'How does it work?' Jack asks when he opens his present – a mobile phone.
Later that night, Jack is a prisoner in a taxi in the empty streets of the dark city. Now he tries his mobile phone for the first time. Can it save his life? (Word count 970)
TAXI OF TERROR

‘Good luck Jack. Don’t forget us!’ Jack’s work friends are saying goodbye to him. They are having a party for him because he is leaving for a new job. He gets a card and a present – a mobile phone. Jack’s friends are sad, but the party is good and they all dance for hours.

Then Jack leaves the party. He’s tired and he wants to go home. ‘It’s cold,’ he thinks. He looks for a taxi, but he can’t find one. He walks for a long time – he is getting very tired. Then, at last, he sees a taxi. Great! Now he can go home and sleep!

But this is only the beginning of a long night – a long night in the taxi of terror!
Taxi of Terror

Starter (250 headwords)
PHILLIP BURROWS AND MARK FOSTER

Taxi of Terror

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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Don't forget us, Jack.

Are you excited about your new job?

You're going, Jack.
I'm sorry.

Here's a leaving card from us all.

Thank you for the card.
My new job's great.
But I'm sorry because I'm leaving you.
Quiet, please. I want to say something.

Jack's leaving and we're all very unhappy. Here's a present for you. You can use it in your new job.

How does it work? Do you know?

Beep!
Oh, it's talking to me.

A mobile phone! Thanks, very much. You're all very kind.

Now I can phone you all – from my car! This is a very good present. Thank you very much.

Good luck, Jack.
Everybody is having a good time.

Good-bye, everyone. Thank you, again, for my present.

See you soon.

Take care.

Enjoy yourself.

Jack cannot find a taxi. He walks for a long time and gets very tired.

At last, Jack sees a taxi.

I live at 57 Park Road. Can you take me there?

It's cold. Where's a taxi?

It's late - but I don't have to work tomorrow. Now, how do I get home?


Yes, I'm very tired.

It's very quiet tonight, sir. You're only my second passenger... Sir?
It's late. He needs his bed.

The taxi stops at a traffic light. Suddenly...

Do what I tell you... or you're dead.

What the...

Say nothing.

When the lights are green, drive fast.

I'm watching you. Don't be clever.

Go left and then right.

Left here, fast.

...then right next to the hospital.
What do you want? I've got some money, but not very much. Take it.

I don't want your money. I...

Screech!

Ow!

Screech!

Don't shoot! We're driving too fast. Can we drive slowly?

Quiet! OK. Just drive carefully.

Ow!

What's happening?
He has a gun! I don't understand. Am I dreaming?

I must do something . . . but what?
Taxi 250. Can you hear me?

This is taxi 250. They want to talk to me.
Well, they can't.

Jack is not tired now. Suddenly, he has an idea.
I know what to do. People do this on television. I can do it.

OK. I must keep calm. Everything's OK. He can't see me here.

G-give me the gun . . . slowly. I don't want to hurt you.
Stop the taxi.
Don't do that. I don't like surprises.

Now, get out of the taxi. Slowly.

Driver, open the boot of the taxi.

What?

Just do it!

You – get in the boot.

It's too small.

Get in, you dog, or I shoot.

How can we get home? Look there's a taxi.

I've got a gun. You haven't! Do you want me to shoot?

No. Please. Don't shoot.

They're going fast.

He's holding a gun!

A gun? No! It's a banana.

A banana?
It's too small in here and my leg hurts. I'm not clever. What can I do?

Something's hurting me. What is it? I must move it.

It's my new phone. Yes! I can phone for help.

I'm taking the keys. I don't want you to drive away.

Beep!

What's that? Is there something wrong with your car?

No!

Drive!

OK, you can stop but you must stay in the taxi.

You're not paying!
Now, I want the police.
9 . . .
9 . . .
9 . . .
Beep!

Hello. Police.

Yes! it works. We're all right now.

I'm Jack and I'm in the boot of the taxi.

OK, keep calm. What's your name and where are you?

Jack phones the police station and talks to a policewoman.

Can I help you?

A man's in our taxi. He's got a gun. I don't know where he wants to go. He's very dangerous.

OK, Jack. Tell me about the man.

He's little and thin, and he has a bad eye and red hair. He has a little beard. You know who that is? It's the Wolf.

Jack, that man's very dangerous. He's called the Wolf and we're looking for him. Be careful. We must find where you are. Can you see anything?
I can’t see anything but I hear a clock. It sounds very loud and very near.

Can you see a big clock?

There are lots in the town.

Look! Here’s a big clock. Here’s the tunnel. And here’s a railway crossing. They must be on this road.

Now I can hear lots of seagulls. Are we near the sea?

We’re going through a tunnel, I think.

We’re driving over lots of bumps. Is it a railway crossing?

We’re wrong. The sea isn’t on that side of town. It’s over here.

No! Look! We are right. The city rubbish dump’s next to the road. Just here. There are always seagulls on the dump. Also, the dump’s near the airport! Quick, let’s catch the Wolf.
It's about five minutes to the airport. We must stop the Wolf.

Drive to the airport. I must get on that plane.

Are you hurt?

Oh! What a bad man!

The car isn't moving now. I can hear planes. I think we're at the airport!

Wait! I've got a ticket. I must get on that plane.
Screech!

There's the taxi.

Quick. He's in the airport.

Come on. Let's go!

Are you looking for that bad man with the beard? He's over there.

Police!

Out of the way!

Police!

I don't like you. You're a very bad man.

Ouch!

Later the police bring the Wolf back into the airport building.
Glossary

banana something you eat; it grows on trees

calm not angry

clever you are clever if you understand things easily
dangerous something that can hurt you is dangerous

enjoy like doing something

great very good

hurt be in pain; a broken leg hurts

job work people do to earn money

kind if you are good to other people you are kind

loud a noise that is not quiet

luck you have luck if good things happen to you

ouch what you say when you are in pain

seagull a bird that lives by the sea

tunnel where a road goes under the ground

turn change the way you are going

way a road or course

wolf a wild animal; it is like a big dog
Taxi of Terror

ACTIVITIES
ACTIVITIES

Before Reading

1. Look at the front and back cover of the book. Now complete these sentences.

   1. The taxi in the story is . . .
      a. black.
      b. yellow.
      c. blue.

   2. Imagine you are the taxi driver. You are . . .
      a. afraid.
      b. happy.
      c. not interested.

   3. The story happens . . .
      a. in a town.
      b. in the country.
      c. not in a or b.

   4. At the end of the story the police catch . . .
      a. a bad man.
      b. the taxi driver.
      c. Jack.
**ACTIVITIES**

**While Reading**

1. Read pages 1–6, then answer these questions.
   1. Why is Jack leaving his job?
   2. How does Jack decide to get home?
   3. Where does the taxi stop?

2. Read pages 7–12, then answer these questions.
   1. Does the Wolf want money?
   2. Does the taxi turn right or left next to the hospital?
   3. Write a description of the Wolf.

3. What is the number of the Taxi?

3. Read pages 13–18.
   Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?
   1. He gets in the boot of the taxi.  
   2. He phones his mum.  
   3. He escapes from the boot.  
   4. He talks to a policeman.  
   5. He tells the police the Wolf has a small nose.  
   6. He hears a clock.

4. Read pages 19–24. Complete the sentences with the following words:

   airport  beard  boot  plane  seagulls

1. Now I can hear lots of ..... Are we near the sea?

2. Drive to the ..... I must get on that .....  

3. Are you looking for that bad man with the ..... ? He's over there.

4. Can someone open the ..... ?
ACTIVITIES

After Reading

1 Answer these questions.

1 Who
   a . . . does the Wolf put in the boot of the taxi?
   b . . . does Jack call on his mobile phone?
   c . . . gets knocked over by the Wolf?
   d . . . says: 'That's £16.50 please'?

2 What
   a . . . almost crashes into the taxi?
   b . . . is the Wolf trying to catch?
   c . . . can Jack hear at the dump?
   d . . . do the police look at on the wall?

3 Where
   a . . . does the taxi go over some bumps?
   b . . . is Jack at the beginning of the story?
   c . . . do the police catch up with the Wolf?
   d . . . does the Wolf get in the taxi?

2 Put these sentences in the correct order.

a  □  The taxi drives next to a rubbish dump.
b  □  The taxi arrives at the airport.
c  □  Jack calls the police with his mobile phone.
d  □  The taxi drives through a tunnel.
e  □  The taxi drives near a clock.

3 Use these words to fill in the gaps.

airport boot catch gun hear job
mobile phone pleased police taxi

Jack is leaving his old ............ His friends give him a ............ as a leaving present. He is very ............ On his way home Jack falls asleep in a ............ Suddenly at some traffic lights, a dangerous man called the Wolf gets in the taxi – he has a ............ The taxi driver does what the Wolf tells him. Jack wakes up and is soon put in the ............ of the taxi. Then he has an idea – he calls the ............ with his phone. Jack tells them what he can ............ from inside the boot. The police find out that the taxi is driving to the ............ The police get there just in time to ............ the Wolf.
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mark Foster and Phillip Burrows have worked as a writer/illustrator team since 1991. They were born three years and many miles apart, but they are very nearly twins. They drive the same car, work on the same computers, and wear the same wellington boots — but not at the same time! They spend all the money they get from writing on gadgets, but please don’t tell their wives. Mark and Phill have worked together on several Bookworms titles, including Starman (Starter, Fantasy & Horror) and Escape (Starter, Thriller & Adventure). When they meet to write, they like to go to expensive hotels, eat chips dipped in coffee, and laugh at their own jokes.

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