

KS2 English Cover Lesson

For the cover teacher

Vocabulary warm-up (10 mins)

The text

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could be lost. Millie had seen her father work the lamp a hundred times. She had never done it herself. She was reluctant at first. The journey up the steps in the storm would be perilous, the wind pulling at the iron rails, the lamp room itself swaying. She contemplated waiting. But she knew, looking at the dimming light, that there was no time. She lit a small storm-lantern. She climbed. At the top, she found the great lens shaking on its turntable. She could feel the lighthouse moving in the gale. Far out at sea, she could see two tiny lights — the lights of a ship. She did not hesitate. She did exactly what her father had taught her in the calm of summer days. She trimmed the wick. She filled the oil reservoir. She turned the great lens. The beam steadied. The light grew strong. The little ship in the dark, two miles out at sea, saw the lighthouse, and turned away from the rocks. It was four o'clock in the morning when Millie heard the thump of boots on the lighthouse door. Her father had walked five miles in the storm to come home. He saw his daughter, twelve years old, asleep at the foot of the stairs, with the lamp above her, still burning steady and strong. He didn't say anything. He just sat down on the step and held her. Eventually, she woke, and looked at him. 'Millie,' he murmured. 'You did it.'



Class discussion (10 mins)

What kind of story is this? Adventure? Coming-of-age? A test? Discuss why all of these fit.	What do we learn about Millie? Encourage textual evidence: 'She knew every step' (long familiarity), 'She did not hesitate' (decisiveness).
Why does the father not say anything at first? Inference question. Pride. Emotion. Relief. Awareness of what she did. Encourage multiple answers.	Why doesn't the writer tell us about the ships' captains? The story stays with Millie. Authors choose viewpoint. The drama is in HER experience.

Comprehension questions — Y3-4 (lower)

#	Question (1 mark each)
1	Where had Millie grown up?
2	How many steps led to the top of the lighthouse?
3	How old was Millie when the storm came?
4	Where had her father gone that morning?
5	What time did he get home?



#	Question (1 mark each)
6	Find a word that means 'not wanting to do something' (paragraph 6).
7	Why was Millie's job lighting the lamp important?
8	What did the ship do when it saw the lighthouse beam?

Comprehension questions — Y4-5 (middle)

#	Question
1	List THREE things Millie knew about the lighthouse from growing up there. (3 marks)
2	Find and copy a phrase that suggests the storm was unusual. (1)
3	Why does the writer say 'she understood: he could not return'? What had Millie realised? (2)
4	Why was the journey up the steps 'perilous'? (2)
5	What does the phrase 'she did not hesitate' tell us about Millie? (1)
6	How do we know the lighthouse helped the ship? Quote from the text. (2)
7	Why does the writer end with the father saying 'You did it'? What is the effect? (2)

Comprehension and inference — Y5-6 (higher)

#	Question
1	How does the writer build suspense in the second half of the story? Find TWO examples and explain. (4 marks)
2	What is the effect of the writer using exact numbers? (e.g., '248 steps', 'two miles out at sea'). (2)



#	Question
3	Find evidence that Millie's father has trained her well, even though she'd never lit the lamp herself. (3)
4	Why might the writer have called the chapter 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Daughter' rather than 'Millie'? (2)
5	Look at the final paragraph. What does the father's silence tell us about his feelings? Explain in your own words. (3)
6	How is Millie at the end of the story different from Millie at the beginning? Use evidence from both sections. (4)
7	What lessons might the writer want readers to take from this story? Justify with reference to the text. (3)

Suggested answers (cover teacher reference)

Y3-4: 1) the lighthouse 2) 248 3) 12 4) the village (for supplies) 5) 4 o'clock in the morning 6) reluctant 7) so that ships did not come to harm on the rocks 8) it turned away from the rocks
 Y4-5: 1) accept any 3 from: every step of the staircase / every sound the wind made / every pattern the lamp cast / location of equipment. 2) 'the worst storm anyone could remember.' 3) That the storm was too dangerous for him to walk home. 4) Wind pulling at the iron rails / lamp room swaying. 5) That she was decisive / brave / didn't waste time. 6) Accept 'the little ship... turned away from the rocks.' 7) Effect: pride, emotion, validation. Father acknowledges what Millie has done. Y5-6: open-ended. Look for textual evidence and considered explanation. MARK GENEROUSLY for cover lessons. The aim is engagement and effort, not standardised assessment.

Plenary (5 mins)

1. SELF-MARK using suggested answers on the board. 2. EXIT QUESTION (whiteboards): 'What ONE word would you use to describe Millie?' Children show their word. Share 4-5 different words. 3. PACK AWAY.

