**Tyler: His Story**

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**Synopsis**

In *Tyler: His Story*, the children are beginning to feel cooped up and bored in the Time Vault. They start to squabble and complain about each other. Tyler shows them they have nothing to complain about by telling them his story: how he became an orphan at the beginning of the nineteenth century; how he survived becoming homeless and thwarted a plot by French spies (or possibly Virans) to blow up the Royal Foundation. Tyler’s brave behaviour on this occasion resulted in his disability.

**Mortlock’s historical notes**

At the time when Tyler lived in London, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, King George the Third was on the throne and Britain was in the midst of a long series of wars with France. Tyler’s father was an officer in Nelson’s Navy during the French Revolutionary wars and was killed in 1801 (at the battle of Copenhagen). His mother died soon after. Tyler describes how hard life was for a homeless orphan and how he found warmth and educated himself by attending free lectures at the Royal Foundation (based on the Royal Institution in Albemarle Street, London). This was a time of enormous excitement about science, and there was a fashion for scientific lectures and demonstrations that drew in people of all ages and social classes. For more information on nineteenth century science and life in Georgian London, see the *Time Chronicles* website: [www.oxfordprimary.com/timechronicles](http://www.oxfordprimary.com/timechronicles).

**Group or guided reading**

**Introducing the book**

- **(Clarifying, Predicting)** Read page 3, and talk about what has happened so far in the series.  
  Ask: *What do we already know about Tyler? What do you think we might find out in this book?*  
  Remind the children about the story where Tyler is introduced (*The Power of the Cell*).

- **(Deducing, Clarifying)** Flip through the book looking at the pictures. What evidence can the children find about the historical period? Introduce the Georgian era and Napoleonic war, using Mortlock’s historical notes if you wish.

**During reading**

- **(Questioning, Clarifying)** Focus on the first two pages of the story (pages 5 and 6). Ask: *Why do you think Tyler is dreaming about a bomb? Could it be something to do with how he injured his leg?*  
  Read to the end of Chapter 1 with the children. Ask them to look out for words and phrases that tell us what the characters are doing and how they are feeling (e.g. ‘shouted’, ‘complained’). Ask: *What sort of mood are the children in and why?*

- **(Predicting)** Pause at the end of Chapter 1. Ask: *What sort of trouble is Wilma referring to? What might happen next?*

- **(Imagining)** Pause at the end of Chapter 2. Why do the children think Wilma called a meeting?
Assessment:

- Can the children pick out verbs that give them clues to the characters’ mood?

Independent reading

- Ask the children to read from Chapter 3 to the end of Chapter 5 (pages 12 to 26).
- (Deducing) As they are reading, ask them to think about why Tyler tried to keep clean and tidy. Why didn’t he want to look like a street urchin?
- (Deducing, Predicting) Ask: How do you think Tyler will manage to go from being homeless to having a home and job? (Remind the children that in The Power of the Cell, Tyler had a home and a job.) What do the children think will happen next in the story?

Objective: Identify features that writers use to provoke readers’ reactions.

- (Clarifying, Questioning) Focus on the last page of Chapter 5 (page 26). Ask the children to find all the questions on the page. Ask: Why do you think the author ends the chapter in this way? (E.g. to help the reader feel involved in the story and make them wonder what will happen next.) Invite the children to suggest answers for Tyler’s questions.
- Ask the children to finish reading to the end of the story independently.

Assessment: Check that children:

- can empathise with Tyler’s feelings and understand what he is thinking at the end of Chapter 5
- can find evidence in the text to support their views.

Returning and responding to the text

- (Summarising) When the children have finished the story, ask them to re-tell it to each other in pairs. If necessary, model how to re-tell the story concisely.
- (Imagining) In their pairs, ask them to compare Tyler’s life in the nineteenth century with his life in the Time Vault.

Speaking, listening and drama activities

Objective: Use some drama strategies to explore stories or issues.

- Ask the children to read page 13 again, and work in small groups, imagining they are in the situation that Tyler describes. Ask them to work out a short role-play.
- Invite some of the children to sit in the hot-seat in the role of Tyler. Ask ‘Tyler’ to describe how his life has changed.

Writing activities

Objective: Write non-narrative texts using structures of different text types. Signal sequence, place and time to give coherence.

- Together, make notes of the key events and key people involved in the attempt to blow up the Royal Foundation. Read the second paragraph on page 34. Ask the children to write a report for a newspaper about the events, focusing on Tyler’s role.
- Ask the children to imagine that Tyler could write a letter and send it back into the past. Ask them to write a letter from Tyler to Michael Faraday describing what he is doing and what it is like in the Time Vault.
Encourage the children to draw up a list of rules for recreational activities to make sure everyone gets along well in the Time Vault.

**Assessment:**
- Can the children use appropriate vocabulary for their newspaper accounts?
- Can the children sequence their writing to make it easy for readers to follow?
- Can the children structure their letter using the appropriate layout and style?

**Cross-curricular ideas: Mortlock’s Discussion Doorways**

**History**
- Tyler was forced to fend for himself at a very young age. Encourage the children to find out about how orphans or homeless children were cared for at different periods of history, for example, in Victorian times or during World War 2.
- Encourage the children to use the internet and reference books to research the lives of people in Georgian Britain.
- Tyler’s father was in the Navy. Encourage the children to use the internet and reference books to research the Navy at the time of King George the Third. *Who was admiral, and what wars and famous battles were fought?*

**Geography**
- Look at a map of London together. Can the children find some of the places Tyler mentions, such as Covent Garden?

**Science**
- Provide the children with magnets and iron filings and encourage them to discover a magnet’s force field for themselves.
- Light a candle and cover it with a glass jar, to demonstrate how a flame goes out when there is no oxygen.