

## Before-reading questions

- 1 *Reader's own answer.*
- 2 *Reader's own answer.*
- 3 *Reader's own answer.*
- 4 *Reader's own answer.*
- 5 *Reader's own answer.*

## During-reading questions

### CHAPTER ONE

- 1 Ishmael is not his real name. He uses the name of a man who survived a terrible event. He is an experienced sailor who normally sails on merchant ships, but he now wants to sail on a whaling ship, because he is interested in whales and the seas where they live. He usually goes to sea when he is feeling worried about life. We know that he does not have much money because he has to stay at a cheap inn.
- 2 Ishmael asks Peter Coffin, the landlord, for a room. The landlord offers him a share of a harpooner's room because the inn is full. Ishmael waits for the harpooner and sees the crew of a ship which has just returned from a four-year voyage. The harpooner does not return before Ishmael is taken to his bedroom by the landlord.

### CHAPTER TWO

- 1 Queequeg comes from the South Sea islands. His skin is yellow and dark purple. The dark parts are tattoos. He has no hair except for a small piece above his forehead. He owns a new, tall, black hat, a hammock, a seaman's bag and a tall harpoon. He prays to a small statue and he smokes a tomahawk pipe. We know that his English is not very good because Ishmael tells us and when he speaks it is not very grammatical. For example, "Tell me who you be". He is a handsome man who is friendly and polite.

- 2 Ishmael is worried and uncomfortable at the beginning of the chapter because he thinks that Queequeg must be a cannibal, and he must be dangerous. At the end of the chapter, the two men peacefully smoke together and Ishmael decides that Queequeg is just a human being like himself, and a friend.

### CHAPTER THREE

- 1 Because they cannot believe that a white man and a black man can be friends.
- 2 Queequeg stops a loose wooden boom from causing damage on the ship, and then he saves the life of one of the passengers.

### CHAPTER FOUR

- 1 The *Pequod* is a small, old whaling ship. She has three masts and all the wood is dark brown as if she has been in lots of bad weather. Many parts of the ship are made of whalebone. Captain Peleg is a big, old man with brown, wrinkled skin. Captain Bildad is a thin, serious-looking old man who sits with a straight back. The two owners argue with each other.
- 2 He feels that there is a mystery about Captain Ahab that makes him fear the captain, but also makes him want to know more about him.

### CHAPTER FIVE

- 1 Because they think that Queequeg is a cannibal from the south seas and therefore he might not be a Christian. Ishmael lies, saying that Queequeg is a member of the First Church. When this does not work, he changes the meaning of First Church to "the great church whose members are all the religious people in the whole world". Then Queequeg shows his skill with the harpoon by throwing it at, and hitting, a small piece of wood floating in the water.
- 2 He sees some grey shapes in front of him. He thinks they might be four or five sailors.

## CHAPTER SIX

- 1 The mates are Starbuck, Stubb and Flask. They make sure that the crew follow the captain's orders. Each of them is responsible for one of the whaleboats. The harpooners are Queequeg, Tashtego and Daggoo. Each of the mates has a harpoon in his whaleboat: Queequeg in Starbuck's boat, Tashtego in Stubb's boat, and Daggoo in Flask's boat.
- 2 He is a tall, strong, elderly man with brown skin. He has a short beard and a long, thin white mark down the side of his face and neck. His face looks grim. He has a whalebone leg. He can become violently angry.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

- 1 To find and kill Moby Dick, the white whale that injured him during a previous voyage. Moby Dick is the whale that tore off Ahab's leg.
- 2 Starbuck, because he came to hunt whales for their oil. He does not think it is right to want revenge on an animal which was only behaving in a normal way. The rest of the crew are excited and support the captain's plan.

## CHAPTERS EIGHT AND NINE

- 1 A group of five unknown men appear and become the crew of the fourth whaleboat.
- 2 The boat gets thrown about by huge waves. It rushes into a wall of fog, so its crew cannot see the other boats. A storm arrives at the same time as a whale swims up from below and pushes the boat upwards, so that the crew fall into the sea and lose their oars. The crew, who start shaking with cold, spend the night in the boat, which is full of water, in the fog, while the storm grows stronger. In the morning the *Pequod*

smashes into the whaleboat and wrecks it, and the crew have to be rescued from the sea.

- 3 Ships that have been hunting for whales for several years look very old and can be covered with frost. The sailors on the *Albatross* look sad and tired and have long, rough beards because they work all the time. The author tells us that this is because whaling ships never stop in harbors to get food and water during their voyages, because they keep everything they need in the hold.

## CHAPTERS TEN AND ELEVEN

- 1 Few whalers have ever seen it and returned home to speak of it. According to Queequeg, if you see the great white squid, you will see a sperm whale very soon afterwards.
- 2 They tie the whale to the side of the ship and the mates cut a hole in the body and attach a hook to the blubber. As they cut large pieces of the blubber from the body, the hook is raised up the mast. Then the pieces of blubber are coiled into the hold. Men work in pairs to cut the blubber into smaller pieces which are put into try-pots, in the try-works, and heated with fire so that the blubber becomes liquid oil. Some of the blubber is squeezed by the men to make it into liquid.
- 3 Fedallah has told Ahab about a superstition. He says that a ship cannot sink if it has a sperm whale's head hanging on one side of her bow, and a right whale's head on the other. Ahab believes him and does this on the *Pequod*.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

- 1 Because he has become mad. This has happened after he jumped out of a whaleboat and became terrified by being left behind in the sea for a long time.
- 2 The captain on the *Samuel Enderby* asks this, because when the doctor tried to joke with

Ahab about his excitement when he heard Captain Boomer talk about Moby Dick, Ahab became very angry.

#### CHAPTERS THIRTEEN AND FOURTEEN

- 1 Because Queequeg thinks that he is dying and he does not want his body to be thrown in the sea wrapped in his hammock. He wants a boat-shaped coffin, like the boats which are used by his people. When he recovers, he uses it as a sea-chest.
- 2 Fedallah says that he will die before Ahab, but Ahab will see Fedallah again before he himself dies. And only rope can kill Ahab. Ahab does not understand the first prophecy, but he believes that it means that he will kill Moby Dick before he dies. He thinks that the second prophecy is about death by hanging. This is because people are hanged with a rope round their necks. Ahab does not believe this can happen to him.
- 3 *Reader's own answer. Model answer:* Ahab believes that he must hunt and kill Moby Dick and that it has not been his choice to do this. Perhaps he believes that God is making him do this.

#### CHAPTER FIFTEEN

- 1 Because one of the sailors falls from a masthead into the sea. The crew tries to rescue him, but when they throw the ship's lifebuoy into the sea, it sinks and the sailor drowns. Queequeg suggests using his coffin as a new lifebuoy.
- 2 Because his twelve-year-old son was on a whaleboat which disappeared and he needs help to search for him. Ahab refuses to help, because the captain has seen Moby Dick nearby the day before, and Ahab wants to go after the whale immediately. He does not want to waste time.

#### CHAPTERS SIXTEEN AND SEVENTEEN

- 1 Ahab falls into the sea after Moby Dick has broken his whaleboat into two pieces. He cannot swim because of his bone leg. He has to be dragged into Stubb's boat and is extremely tired.
- 2 He causes Stubb's and Flask's boats to crash together when he pulls the lines which are stuck in his body tight. Both crews fall into the sea. He pushes Ahab's boat up into the air, using his forehead.

#### CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

- 1 Ahab sees Fedallah again when Fedallah's body appears tied to Moby Dick's side by his own harpoon lines. Ahab is killed because he is pulled out of his boat by a rope (the harpoon line) which becomes wrapped round his neck.
- 2 Ishmael is "the helpless man" who is thrown into the sea when Moby Dick hits his whaleboat. He cannot get back to the boat. The whirlpool which takes both the whaleboat and the *Pequod* down into the sea becomes slower and does not drown him. He survives because he climbs onto the lifebuoy made from Queequeg's coffin and is rescued, after a day and a night, by the *Rachel*.

#### After-reading questions

- 1 *Reader's own answer.*
- 2 *Reader's own answer. Model answers:*
  - a Ishmael is not doing his job because he is following his own thoughts instead.
  - b the *Pequod* is sailing behind the small whaleboats, as if she is looking after them
  - c his death
  - d very, very sad
  - e they were waiting nervously/excitedly for something to happen

**3** *Reader's own answers. Model answers:*

**a** The *Moss* is the ship that takes Ishmael and Queequeg from New Bedford to Nantucket. On this ship, Queequeg shows his strength and skill.

**b** When the *Pequod* meets the *Albatross*, another whaling ship, we learn something about Ahab's obsession. He will not stop his ship to talk to any other captain who has *not* recently seen the white whale. For the first time we hear the question he goes on to ask every ship's captain. The *Albatross* has already been at sea for four years and the ship and crew look tired and unhappy.

**c** The *Bachelor* has finished its whale hunting and is going home. We see the contrast between the excitement and happiness of the *Bachelor's* crew and the silent thoughtfulness of the *Pequod's* crew.

**d** The *Samuel Enderby* met with Moby Dick during the previous year, and while attacking him the captain was badly injured. Its captain has seen Moby Dick more recently, but has avoided him. The story makes Ahab sure that he is getting close to his prey.

**4** *Reader's own answers. Model answers:*

**a** Yojo is Queequeg's little wooden god. Yojo tells Queequeg that Ishmael must go on his own to choose their whaling ship and so is the cause of Ishmael choosing the *Pequod* for them to sail on.

**b** It is from the mastheads that whales are first seen. During the typhoon, lightning starts fires on the mastheads and we can see Ahab's madness when he describes the masthead fires as candles showing him the way to the white whale. And the mastheads, with Queequeg, Tashtego and Daggoo standing on them, are the last parts of the *Pequod* that Ishmael sees before they disappear into the sea.

**c** Pip's madness is shown when he repeats verbs from a grammar book.

**d** The crew of the *Pequod* hear a sound of wild and terrible crying. Some of them think the sounds are the voices of sailors who have drowned. Flask thinks this is an ominous sign. But Ahab says that the sounds are the cries of baby seals who have lost their mothers. Later, one of the old seamen says that what they heard were the cries of the drowned son of the captain of the *Rachel*.

- 5** *Reader's own answer. Model answer:* Because Ishmael is the name of a man in the Bible who survived a terrible event, and the narrator survives a terrible event, too. It's a good choice because he explains this at the beginning of the story and so, as readers, we know that something terrible is going to happen, but we do not know what. It makes us want to read the story to find out what happens to him.

## Exercises

### CHAPTERS ONE AND TWO

- 1** A **harpoon** is an important whaling tool.
- 2** The *Grampus* was a **whaling ship** which had just come back from a long **voyage**.
- 3** Ishmael thought that the last name 'Coffin' was **ominous** because you are put in a coffin when you die.
- 4** The **crew** of the *Grampus* had ice in their beards.
- 5** Each sailor needs a **hammock** to sleep in on a ship.
- 6** A sailor often keeps his possessions in a **sea-chest**.
- 7** There was an **arch** made of whalebone in the Spouter Inn.

## CHAPTERS THREE AND FOUR

- 2 1 Queequeg **could have killed** the rude man on the *Moss*, but he did not want to do that.
- 2 The passengers on the *Moss* thought that Ishmael **should not have been** friends with Queequeg.
- 3 The captain of the *Moss* **must have felt / been** very frightened when the sail tore away from the boom.
- 4 The man who was knocked into the sea by the boom **could have drowned / been drowned**.
- 5 Ishmael **must have felt / been** worried about making the choice of whaling ship on his own.
- 6 Ishmael thought that he **should have had** a two hundred and seventy-fifth lay.

## CHAPTERS FIVE AND SIX

- 3 1 If Ishmael **had not lied**, Peleg and Bildad might not have allowed Queequeg on board the *Pequod*.
- 2 If Queequeg had not shown his skill with the harpoon, he **would not have been given** the ninetieth lay.
- 3 If **I had been** honest with myself, I would have said that I was very worried about the voyage with Captain Ahab.
- 4 If I hadn't heard the strange words of Elijah, I **would have thought** that I hadn't seen anything strange.
- 5 Stubb **would not have tried** to joke with Ahab if he had known how angry he would get.
- 6 I would have been a better lookout if I **had not got lost** in my thoughts so often.

## CHAPTERS SEVEN AND EIGHT

- 4 1 *Reader's own answer.*
- 2 *Reader's own answer.*
- 3 *Reader's own answer.*
- 4 *Reader's own answer.*

- 5 *Reader's own answer.*
- 6 *Reader's own answer.*
- 7 *Reader's own answer.*
- 8 *Reader's own answer.*
- 9 *Reader's own answer.*
- 10 *Reader's own answer.*

## CHAPTERS NINE AND TEN

- 1 Fedallah sees the silver-colored spout of a sperm whale night after night. Captains will not usually hunt whales during the night, but we get more of an understanding of Ahab's obsession with Moby Dick when he orders the crew to sail the *Pequod* after it. Also, we see the superstitious seamen who think it might be Moby Dick himself.
- 2 The captain of the *Albatross* drops a speaking trumpet into the water as he tries to speak to Ahab. Ishmael thinks that this is an ominous sign.
- 3 The spout of blood comes from the first whale they catch as it dies. Ishmael is describing how violent and horrible whale-hunting is and showing sympathy for the whale, too.
- 4 The blubber room is part of the hold where men, using sharp tools, do the dangerous job of cutting the valuable blubber from sperm whales into pieces. This shows us the dangerous and skilful job that the whalers do in order to earn their lay.
- 5 Ishmael describes the smoke, the black night and the fire from the try-works while they sail away from the body of the whale as giving him a picture of the madness of Captain Ahab.

## CHAPTERS ELEVEN AND TWELVE

- 6 1 sink *Reader's own answer.*
- 2 straits *Reader's own answer.*
- 3 pirate *Reader's own answer.*
- 4 prophecy *Reader's own answer.*
- 5 equator *Reader's own answer.*
- 6 point *Reader's own answer.*

## CHAPTERS THIRTEEN AND FOURTEEN

- 7 1 Starbuck **could** have stopped the ship to find the leaking barrels, but Ahab told him not to.
- 2 At first, Ahab **would not** stop the ship.
- 3 Queequeg was **such** a strong man that he did not die from his illness.
- 4 Ahab did not want to go on board the *Bachelor*, saying that the crew were **too** happy for him.
- 5 Ahab was **so** angry that he was not afraid of the burning harpoon.
- 6 Starbuck **had been** thinking of killing Ahab, but he did not do it.

- 5 “And does he have a lot of harpoons in his body?”
- 6 “(My superstition is that) if you see the great white squid, it means that you will soon see a sperm whale.”

## Project work

*Reader's own answers.*

## Essay questions

*Reader's own answers.*

## CHAPTERS FIFTEEN AND SIXTEEN

- 8 1 intelligence
- 2 terror
- 3 board
- 4 crash
- 5 firmly
- 6 part
- 7 roll
- 8 direction

## CHAPTERS SEVENTEEN AND EIGHTEEN

- 9 1 a    2 g    3 j    4 b    5 e
- 6 d    7 c    8 i    9 h    10 f

## ALL CHAPTERS

- 10 *Reader's own answers. Model answers:*
- 1 “Who are you? If you speak to me again, I will kill you.”
- 2 “I would not kill this man because he is so small. I am a harpooneer who kills big whales, and he is like a small fish.”
- 3 “Captain, look at that small piece of wood floating in the sea. Imagine that it is the eye of a whale and watch me throw the harpoon at it.”
- 4 “If it had been the eye of a whale, the whale would have been dead now.”