whole Windsor family abdicated.

The monarchy in England does not have any real power, as Pascal Sauvage hopes. The Queen is a figurehead and only acts on the advice of her Prime Minister. She never makes political statements and her job is to serve her country at ceremonies throughout the year. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the most important bishop in the Church of England, although the Queen is actually head of the Church. The Archbishop always carries out the coronation at Westminster Abbey.

Queen Elizabeth II is famous for her love of animals, particularly horses and Corgi dogs. She would be unlikely to abdicate if someone held a gun to her dog's head, however, as Vendetta does to one of her Corgis in *Johnny English*!

Johnny English works for M17. The actual Secret Service agencies in Britain are MI5 (counter-intelligence) and MI6 (intelligence and spies). His character is a popular



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English comic type: an idiot who saves his country by mistake. His plans always go wrong, but the results often come out right. Like Bond, Johnny has clever spy gadgets to help him at difficult moments – of course, he always mis-uses them and disaster follows. When he is trying to sneak around inside Savage's London headquarters, for example, he injects himself with a pen that makes its victim unable to walk and talk.

The story uses a familiar plot device in thrillers – the key investigator, in this case English, discovers the truth about an important establishment figure. His bosses won't believe his accusations because they want to keep in with the important figure, and the investigator is told to lay off the case, or, in this case, sacked. Johnny, Lorna and Johnny's assistant Bough (who saves his boss on an hourly basis) have to fight on and save England alone.

Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the reader, and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopyable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of discussion and pair/group work questions, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

What do Secret Service agents like James Bond do? Ask students to write down three things. Discuss their ideas.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A SECTION

Chapters 1–3

- 1 Students work in pairs or small groups. They write a list of all the mistakes that Johnny English makes in this part of the book. In turn, pairs describe one of his mistakes. Put them on the board. Who found the most mistakes? Which is the worst mistake?
- 2 At the end of Chapter 2, Johnny English pushes the button to open the security doors and reveal the Queen's crown. But it has gone. Students imagine they are all guests at the party. What do they say when the doors open? What do they do?

Chapters 4–6

- 1 Students work in pairs or groups and think of adjectives to describe each of the characters in this part of the story – Johnny, Lorna, Pascal, Klein, Pegasus, the Queen, Bough. Compare choices with the whole class.
- 2 What will life be like in England under King Pascal? Students discuss this future in small groups.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

- 1 Discussion. What do students think of kings and queens? Do they have a king or queen in their country? Do they think a king or queen is a good thing or a bad thing? Why? Put useful vocabulary up on the board as you go along.
- 2 Divide the class into eight pairs or small groups. Each pair looks at a different photograph in the book. They work out a description of their photo and read it to the class.
- 3 Remind students of their discussion about James Bond before they read the story. Ask them to compare Johnny English with James Bond. Is Johnny English a good agent? Is he clever? Does he think quickly? Does he make mistakes?

Glossary

It will be useful for your students to know these new words. They are practised in the exercises at the back of the book. (The definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

Chapters 1–3

archbishop (n) a very important man in the Church of England

button (n) a small round thing on a machine; you can stop or start a machine with it

coffin (n) a long box for a dead person, coffins go into the ground

coronation (n) When there is a new king or queen in England, there is a coronation. It happens at Westminster Abbey. The Archbishop puts the crown on the new king or queen's head

crown (n) a king or queen wears the crown on their head

hole (n) you can fall into a hole in the ground

Prime Minister (n) a very important person in a country; Tony Blair is Prime Minister of the UK

prison (n) when someone kills someone, they go to prison

queen (n) this woman is head of her country

screen (n) you look at this part of a television or computer

Secret Service agent (n) an agent works for the Prime Minister: the Secret Service look after the security of the country

security (n) when a building has good security, the wrong people cannot get in or out

shoot (v) a person can shoot someone with a gun and kill them

tower (n) a tall thin building

Chapters 4–6

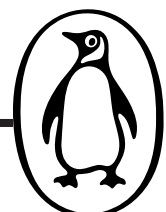
abbey (n) a very important church building; Westminster Abbey is a very important church in England

abdicate (v) when a king doesn't want to be king, he abdicates; he gives his crown to another person

king (n) this man is head of his country

mask (n) when you wear this over your face, nobody can see your face

parachute (n) when you jump out of a plane, this opens above you and you come slowly to the ground



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Student's activities

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These activities can be done alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only activities are marked.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

- 1 Read the introduction on page iv. Find the second half of these sentences.
 - (a) Agent One did not finish his work
 - (b) Johnny English didn't die
 - (c) He was outside in the car park
 - (d) Johnny English is now Number One agent
 - (e) Johnny has to stop
 - (i) because he made a mistake.
 - (ii) before he died.
 - (iii) Pascal Sauvage.
 - (iv) when they died.
 - (v) with all the other agents.
- 2 Did Johnny English do his security job at the church well? Why not? Talk to another student.

ACTIVITIES WHILE READING THE BOOK

CHAPTERS 1–3

Chapter 1

- 1 Who ...
 - (a) is stopping cars and asking for their papers?
 - (b) is driving a long black car with a coffin inside it?
 - (c) is talking to Johnny English when, suddenly, there is a very loud noise?
 - (d) is Pegasus?
 - (e) has a nice crown?
 - (f) has prisons in many different countries?
- 2 Find the mistakes in these sentences.
 - (a) Five agents die in the church.
 - (b) English and Bough follow the coffin into the church.
 - (c) Johnny English never makes mistakes.
 - (d) The Archbishop is going to the party at the Tower of London.
 - (e) The Prime Minister doesn't know Pascal Sauvage.
- 3 Johnny English has the job of security at the party at the Tower of London. What do you think will happen? Talk to another student.

Chapter 2

- 1 Answer these questions.
 - (a) Johnny talks to Lorna Campbell. Is he thinking about security?
 - (b) Who does Johnny think Pascal Sauvage is when he first sees him?
 - (c) Why do the lights go out at the party?

- (d) Why does Johnny hit Chevenix on the head?
- (e) Who is Johnny fighting in the next room?
- (f) When the Queen arrives, what does she see?

- 2 You and another student are listening to the fight between Johnny and 'a man'. What do you hear? What do you think is happening? Talk about it.
- 3 Which of these people are not in the room when the lights go out?

Bough Chevenix Johnny English Klein Lorna Campbell
Pascal Sauvage Pegasus the Queen Vendetta

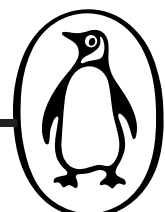
Chapter 3

- 1 Are these sentences right or wrong?
 - (a) A big man with orange hair took the crown.
 - (b) The security at the Tower of London was not good.
 - (c) Somebody got in and took the crown through a hole in the floor.
 - (d) Johnny goes down the hole first.
 - (e) Vendetta and Klein took the crown to Sauvage last night.
- 2 Johnny says the man was big with orange hair. This isn't very clever – nobody saw a big man with orange hair before or after the lights went out. Can you do better? You are Johnny. Tell Pegasus about the man.
- 3 Answer these questions.
 - (a) Who follows the right coffin?
 - (b) Who follows the wrong coffin?
 - (c) Who follows in a taxi?
 - (d) Who or what is in the coffin with 'Dad' on it?
 - (e) Who or what is in the coffin with 'Mum' on it?
- 4 'Dad' in the coffin was your uncle. You were at the church. What happened? Tell a friend.

CHAPTERS 4–6

Chapter 4

- 1 Choose the right answer.
 - (a) Sauvage thinks English is
(i) clever (ii) stupid (iii) funny
 - (b) Pegasus thinks Sauvage is
(i) bad (ii) good (iii) stupid
 - (c) The man under the car is
(i) Vendetta (ii) Felch (iii) Bough
 - (d) Johnny pushes
(i) Vendetta (ii) Felch (iii) Bough
to the floor.



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Student's activities

2 Complete these sentences. Use these words:

hospital prisoners right security window wrong

- (a) Bough jumps onto the _____ building.
- (b) Johnny jumps onto the _____ building.
- (c) Johnny is in a _____.
- (d) He thinks the people in beds are _____.
- (e) He sees Bough at a _____ of Sauvage's building.
- (f) He says he's looking at the _____.

3 Why doesn't Johnny listen to Bough in the plane? What does this tell us about him?

Chapter 5

1 Which object goes with which sentence?

black pen chair a dog's head
letter mask red pen video

- (a) You use this when you want people to talk.
- (b) A man puts this on his face and suddenly he is the Archbishop.
- (c) This shows Sauvage's plans.
- (d) When you push this into someone's arm, they can't walk or talk.
- (e) Lorna hits a security man across the back of the head with this.
- (f) Vendetta puts a gun to this.
- (g) This makes Sauvage King of England.

2 One word in each of these sentences is wrong. Can you put it right?

- (a) Sauvage wants to be King of England because he wants GYREVHTNIE.
- (b) Lorna works for PRETOINL.
- (c) Sauvage SLTEL Pegasus about his three security men.
- (d) Johnny loses his job as an TNEAG.
- (e) The Queen CTSDBAEAI because Vendetta is going to kill her dog.
- (f) Lorna wants Johnny to help her HCCTA Sauvage.

3 Johnny throws his drink over a woman at the party. What does she say? Talk to another student.

4 Lorna and Johnny are going to Brittany. What do you think will happen? Write down some ideas.

Chapter 6

1 Put these sentences in order.

- (a) Bough gets them out.
- (b) Johnny jumps into the room.
- (c) Johnny pushes a button by accident – the men below hear his plans.
- (d) Klein puts Lorna and Johnny in a small dark room.
- (e) Lorna and Johnny get inside Sauvage's house.
- (f) Pascal's men take him prisoner.
- (g) They are watching Pascal on a big screen.
- (h) They see ten important men around a table.

2 Answer these questions.

- (a) Why are thousands of people in the streets of London?
- (b) Why can't Johnny pull the mask off the Archbishop's face?
- (c) What mistake did Johnny make when he took the video from Sauvage's house in Brittany?
- (d) What doesn't Vendetta shoot Johnny?
- (e) Who is the new king?
- (f) What kind of car are Johnny and Lorna in at the end of the story?

3 What happens to Johnny after the 'coronation'? Talk to other students.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

- 1 What do you think of Johnny English? Do you like him? Do you think he is funny? Talk to another student or write down your ideas.
- 2 You are Bough. When you get back to the office, you have to write about Sauvage and the crown for your boss. Tell the story.
- 3 What job would you give Johnny English? Write down some ideas.
- 4 Before the story starts, Sauvage writes notes about his plans to win the crown. Write his notes – make them short.

