

Creative writing task:

Sell the book! Write a blurb that will persuade other students to read it.

Blurb

by Clemens Hofstädter

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Christopher is 15 years old. He knows every prime number up to 27,059 and he detests the colours brown and yellow. He lives in Swindon together with his rat Toby and his father. He has never gone further than the end of his road, but he thinks he would make a good astronaut. He can't tell jokes because he doesn't understand them and he always tells the truth.

Christopher is a bit strange. But he loves the neighbour's dog, Wellington. Thus, it's no wonder that he of all people finds the poodle murdered by a garden fork one night. The police don't take this horrible murder seriously, so Christopher turns his whole world upside down to find the murderer.

This is not a simple book about a boy with Asperger syndrome, but it is a perfect account of what it means to live with this developmental disorder. Through the eyes of Christopher, Mark Haddon narrates a curious and funny adventure. Christopher uses rather simple vocabulary, which makes it easy to follow the plot. With *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Mark Haddon succeeded in creating a real masterpiece which is worth reading, no matter whether you are 11 or 99 years old.

Creative writing task:

As a TV or radio reporter give a live report from one of the scenes/events in the book.

Live Report

by David Just

Reporter: Good morning, my name is Katie Couric and you are watching BBC News. This morning, something terrible happened. As you can see behind me, there is still blood on the grass and the police are still investigating the crime scene because someone killed a dog in the most horrible way possible! A poodle named Wellington was killed with a garden fork which is going all the way through his body and into the ground. The first person to arrive at the scene and witness this incident was Christopher Boone, a 15-year-old boy who lives in the neighbourhood and is here with me now.

Christopher, you are a big dog lover, right? What was going through your head when you saw the dead dog?

Christopher does not respond.

Reporter: Christopher?

Christopher's dad: It's okay, Christopher.

Christopher: I wanted to hug the dog. That's why I went up to Wellington and hugged him.

Reporter: Well, that's a rather unusual thing to do, but as you can see, dear viewers, Christopher is a real dog lover. Christopher, can you tell me one more thing? Weren't you disgusted by the fact that you'd covered yourself in blood when picking up the dog and hugging him?

Christopher: No.

Reporter: Okay. Christopher, thank you very much for the interview!
I'm Katie Couric for BBC News. Back to you, Pat.

Live Report

by Anna-Marie Christely

“Good evening, ladies and gentleman, I am here at Reading Station where the dramatic search for little Christopher Boone continues. Christopher is fifteen years old, but has Asperger syndrome, a kind of autism. He is mentally confused and definitely not able to travel on his own. The gentleman in the back is Christopher's father, who reported him missing this morning. He refused any interviews so far, but we will try to ask him a few questions. Mr Boone, how worried are you about your son?”

“A fucking lot, you bet.”

“As you can see, dear viewers, Mr Boone is under a lot of pressure. The most dramatic turn in this case: Christopher had already been found by the police, but escaped. He was last seen on the train originally heading to London, but must have left it there. Officer Green, how could this happen?”

“I don’t know. This crazy lad just wanted to use the toilet, didn’t even know there was one. And then he was gone. Just disappeared.”

“How tragic. How would you describe Christopher’s mental state?”

“Absolutely crazy, let me tell you. Immediately caught my eye at the train station, didn’t know a thing about travelling. And didn’t listen to a word I said, didn’t even hear me, I suppose.”

“Thank you for your expert advice. There we have it: Poor Christopher is still running around without really knowing what he does. I think I don’t have to explain all the dangers he has to meet at a train station, with fast engines all around. Our hearts are with Christopher’s family, who continue the desperate search for their beloved child. Of course, we will inform you of any further turns in this tragic incident. This was Kevin Moore, live from the place of action. And now back to Susanna in the studio.”

Creative writing task:

Felt like something was missing in the book? Write an additional scene.

Additional Scene

by Paulo Schalkhammer

People usually see me as shy, but that's not really true – it's more like I am not trusting them. It's the same problem I have with strangers.

When I was about six years old, my teacher suggested that I should see a psychologist because I refused to eat. What she didn't know was that it was because of the yellow colour of the rice.

When Mother, or "Mummy" as I called her back then, noticed similar behaviours she did just that. I remember that it was a bad day because I saw five yellow cars in a row, knowing that I wouldn't speak to anybody. The only problem was that Mother told me to be nice to the doctor and to answer all his questions. I tried that by writing my answers on a sheet of paper since she didn't say that I had to respond verbally. When the doctor asked me why I wasn't speaking, Mother tried to explain it to him as best as she could because I had to explain the same thing to her after I hadn't eaten for two days.

What I really liked was the doctor's clock. It had red hands. I remember that when we had finished, the doctor, or as Mother later explained to me the psychologist, wanted to give me a lollipop. Although it was blue and I quite like blue I couldn't take it and hit him because Father told me to never take things from strangers and even if they were trying to give me sweets I should run away or kick them in their fucking balls as he used to say. Instantaneously Mother grabbed my arm and pulled me out of the building. I didn't understand it back then, but as Siobhan explained to me one day it was because Mother seemed to be ashamed of me.

One week later we got a letter stating that I had autism.

Additional Scene

by Anna-Marie Christely

Today was a special day. Not only because I saw five red cars in a row, which makes it a Super Good day, but also because today I am leaving for college. This makes it so special that I wrote it down although Siobhan says that you don't write down things that happen a long time after the thing you are actually writing about. But in this case she said it is OK because it's about me and the book is too. So I'm writing it down.

It was 6:32 a.m. when dad said we had to go. I normally don't like this because I usually wake up at 7:20 a.m. but today it was OK because dad told me exactly what we would do and I wrote a timetable. I also wrote a new timetable for college because at college everything is different. But that's OK too because I can bring my TV and my videos and my dog. Mum and dad talked to the dean of the college about my dog because usually dogs are not allowed at college. The dean was very nice and said that she could make an exception for me. Mum was happy but dad got a little loud because he often gets loud about things that are about me and that means that he loves me and is happy for me too. But the dean was still very nice, so I packed my dog's things too, whose name is Sandy. He needs his dog bed and his dog food and his leash and his collar, but he is always wearing it so I don't have to pack it. And mum reminded me to take him for a walk three times a day and I wrote it in my timetable.

Then we all drove to college, which is me, mum, dad and Sandy. And that was when I saw all the red cars. I read a maths book on the car ride and then I slept. And then I read Siobhan's letter again. She gave it to me and said it was in case I forget her, which is stupid because I never forget anything, but I like the letter. My college is called St Benet's Hall and it is a part of Oxford University. It is a very small college, which is good because this also means that there are not many people there. But I am OK with some people around. Mum once put a list on the fridge about how many people are allowed to be around me without me getting uncomfortable. And she made a small cross for every person and there are exactly 43 crosses now.

Dad stopped the car because we had already arrived at the parking lot of my college. Mum asked if I wanted them to come in with me but I said that they didn't need to because I was in college now and you have to do things on your own in college. And then mum cried a little but dad said that this wasn't because she was sad but because she was very happy for me. And mum said that I have to remember to take Sandy for walks, which is a little stupid because I never forget anything, especially when it's on the timetable. And then dad asked me if it was OK if he hugged me and it was OK because we have been practising a lot the past few weeks and now it's OK if mum or dad hug me, but only if they ask me before. And mum hugged me too. She cried a little more and then they got into the car, but they waited to watch me go in. So I went in and it was big and new, but I suppose that's OK because I can do anything and I also looked up maps of the building on the internet. I sent Siobhan the last chapter by email and she said that she liked it and that it was a good ending. And I like it too.

Additional Scene

by Moritz Schaller

Christopher got into Mrs Shears' garden and saw her poodle lying dead on the lawn. After staring at the dog sadly, he moved closer to Wellington. Christopher slowly removed the garden fork with which the dog had been stabbed to death. He put his hands over the poodle and then he closed his eyes. Christopher collected all of his powers. After he did that his hands started to shake. Suddenly, the impossible happened. The holes which were created by the fork disappeared. Wellington started to jerk. Christopher's veins showed up under the skin of his hands. The poodle's ears started to move. A creaky sound appeared. The dog's entire body got stiff. Suddenly, the dog stood up. Christopher put down his hands. Wellington immediately started to bark at Christopher. The kid stroked the undead dog. Mrs Shears' door opened. Because Mrs Shears heard her dog barking, she screamed, "It is midnight already, come in!" Wellington ran away from Christopher and into Mrs Shears' house. Mrs Shears had no clue that her dog had been dead for a moment. And who knows, her dog might not be the same anymore...

Creative writing task:

Two of the characters meet some years after the book's ending. What do they talk about? How do they look back at what happened? Write their conversation in a dialogue.

Dialogue - Mrs Shears and Mr Boone

by Filippo Guggi

Knock, knock.

Mr Boone: Hello.

Mrs Shears: What do you want?

Mr Boone: We need to talk about this whole dog tragedy.

Mrs Shears tries to shut the door, but Mr Boone puts his foot in the door.

Mr Boone: I'm trying to clear things up, okay? Can I come in where we can talk in privacy?

No answer.

Mr Boone: Please.

Mrs Shears: You had your fucking change two years ago. LEAVE ME ALONE!

Finally shuts the door again.

Mr Boone: Come on, it's important for our relationship as neighbours.

Mrs Shears: NO, just leave!

Mr Boone: Fine, I will leave, and I won't bother you again.

Mrs Shears slowly opens the door, nearly crying.

Mrs Shears: You have five minutes.

Mr Boone: I'm really sorry for this thing that happened that night.

Mrs Shears: Say what happened that night.

Mr Boone: Why?

Mrs Shears: Just do it.

Mr Boone: Okay, calm down.

Mrs Shears: No, I won't calm down, you damn bastard killed my fucking dog!

Mr Boone: Okay, after our argument in the garden your dog Wellington attacked me. I was angry and I saw this fork. Uhh, I don't know how we could end up like this.

Silence.

Mrs Shears: Please leave.

He walks away.

Creative writing task:

Not happy with the ending? Write a different ending to the story.

Different Ending

by Rhoda Kapl

And I called the dog Sandy. And father bought him a collar. And father took me to a psychiatrist to talk about all the stuff that had happened. But I didn't like him because he wore a brown suit with a yellow tie, so father took me to another one. He told me I should leave mother and stay with father because she would leave me again. This time I thought he was joking but he was serious. First, I didn't believe him, but two weeks later mother told me we were going to move to London again. I started to cry and I didn't stop for four hours until father grabbed me and took me to his house. A month later mother said goodbye and moved to London with her new boyfriend. So I had to live with father again and they agreed that I would meet mother twice a month, every first and third Saturday of the month. But I haven't seen her in two months and she isn't responding to my letters, not even my calls. I thought about calling the police but when I told father about it he laughed and said she might be dead and they wouldn't find her anyway. I was shocked but then he told me that he was just joking and he didn't know what was going on, and I believed him. And now I'm living my life just like I did after mother had left us for the first time when she went away with Mr Shears. But it's not exactly the same because now I have Sandy. And one day when I have written a bestselling book and have travelled to space, I will be rich and will pay a private detective to find mother.

Different Ending

by Clemens Hofstädter

Father said, "Christopher, can I have a talk with you?"

And I said, "No."

And I turned around to follow Mother to the car, but Father started groaning like I used to do sometimes and he ran into the kitchen and came back with a big knife. And Mother started screaming and tried to run away, but Father barred her way. His face turned red, and I liked this sight because red is my favourite colour and I didn't realise what was going on.

Father shouted, "I've done everything for you since your mother left us to live with that bloody bastard, and what do I get in return? I've cooked your meals. I've looked after you. I love you, Christopher!"

And he tried to grab me, so I hit him very hard and he dropped the knife to the floor. Then his face turned even more red, almost purple, and he breathed stertorously and gasped for air. Mother called the ambulance, but Father's breathing had stopped. I wanted to write down the whole story, but Shioban said it wasn't very interesting, so I cut it.

Father had to stay in the hospital for a long time, and the doctor said that he had had a heart attack. Mother mumbled, "Serves him right", but she didn't mean it. Mother and I moved into Father's house and she cosseted him and we visited him every day. I didn't understand why they had made up again, but I felt very happy about it. And Mrs Shears got a new dog, a dachshund like Mrs Alexander's dog, and the two of them had sex and Mrs Alexander's dog had five little puppies, and Mrs Alexander gave me one of them as a present. I called it Sandy because of its sandy-coloured skin.

And next year I am going to take A-Level Further Maths and maybe I will write another book.

Creative writing task:

Choose one of the characters. Which song or poem would you associate with him/her?

Write down the song/poem and explain why you associate it with that character.

OR: Write your own song/poem for that character.

Poem

by Rotag Elseidy

I am Christopher Boone
An animal lover, determined detective
Who loves Toby and Siobhan
Who hates Mr Shears and Wellington's murderer
Who feels sad about Mother's death
Who fears strangers
Who would like to see Mother
Who dreams of A-Levels in maths
Who ends up in a little room with Mother
I am Christopher Boone

Never give up - Sia

by Niklas Grüner

I chose this song for Christopher for the scene when he is on his way to his mother's home in London. The reason I think this song fits his journey is that he often thinks about quitting looking for his mother and going back to his father's home in Swindon, but he never gives up. The song is about someone trying to find their "home" and to always keep getting up when you are down. Christopher never loses hope and sight of his goal, which is also described in the song multiple times. Even if it doesn't seem so in the book, but for a boy who has Asperger's and has never really seen the big world outside of his little home town, this is more than challenging to manage.

Lyrics

I've battled demons that won't let me sleep
Called to the sea but she abandoned me

But I won't never give up, no, never give up, no, no
No, I won't never give up, no, never give up, no, no

And I won't let you get me down
I'll keep gettin' up when I hit the ground
Oh, never give up, no, never give up no, no, oh
I won't let you get me down
I'll keep gettin' up when I hit the ground
Oh, never give up, no, never give up no, no, oh

I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh

Oh yeah, I'm haunted by the distant past
Called to the skies but she was she overcast

But I won't never give up, no, never give up, no, no
No, I won't never give up, no, never give up, no, no

And I won't let you get me down
I'll keep gettin' up when I hit the ground
Oh, never give up, no, never give up no, no, oh
I won't let you get me down
I'll keep gettin' up when I hit the ground
Oh, never give up, no, never give up no, no, oh

I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh

Never give up, never give up
Never give up, never give up
No, no, ooh

And I won't let you get me down
I'll keep gettin' up when I hit the ground
Oh, never give up, no, never give up no, no, oh
I won't let you get me down
I'll keep gettin' up when I hit the ground
Oh, never give up, no, never give up no, no, oh

I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh
I'll find my way, find my way home, oh, oh, oh

Source: <https://genius.com/Sia-never-give-up-lyrics>