

# 3 James and the Giant Peach



## Warm Up

Discuss in groups of four.

- Are you fond of trees?
- What does a tree mean to you?
- Why is it important to look after trees?
- How do trees make your life better?



## Reading

Here is James Henry Trotter when he was about four years old.

Up until this time, he had had a happy life, living **peacefully** with his mother and father in a beautiful house beside the sea. There were always plenty of other children for him to play with, and there was the sandy beach for him to run about on and the ocean to paddle in. It was the perfect life for a small boy.

Then, one day, James's mother and father went to London to do some shopping, and there a terrible thing happened. Both of them suddenly got eaten up (in full daylight, mind you, and on a crowded street) by an **enormous** angry rhinoceros which had escaped from the London Zoo.



Now this, as you can well imagine, was a rather **nasty experience** for two such gentle parents. But in the long run, it was far nastier for James than it was for them. Their troubles were all over in a **jiffy**.

They were dead and gone in thirty-five seconds flat. Poor James, on the other hand, was still very much alive, and all at once he found himself alone and frightened in a vast, unfriendly world. The lovely house by the seaside had to be sold **immediately**, and the little boy, carrying nothing but a small suitcase containing a pair of pyjamas and a toothbrush, was sent away to live with his two aunts.

Their names were Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker, and I am sorry to say that they were both really horrible people. They were selfish and lazy and cruel, and right from the beginning they started beating poor James for almost no reason at all. They never called him by his real name, but always **referred** to him as “you **miserable creature**”, and they certainly never gave him any toys to play with or any picture books to look at. His room was as bare as a prison cell.



They lived – Aunt Sponge, Aunt Spiker, and now James as well – in a **queer ramshackle** house on the top of a high hill in the south of England. The hill was so high that from almost anywhere in the garden James could look down and see for miles and miles across a **marvellous** landscape of woods and fields, and on a very clear day, if he looked in the right direction, he could see a tiny grey dot far away on the **horizon**, which was the house that he used to live in with his beloved mother and father. And just beyond that, he could see the ocean itself – a long thin **streak** of blackish-blue, like a line of ink, beneath the **rim** of the sky.

But James was never allowed to go down off the top of that hill. Neither Aunt Sponge nor Aunt Spiker could ever be bothered to take him out herself, not even for a small walk or a picnic, and he certainly wasn't **permitted** to go alone. “The

nasty little beast will only get into mischief if he goes out of the garden,” Aunt Spiker had said. And terrible punishments were promised him, such as being locked up in the **cellar** with the rats for a week, if he even so much as **dared** to climb over the fence.

The garden, which covered the whole of the top of the hill, was large and **desolate**, and the only tree in the entire place (apart from a clump of dirty old **laurel** bushes at the far end) was an **ancient** peach tree that never gave any peaches. There was no swing, no seesaw, no sandpit, and no other children were ever invited to come up the hill to play with poor James. There wasn't so much as a dog or a cat around to keep him company.



And as time went on, he became sadder and sadder, and more and more lonely, and he used to spend hours every day standing at the bottom of the garden, gazing **wistfully** at the lovely but **forbidden** world of woods and fields and ocean that was spread out below him like a magic carpet.

*Roald Dahl*

### Glossary

**peacefully:** without disturbance

**enormous:** very large

**nasty:** very bad or unpleasant

**experience:** an event or occurrence that creates an impression on people

**jiffy:** very quickly

**immediately:** without delay

**referred:** mentioned or talked about

**miserable:** very unhappy

**queer:** strange

**ramshackle:** a house that is badly made and likely to break or fall down

**marvellous:** amazing and beautiful

**horizon:** point where the earth and the sky seem to meet

**streak:** a line or long mark on something that is a different colour from the colour surrounding it

**rim:** the upper or outer edge of an object

**permitted:** allowed

**cellar:** a room under a building, below the level of the ground, usually used for storing things

**dared:** had the courage to do something that is not safe

**desolate:** empty and deserted

**laurel:** a small tree with shiny dark green leaves that do not fall off in winter

**ancient:** very old

**wistfully:** sadly, with regret

**forbidden:** a place where you are not allowed to enter



## Read and Answer

### 1. Answer the following questions.

- Where did James live when we first meet him?
- Why did he move in with his aunts?
- Where was he not allowed to go?
- What happened to James's parents?
- What were James's aunts called?
- What was in the backyard of James's house?
- What did James's cruel aunts call him?
- What did James do as he became sadder and sadder?

### 2. Describe each of the following and complete the table.

James's parents' house	James's aunts' house
James's life in his parents' house	James's life in his aunts' house



## Think and Answer

- Describe James's aunts. Talk about their characteristics as well as their appearance.
- Why do you think the woods and fields looked like a 'magic carpet' from the hill where James was?

3. Read the last two paragraphs. What do they tell us about James?

4. What do you think will happen to the peach tree in the story and why?



5. Imagine how the peach tree looks like. Write two lines about it.



## Word Work

### Suffixes

Read this sentence.

- Up until this time, he had had a happy life, living **peacefully** with his mother and father in a beautiful house beside the sea.

Note the word **peaceful** is made by adding the ending **-ful** to the word **peace**.

There are many similar words in the English language that use the endings **-ful** or **-less**. These are called **suffixes**.

Example:

- pain + less = **painless**
- forget + ful = **forgetful**
- meaning + less = **meaningless**

1. Read the words below and make new words using **-ful** or **-less**. Some words can use both.

- care + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.
- dread + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.
- hope + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.
- cheer + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.
- harm + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.
- heart + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.
- sleep + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.
- doubt + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_.

The suffix 'ful' means **full of**.

The suffix 'less' means **without**.

2. Write a single word with **-ful** or **-less** to complete each sentence. Use the clues given.

home   care   thank   harm   colour

- a) I am \_\_\_\_\_ to God for having wonderful parents.
- b) \_\_\_\_\_ people are provided with shelters.
- c) Some snakes are \_\_\_\_\_, but others are dangerous.
- d) Holi is a \_\_\_\_\_ festival.
- e) Ram is a \_\_\_\_\_ driver. He hit a tree last week.

 **Listen Live** 

Number the things in the order you hear about them.





## Sound Sense

Notice the spelling of the word **peach** from the story.

Although peach is spelt with an **ea**, it is pronounced as **ee**. It takes the long **e** sound.

Similar words in the English language are **each**, **reach**, **heat**, **beat**, **teach**.

Note that not all **ea** words are pronounced with a long **e** sound.

Many take the **a** sound. Example: **tear**, **wear**, **bear**.

**Fill in the blanks with words that have a long ee sound. Then read the sentences aloud.**

- a) May I have my dinner, \_\_\_\_\_. (p \_ \_ \_ \_)
- b) It is time to \_\_\_\_\_ dinner. (e \_ \_)
- c) Frogs like to \_\_\_\_\_ in the pond. (l \_ \_ \_)
- d) I don't eat \_\_\_\_\_. I am a vegetarian. (m \_ \_ \_)
- e) My mother likes me to keep my bedroom nice and \_\_\_\_\_. (c \_ \_ \_ \_)
- f) I would like to have a cup of \_\_\_\_\_. (t \_ \_)

## Speak Now



**Talk briefly to your class about one of the following.**



How James's life changed after his parents' death

Or

James's aunts and their treatment of him

Or

The ancient peach tree in James's backyard



## Go Grammar

### Pronouns

Read the following sentences from the story and note the words in colour.

- Up until this time, **he** had had a happy life, living peacefully with his mother and father.
- Their names were Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker, and I am sorry to say that **they** were both really horrible people.

The words in colour replace the naming words James, and Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker. That way, their names do not have to be repeated. These words are called **pronouns**.

**Pronouns** are words that are used in place of nouns so that the nouns are not repeated in a sentence.

Now let us look at the pronouns used for different people. Notice how a pronoun changes if it is put after the doing word in a sentence.

a girl or a woman	<b>She</b> is my sister. I <b>like her</b> a lot.
a boy or a man	<b>He</b> is a doctor. You can <b>meet him</b> .
our own self	I am hungry. <b>Give me</b> something to eat.
person or persons we are speaking to	<b>You</b> are late. The teacher wants to <b>meet you</b> .
a group of people	Tim and Ann are singers. <b>They</b> sing very well. People love to <b>hear them</b> sing.
a group which includes us	David and I are friends. <b>We</b> are in the same school. Father <b>drops us</b> there every morning.
an animal or thing	I saw a green frog. <b>It</b> jumped into the pond. A big fish <b>caught it</b> .



1. Underline the **pronouns** in these sentences.

- a) It is my parents' anniversary today. I bought flowers for them.
- b) Max is sitting in the car. He is going to office.
- c) Grandma gave some chocolates to Annie and me. She gave us some wafers too.
- d) My name is Rudy. I am nine years old.
- e) That is Alice's dog. It is very fond of me.
- f) Mini and Soni are going to the park. They are going to play.



2. Choose the correct **pronouns** and fill in the blanks.

- a) We are going to watch a movie and Dia is coming with \_\_\_\_\_. (us/them)
- b) These flowers are for Alice. Please pass them to \_\_\_\_\_. (her/she)
- c) The milk has gone bad. \_\_\_\_\_ is not fit for drinking now. (It/He)
- d) Mary and Jon are in the library. \_\_\_\_\_ are reading storybooks. (We/They)
- e) I don't want to go to the mall alone. Tina, will \_\_\_\_\_ come with me? (you/she)
- f) Dan and I are going to the circus. \_\_\_\_\_ are meeting at 4 o'clock. (Us/We)



## Write It

What do you think will happen as the story unfolds? Write a paragraph based on what you think will happen to James, James's mean aunts, and the peach tree as the story moves forward.