

NOWHERE BOY

– EXTRA

Level 4

This level is suitable for students who have been learning English for at least four years and up to five years. It corresponds with the Common European Framework level B2. Suitable for users of CLUB magazine.

SYNOPSIS

Nowhere Boy tells the story of John Lennon as a teenager in the 1950s, when he lived with his Aunt Mimi and Uncle George in a middle-class Liverpool suburb. At home, John follows his aunt's strict rules, but at school he already shows the creativity and sarcastic humour he was later famous for.

When George dies, John resumes contact with his real mother, Julia. She is everything that Mimi is not – exciting and carefree, but also unpredictable and volatile. When John is suspended from school, Julia is seemingly unconcerned. She encourages his ambitions to start a rock 'n' roll group.

John forms a band, The Quarrymen, which was later to become the Beatles. We see the famous first meeting between John and Paul McCartney, and George Harrison's audition for the band. However, the film's main focus is on John's relationship with Mimi and Julia. Eventually, he demands that Julia explain why she abandoned him when he was little. He learns that his estranged father had kidnapped him with the intention of taking him to live abroad; when Julia and Mimi went to retrieve him, John was given a choice: which parent did he want to be with? John chose his father, and Julia walked away, devastated, leaving Mimi to take John from his father and bring him up as her own child.

Mimi and Julia are reconciled for a brief, happy period. This ends when Julia is killed in a car accident. John uses the money that Julia has left him to pay for a recording session; as he sings, he remembers his mother.

THE BACK STORY

Nowhere Boy (2009) is a British film directed by Sam Taylor-Wood. Before making this film, she was an artist and photographer. The film stars British actor Aaron Johnson as John Lennon, and much of it was filmed on location in Liverpool. It accurately depicts the events of John Lennon's early life: his relationship with his mother and her early death shaped Lennon's life and work. The film is also accurate in the details of John's growing interest in music: he later spoke about the impact of seeing Elvis on screen at the cinema. His initial distrust and growing partnership with Paul McCartney is based on fact, too. The film ends just before The Beatles went to Hamburg, a phase often considered the start of their musical career.

The film was first shown at the end of 2009. It was given a general release in the US in October 2010 – this was timed to coincide with the 70th anniversary of John Lennon's birth.

MEDIA LINKS

DVD: *Nowhere Boy* is available on DVD.

CD: A recording of *Nowhere Boy* is available to accompany the Scholastic Reader.

Internet: The official website of the film, with information about the cast, is at www.nowhereboy.co.uk. You can also find out more about the film and read reviews at the Internet Movie Database www.imdb.com.

Book(s): The huge *Beatles Anthology* tells the story of the Beatles, including their early lives, in their own words.

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOLASTIC READER

Choosing and motivating

Is this the right story for your class? Do the students know and like the music of The Beatles and John Lennon? Motivate them with background information (see The Back Story above) and by reading aloud the first page of the story.

Organising

Plan a class reading schedule. Decide how many pages to set for reading each week. Select exercises from the Self-Study section at the back of the reader and extra activities from this resource sheet to go with each chunk of reading. (All answers on page 6 of this resource sheet.)

Using the CD

Students can listen and follow in their books. They can listen and then read. They can read and then listen. All these activities will improve their reading speeds and skills.

Using the DVD

Select the English language option on the DVD. The film is 93 minutes. You could show it in chunks of, say, 15 minutes in parallel with the class reading schedule. Alternatively, show it when the class have finished the book, as a reward.

Glossary

Go to 'New Words' at the back of the reader. Translate the words with the class or get students to find meanings at home. The Vocabulary Builder on page 4 of this resource sheet practises the new words in a different context.

Casual language

Introduce the informal expressions used in *Nowhere Boy* (see Vocabulary Builder on page 4 of this resource sheet). Put them into context. Ask students to look out for them as they read.

Fact Files

Set these as self-study or use for whole class work. These provide background information about The Beatles, John Lennon's life after the Beatles split up, and the history of the city of Liverpool.

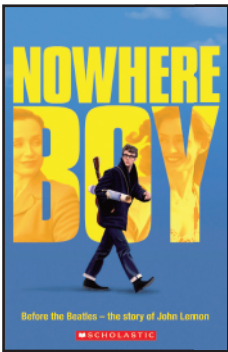
What did they think?

Get everyone to do a written or spoken review of *Nowhere Boy*. Compare opinions. Will they go and see the film? Did you like it? Let us know at readers@link2english.com.

COMPETITIONS AND UPDATES

Check www.scholasticeltreaders.com for competitions and other activities related to the Scholastic Readers.

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES



NOWHERE BOY - EXTRA

ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS IN YOUR NOTEBOOK

Chapters 1-2

1 Who is speaking? Write the names of the characters.

- a) 'Glasses, John!' Aunt Mimi.....
- b) 'You'll be lucky if you get a job in the docks.'
- c) 'Is nowhere full of geniuses, sir?'
- d) 'Your programme's on, and the pub's waiting for me.'
- e) 'I found out where you mum lives.'
- f) 'Do you know what it means, rock 'n' roll?'
- g) 'And they should be in bed.'

2 Answer the questions.

- a) How is John's relationship with George at the start of the book different from his relationship with Mimi?
- b) Why doesn't the head teacher Mr Pobjoy like John?
- c) Describe Mimi's behaviour when she gets back from the hospital. What do you think this shows about her character?
- d) In what ways is Julia different from Mimi?
- e) How does Bobby behave towards John? Is this fair?

3 Julia and Mimi are very different. Do you have brothers or sisters? If yes, in what ways are you similar or different? If no, think about brothers or sisters that you know.

Chapters 3-4

1 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false sentences.

- a) John loves jazz music.
F. John hates jazz; he likes rock 'n' roll.....
- b) John doesn't know who singer Billie Holiday is.
- c) John points a knife at a boy at the bus stop.
- d) Mimi is angry about John's behaviour.
- e) John does not tell Julia that he has been suspended.

- f) John practises hard on the banjo at Julia's house.
- g) John agrees to go home with Mimi.
- h) John goes back to Mimi's house because he hears Julia and her daughter talking.

2 Work with a partner. Imagine that you are characters in the story. Pick one of these moments and have a conversation.

- a) You are John and Julia. John has just played his first song on the banjo.
- b) You are John and Mimi. John has told come home and told Mimi about his plan to start a band.

3 Answer the questions.

- a) Do you think that Julia is a good parent? Why or why not?
- b) In your opinion, what makes a good parent?

4 What do you think happens next? Look at the pictures in Chapters 5-6 and answer the questions.

- a) (page 38) Where are Mimi and John going, do you think?
- b) (page 40) What is John telling his friends at school to do?
- c) (page 42) Where is the band's first concert?
- d) (page 50) How do the band's later concerts look different?

Chapters 5-6

1 Choose the correct answer.

- a) Why do Mimi and John go into town?
 - i) to buy a musical instrument
 - ii) to go to a clothes shop
 - iii) to go to a record shop
- b) Who does John ask to join his band?
 - i) some kids at the music shop
 - ii) a group of teenagers at the fair
 - iii) his friends at school
- c) How does John behave when he first meets Paul?
 - i) He wants to please him.
 - ii) He isn't very friendly.
 - iii) He is happy to meet another fan of rock 'n' roll.
- d) In Paul's opinion, why should bands write their own songs?
 - i) They get the money instead of the record company.
 - ii) It is easier to learn the songs.
 - iii) He thinks that it is more fun.
- e) Why does Mimi sell John's guitar?
 - i) John was suspended from school again.
 - ii) His school report was not good enough.
 - iii) John was stealing from a shop in the city.

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES

2 Answer the questions.

- a) Were you surprised that Mimi bought John a guitar? Why or why not?
- b) What was the band's first song at their first concert? Why was this important, do you think?
- c) John says that Paul is not 'a very rock'n'roll guy'. What does he mean by this? Do you agree with him?
- d) Why does John make a joke on stage and introduce Paul by the wrong name?

3 John and Paul both dream of being rock 'n' roll stars. What is your dream in life?

Chapters 7–8

1 Rewrite the sentences using reported speech.

- a) 'I'm not in the mood for a party,' John told Pete.
John told Pete that he wasn't in the mood ...
for a party:.....
- b) 'Where's Dad?' John asked.
.....
- c) 'We've got a guest!' John shouted.
.....
- d) 'Your mother knew,' Mimi told John.
.....
- e) 'Maybe you and your sister will be friends again,' John said to Mimi.
.....

2 Write a summary in no more than ten sentences of what happened in Blackpool.

1. John's father Alf said that he wanted to take his son to Blackpool.....

3 What do you think? Work with a partner.

- a) Why did Mimi take John to her house and not let Julia see him? Was she right to do this? Why or why not?
- b) After the phone call at the end of Chapter 8, will Mimi and Julia's relationship change, do you think? In what ways?

Chapters 9–Epilogue

1 Number the sentences in the correct order.

- a) John plays his first ever song for Paul.
- b) Bobby gives John an envelope of money.
- c) John runs out of the wake after the funeral.
- d) John comes home from Art College. 1
- e) John tells Mimi that his is going to Germany.
- f) John learns that Julia has died.

- g) John sits in the sunshine with his mother and aunt.
- h) The band make a record in a studio.

2 Answer the questions.

- a) Paul is the one who runs after John at the wake. What does this show about Paul, do you think?
- b) At the end of Chapter 9, it says that 'John's *nowhere boy* years were over. What do you think the words '*nowhere boy* years' means here?
- c) Why do you think that the book includes the note at the bottom of page 77? In your opinion, what does this add?

3 Discuss with a partner.

Does the fact that *Nowhere Boy* is a true story change your opinion of the book? Why or why not? If yes, in what way does it change your opinion?

FINAL TASKS

Writing

Most of *Nowhere Boy* is told from John's point of view. Pick a different character and write diary entries about important moments in the story from their point of view.

Example:

Julia: I can't believe it! There was a knock at the door and John was standing there. MY John!

Paul: The band weren't so good, but there was something special about the singer. He was clearly the leader of the band. After the concert, I took my guitar and went to see them.

Debate

Read the following statement: 'The early life of an artist can help you to understand better his or her work.'

Do you agree with this statement or not? Hold a debate in your classroom about it. Let one or two speakers argue for the statement; then have one or two speakers argue against it. After a general discussion, the class should vote.

Interview roleplay

Student A: Imagine that you are John Lennon. It is the middle of the 1960s and The Beatles are the biggest band in the world.

Student B: You are a journalist for a music magazine. You have got an interview with John Lennon and you want to find out more about his early life in Liverpool.

Roleplay the interview. If possible, you could film it.

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES

VOCABULARY BUILDER

1 There is a mistake in each of these sentences. Correct with words from the 'New Words' at the back of the book.

1. I'm learning to play a new ~~book~~ on the guitar. *chord*
2. Lots of ships come to the city's factory.
3. John was a musical fan like Mozart!
4. I gave him a big pat when we met at the station.
5. You have to wear a T-shirt in the police.
6. The band recorded their last album in a shop.
7. Most guitars have got six buttons.
8. There were sixteen presents on her birthday cake.
9. Your birth letter shows your date and place of birth.
10. The school is going to notice him because he stole something.
11. That band gave a fantastic job that night.
12. You could hear the whisper of the crowd from outside.

2 Write two words from the 'New Words' list under each description.

1. A fun afternoon out near the sea:
 *ride*

2. A dead body when someone has died:

3. Musical instruments:

4. Small movements of the head/shoulders:

3 Match the words with the dictionary definitions.

guardian sigh stage swap

1. (v) to give something that you have to someone for something that he or she has
2. (n) someone who looks after a child in the place of a parent
3. (n) the part of a theatre where performers stand
4. (v, n) to breathe out slowly and loudly, showing sadness or anger

Casual language

- **'Oy, you!'** (p.8). John shouts this to get a boy's attention. It is used in the same way as 'Hey!' but is usually more unfriendly.
- **'Cool it!'** (p.24). The man at the docks says this to John when he is throwing away the records that he stole. It means 'calm down'. This phrase is quite old-fashioned.
- **'hang out with'** (p.25). John asks Marie if she always 'hangs out with' the kids at the bus stop. Here 'hang out with' means 'to spend time with friends'.
- **'Here we go'** (p.58). John says this when Julia begins crying. People often say this (or sometimes 'Here we go again') when something annoying is starting to happen.
- **'Honest.'** (p.58). When Julia tells him that she always wanted him back, John replies, 'I believe you. Honest.' People sometimes say 'Honest' when they want others to think that they are telling the truth. Sometimes people use this word to be sarcastic (saying the opposite of what you mean, for greater effect): in this situation, John is making it clearly that he doesn't believe Julia.

Complete these sentences with the expressions.

1. In the evening I usually my friends from school.
2. 'I'm sorry I'm late. I didn't notice the time.'
 'Oh, I believe you.'
3. 'Don't be so angry! Just !'
4. ' Stop that!'
5. ' He's going to start telling lies again.'

THE BEATLES (pages 78–9)**Research**

Divide the class into small groups. Ask each group to find out more about one member of The Beatles: John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. They could look at the following:

- what instruments he played
- which songs he wrote or sang for the band
- his musical career after The Beatles
- life and work outside of music

Students can use information from the Internet, books and magazines, etc. Ask each group to present to the class what they have found out about each band member. If possible, they could play Beatles music as examples.

Musical presentation

Ask students to discuss what part music plays in their lives. When and where do they usually listen to it?

Ask each student to think of three or four songs that in some way show something about them or their life. Each student should give a presentation to the rest of the class about their choices. They can introduce each song and explain its special meaning for them. They could also play each song (or part of it).

Debate

Ask students if they agree with this sentence or not: 'The music from the 1960s is not important to young people today.' Students could discuss this in a more free way, or they could hold a more structured debate. Have two people speak for and against the sentence. After questions and open discussion, the class can vote on whether or not they agree with the sentence.

LIFE AFTER THE BEATLES (pages 80–1)**Writing**

Ask students if they know one of John Lennon's most famous songs after The Beatles, 'Imagine'. In this song, Lennon asks the listener to imagine a better world. For example, he asks the listener to imagine a world with no war or different countries.

Find a copy of the words of the song online for the students to work with. In groups of two or three, they should write another verse of the song asking the listener to imagine what they think would be a better world. Each group should read out their new verse to the class.

Roleplay

In the late 1970s John and Paul McCartney became friendlier again and Paul visited John in New York. Ask students to roleplay one of these meetings, with one student as Paul and one as John. They could talk about:

- their days in the Beatles
- life and music since the Beatles
- plans for the future

Pairs could film their roleplays or perform them for the rest of the class.

Design

Have students look at the section in Fact File 2 about Strawberry Fields in Central Park, New York, where fans can remember John Lennon's music and his message.

Ask students to think of another famous person who in their opinion should be remembered in this way. How would they do this? Ask them to design a plan for an area in a park to remember this person. They can present their plans to the rest of the class in the way that they think is best.

LIVERPOOL (pages 82–3)**Travel plan**

Ask students to imagine that they are visiting Liverpool for a weekend. Using the information in the Fact File and other information from the Internet or travel books, they should plan their trip. What would they visit in Liverpool? What would they like to do there? Students can present their plans to the rest of the class.

Advert

After they have read Fact File 3, remind students that thousands of tourists visit Liverpool every year. Ask them to pick a city in their country that they think tourists should visit. Have them work in small groups to make an advert for the city, listing everything that people can see and do there. They could make a poster or magazine advert. Or, if possible, they could film an advert for television or the Internet. Each group can show their advert to the class. Afterwards everyone can vote on which is the best advert.

FILM/CD FOLLOW-UP

If you want to show the film in class, watch it yourself first. The language in the film and some scenes may be unsuitable for young viewers. The characters speak with mild Liverpool accents.

What happens next?

Stop the CD or freeze the film just before a dramatic moment, for example the scene after Julia's funeral when John gets angry. Students say what has just happened and discuss what is going to happen.

CD character analysis

Choose a scene from the CD, for example the scene in which Mimi comes to Julia's house and finds John playing music. Allocate a different character to different sections of the class – John, Mimi or Julia. While they listen, students note down what the scene reveals about their character, e.g. Julia is afraid of her older sister but finds the courage to stand up to Mimi because of her love for John, etc.

What are they saying?

When students are familiar with the story, choose a dramatic scene (for example, the scene in which John learns what happened in Blackpool, or his first meeting with Paul). Play the scene without sound. Ask students to suggest what the characters are saying. Then students work in small groups and write the dialogue for the scene and then act it out. Finally the whole class watches the scene with sound. Compare the two dialogues.

Casual Language

Use the CD to focus on items of casual language (see page 4 of this resource). Play the relevant sections several times and use a model for drilling, focusing on intonation.

Deleted Scenes

Play students the deleted scenes on the DVD with director Sam Taylor-Wood's explanation why these scenes were cut. Students can discuss whether they agree that the film is better without these scenes.

Self-Study Activities (pages 84–8)

- 1 a) funeral b) docks c) genius d) harmonica e) hug f) fair
g) nod h) grave i) uniform j) pat k) ride l) sighed
- 2 a) his Aunt Mimi and Uncle George b) Julia c) Paul d) Pete
e) that he is 'going nowhere' f) for day trips or holidays
- 3 a) a harmonica
b) He thinks that John will 'do nothing'; he thinks that he might work at the docks.
c) Mimi goes to the hospital with George.
d) Julia, John's mother
e) It is messy and noisy.
f) to Blackpool
- 4 a) *Possible answer:* Julia gave birth to John but she did not bring him up or care for him.
b) Open answers.
- 5 Open answers.
- 6 a) shrug b) chord c) swap d) string e) suspend f) banjo
- 7 Open answers.
- 8 a) Bobby b) Mr Pobjoy c) Mimi d) John e) Julia
- 9 a) He steals records from the shop.
b) He burns the letter to Mimi.
c) She teaches him how to play the banjo.
d) She comes to Julia's house when she learns that the school has suspended John.
e) He tells Mimi that he is going to start a band.
- 10 Open answers.
- 11 a) the band b) the band c) the crowd
- 12 Open answers.
- 13 The correct order is: d, b, f, c, a, g, h, e.
- 14–17 Open answers.
- 18 a) F. John 'wasn't in the mood to celebrate'.
b) F. Julia is talking to Paul when John arrives.
c) T d) F. She explains that John's father left them.
e) F. Mimi's birthday dinner is a surprise and John arrives late.
f) T g) F. John pulls Julia inside the house.
- 19 a) his sister, Julia
b) He wanted to take him to live in New Zealand.
c) his father
d) outside, by the river
e) to George's grave
f) He tells her that he is moving out of her house.
- 20 Open answers.
- 21 a) studio b) guardian c) certificate
- 22 Open answers.
- 23 a) at art college
b) They become friendlier with each other.
c) It is the first song that John wrote.
d) She is hit by a car and dies.
e) He pays for the band to record a song in a studio.
f) He needs to get a passport to go to Hamburg with the band.
- 24–25 Open answers.

Resource Sheet Activities

Chapters 1–2

- 1 b) Mr Pobjoy c) John d) George e) Stan f) Julia g) Bobby
- 2 *Possible answers:*
a) John is able to relax and have fun with George much more.
b) John does not pay attention in lessons.
c) Mimi does not hug John or cry. This shows that she does not show her feelings much.
d) Unlike Mimi, Julia is lively, fun, and messy.
e) Bobby is polite but not very friendly.
- 3 Open answers.

Chapters 3–4

- 1 b) T c) F. A boy at the bus stop points a knife at John. d) T
e) F. Julia offers to teach John the banjo. John tells Julia that he has been suspended; he does not tell Mimi.
f) T g) F. John refuses to go home with Mimi.
h) F. John goes back to Mimi's house because he hears Julia and Bobby talking.

2–3 Open answers.

- 4 a) They are going to a guitar shop.
b) He is telling them to join his band.
c) at a village fair
d) They are dressed more smartly; they play bigger concerts.

Chapters 5–6

- 1 b) iii c) ii d) i e) ii
- 2 *Possible answers:*
a) Mimi has shown that she is not interested in rock 'n' roll; she prefers classical music.
b) The band played 'Maggie Mae', the song that Julia first played on the banjo for John. It shows how much Julia influenced John's decision to start a band.
c) Paul is friendly and polite.
d) John is starting to worry that he is no longer the leader of the band; Paul is just as talented. John hides his worry with jokes.
- 3 Open answers.

Chapters 7–8

- 1 b) John asked where his dad was.
c) John shouted that they had a guest.
d) Mimi told John that his mother had known.
e) John said to Mimi that maybe she and her sister would be friends again.

2–3 Open answers.

Chapters 9–Epilogue

- 1 The correct order is: d, g, a, f, c, b, h, e.
- 2 *Answer the questions.*
a) Paul is being kind; he understands John's situation because his own mother has died.
b) In these years, John felt uncertain. He didn't know about his own past and he had no real direction for the future (until his dreams of rock 'n' roll).
c) The note reminds readers that the book is based on a true story. The book ends as John and Mimi realise that she has been a true parent to him for years. The note tells us that this understanding between them lasted for the rest of John's life.
- 3 Open answers.

Vocabulary Builder

- 1 2. Lots of ships come to the city's docks.
3. John was a musical genius like Mozart!
4. I gave him a big hug when we met at the station.
5. You have to wear a uniform in the police.
6. The band recorded their last album in a studio.
7. Most guitars have got six strings.
8. There were sixteen candles on her birthday cake.
9. Your birth certificate shows your date and place of birth.
10. The school is going to suspend him because he stole something.
11. That band gave a fantastic performance that night.
12. You could hear the cheer of the crowd from outside.
- 2 1. ride, fair 2. funeral, grave 3. banjo, harmonica 4. nod, shrug
3 1. swap 2. guardian 3. stage 4. sigh

Casual language

1. hang out with 2. Honest 3. cool it! 4. Oy, you 5. Here we go.