



# Taking Stock

by Wendy Milton

## TEACHER'S RESOURCE

### Using this resource

This resource is designed to be used as students read each chapter. Each section is divided into the following:

#### Vocabulary

This section highlights some of the trickier words or phrases that students will find in this chapter. Work through the list, or pick out a few words of interest, and ask students about each word using these questions:

- What is another word the author could have used instead of \_\_\_\_\_?
- What does the word \_\_\_\_\_ mean?
- Can you find the word \_\_\_\_\_ in a dictionary?
- Can you think of another word that means the same as \_\_\_\_\_?
- What is a \_\_\_\_\_?
- What does the author mean by \_\_\_\_\_?

#### Comprehension

This section includes questions to help gauge your students' understanding of the text. Some questions can be answered by a straightforward reading of the text, while others may involve students drawing on prior information or drawing conclusions.

#### Conversation

This section includes questions of a more interpretive, open-ended nature to encourage higher-order thinking. Questions may ask students to make predictions, use their imaginations and draw upon personal experiences.

#### Worksheets

Worksheets are included for some chapters.

### Before you begin

The term 'taking stock' can be used literally or metaphorically. What do literal and metaphorical mean? Can you think of different meanings for 'taking stock'?

## Chapter 1 Pages 1-8

### Vocabulary

eccentric	p. 2
luxuriant	p. 3
evasive	p. 4
elusive	p. 6

### Comprehension

- Why isn't Neil happy about the birthday gifts he receives?

### Conversation

Why does Neil think Uncle Rex is 'seriously weird'?

## Chapter 2 Pages 9-15

### Vocabulary

slandering	p. 11
annexation	p. 12
iconic	p. 13

### Comprehension

- Why are some products – pens, for example – more valuable than others?
- Neil's mother says Uncle Rex is 'generous without being ostentatious'. What does she mean?

### Conversation

Do you approve of the behavior of Flip and Hendo?

## Chapter 3 Pages 16-23

### Vocabulary

ostentatious	p. 17
insignificant	p. 19
inventory	p. 20
pristine	p. 21

### Comprehension

- Why are the 'treasures' from Neil's toy cupboard in such wonderful condition?
- Why does Boofer see the Toovey household as different?

### Conversation

What does it mean to 'rise above' something unpleasant? Would it work for you?

## Chapter 4

Pages 24–30

### Vocabulary

phenomenon	p. 24
sidelong	p. 28
supplement	p. 29

### Comprehension

- Why do some people collect things?
- Why does Neil's mother change her mind about drilling a hole in the mauve stool?

### Conversation

Do you think it is important to save money?

## Chapter 5

Pages 31–38

### Vocabulary

rattled	p. 32
memorabilia	p. 34
dodgy	p. 37

### Comprehension

- Who are the men in the black car, and why are they there?
- What is Boofer keen to do for Uncle Rex?

### Conversation

'When I asked [Uncle Rex] where he'd been, he said that when he was in he was out, and that when he was out he wasn't in.' Does this make any sense?

## Chapter 6

Pages 39–45

### Vocabulary

fossilised	p. 40
headier	p. 44

### Comprehension

- Why does Neil's mother say she can't eat Uncle Rex's chocolates?
- What does Neil's mother believe they should do with the money?

### Conversation

Do any of your family members (grandparents, perhaps) remember Winning Post chocolates?

## Chapter 7

Pages 46–51

### Vocabulary

gyrating	p. 49
emulate	p. 49
unseemly	p. 49

### Comprehension

- What theory does Boofer develop about Uncle Rex?
- What do the lyrics of Uncle Rex's song ('Say you don't need no diamond rings') mean?

### Conversation

Which pop group sang 'Can't Buy Me Love'? Why does Uncle Rex like it?



### Worksheet 1

TR Page 14

One of Uncle Rex's heroes is Elvis, 'the king of rock 'n' roll'. Draw Uncle Rex strumming an imaginary guitar and imitating this famous musician's moves.

## Chapter 8

Pages 52–60

### Vocabulary

hoard	p. 57
gloat	p. 58
fawned upon	p. 60

### Comprehension

- Who is the 'Creeper' and why is he arguing with the man in the tailor-made suit?
- Are there any clues as to who the man in the tailor-made suit might be?

### Conversation

Are there people so obsessed by beautiful things that they'll collect them even if they're stolen?

## Chapter 9

Pages 61–66

### Vocabulary

impromptu	p. 62
exasperated	p. 62
scapegoat	p. 66

### Comprehension

- How do Boofer's opinions about money differ from those of Flip?

### Conversation

How important do you think money is? What are some well-known sayings about money?

## Chapter 10

Pages 67–72

### Vocabulary

incensed	p. 71
allegations	p. 72
deduction	p. 72

### Comprehension

- In terms of collecting, what is a 'gloater'?
- Why is Flip angry?
- What does Boofer deduce from Flip's angry outburst?

### Conversation

What constitutes success? What sort of people do you regard as successful?

## Chapter 11

Pages 73–79

### Vocabulary

audacious	p. 73
literally	p. 75
idolised	p. 78

### Comprehension

- What makes Boofer suspect that Flip's father is the fence?
- 'So when he's in the past he's out buying stock, and when he's out delivering stock, he's not in?' To what earlier Uncle Rex comment is Neil referring?

### Conversation

If you were Flip, how would you feel at the end of Chapter 11?

## Chapter 12

Pages 80–84

### Vocabulary

baloney	p. 81
transfixed	p. 83
warped	p. 83

### Comprehension

- What is a police 'snout' and why is he so called?
- What is Flip's father trying to persuade the Creeper to do?

### Conversation

Have famous paintings being stolen from art galleries? Why would the thieves find them difficult to sell?



### Worksheet 2 TR Page 15

Write a short story about the importance (or unimportance?) of money.

## Chapter 13

Pages 85–90

### Vocabulary

gizmo	p. 86
barmy	p. 89
humongous	p. 90

### Comprehension

- Who is Uncle Rex's 'wretched friend'?
- Why did Uncle Rex never show his portrait to Neil's mother?

### Conversation

If you could time travel, what sort of things would you buy in the past?

## Chapter 14

Pages 91–99

### Vocabulary

remote	p. 92
legitimately	p. 93
heirlooms	p. 93
aperture	p. 94
vigilance	p. 99

### Comprehension

- 'If you tell anyone I sat for Van Gogh, the men in white coats will be around to lock me up.' What does Uncle Rex mean by 'the men in white coats'?
- Why is Inspector Mallard angry with Sergeant Cunningham?

### Conversation

Do you agree that there's something 'mightily peculiar' about Uncle Rex's art collection? Who are the famous Heidelberg school artists with whom Uncle Rex has been photographed?

## Chapter 15

Pages 100–107

### Vocabulary

premature	p. 100
infamy	p. 100
inundated	p. 101
traumatised	p. 102
ally	p. 105

### Comprehension

- How does Neil's mother explain the photograph of Uncle Rex taken, apparently, with Charles Conder?

### Conversation

How would you feel if you were accused of something you didn't do?

## Chapter 16

Pages 108–117

### Vocabulary

methodically p. 109  
inaccessible p. 110  
encroached p. 112  
unnerving p. 113

### Comprehension

- Why would there be two Uncle Rexes in 1956?

### Conversation

Neil says: 'If you time travel, you wouldn't have to lose anyone ... You could always go back an' talk to 'em.' If you could go back in time, to whom would you talk? A long-lost relative? A famous person?

## Chapter 17

Pages 118–125

### Vocabulary

interrogating p. 119  
admonitory p. 119  
prune p. 125

### Comprehension

- Why is Neil's mother angry?

### Conversation

Do you think Neil behaved foolishly or bravely?

## Chapter 18

Pages 126–135

### Vocabulary

dabbling	p. 127
prophetic	p. 130
cerebral	p. 130
dodgy	p. 133

### Comprehension

- Was it a mistake for Uncle Rex to take Rob and Con into his confidence? Why did he do so?

### Conversation

Are 'Rob' and 'Con' appropriate names? Have you heard of other people with appropriate names? The writer once knew a teacher whose name was Mrs Savage.



### Worksheet 3 TR Page 16

Write a plot summary for a story about villains who prey upon gullible people. In your plot summary, these villains make a stupid mistake that leads to their arrest.

## Chapter 19

Pages 136–147

### Vocabulary

dubious	p. 141
skewered	p. 146
plunder	p. 146

### Comprehension

- Rob and Con think they can take a taxi to their warehouse and return, with their van, to steal Uncle Rex's stock. Why can't they?
- What flaws does Rob see in Con's plan to plunder treasures from the past?

### Conversation

Would you say Boofer is intelligent? What evidence supports this?



## Chapter 20

Pages 148–154

### Vocabulary

speculation	p. 153
legitimacy	p. 153
inundated	p. 153

### Comprehension

- Neil's classmates' opinions are changing. How does this affect Flip?

### Conversation

Is the security company appropriately named? In the light of events, is the security company's name ironic?

## Chapter 21

Pages 155–161

### Vocabulary

bogus	p. 155
iconic	p. 156
incensed	p. 159
confiscation	p. 161

### Comprehension

- What suspicion does Flip arouse when he attempts to justify his father's absence from the exhibition – i.e. 'My father doesn't *need* to go to any stupid gallery'?

### Conversation

Have you ever said something without thinking, and later wished you hadn't said it? Sometimes this is called 'a slip of the tongue'. Are there other names for it?

## Chapter 22

Pages 162–170

### Vocabulary

shortcoming	p. 165
distraught	p. 169
contrition	p. 169

### Comprehension

- How does Flip give Sergeant Cunningham the excuse he needs?
- Why doesn't Flip call for help?
- Roger Benson admits he hasn't been the best of fathers, and promises to be a better one. What brings about this change?

### Conversation

Has learning about Flip's relationship with his father altered your opinion of him?

## Chapter 23

Pages 171–176

### Vocabulary

endured	p. 171
negotiable	p. 171
contrite	p. 172
backlash	p. 172
remorseful	p. 173

### Comprehension

- What don't the police know about the gallery gang's threats?
- Why is Flip loath to go back to school?

### Conversation

Why do Neil and Boofer find it hard to feel sorry for Flip? Could you feel sorry for him?

## Chapter 24

Pages 177–185

### Vocabulary

enterprising	p. 178
inadvisable	p. 179
theorising	p. 180
oblivious	p. 182

### Comprehension

- How does Mrs McFadden make things worse?
- What does Boofer mean when he says that Uncle Rex would be following the black van from 'in front'?

### Conversation

Is Uncle Rex's remote a crime-solving device? If you had such a remote, what sort of unsolved crimes would you investigate?

## Chapter 25

Pages 186–195

### Vocabulary

mayhem	p. 186
severed	p. 192

### Comprehension

- What is 'maternal instinct' and why does Uncle Rex mention it?
- Why does Flip's father change his mind about 'spilling the beans' – i.e. giving evidence against the gallery gang?
- Would you say Flip's father has been 'taking stock'?

### Conversation

Boofer says that being kidnapped has done Flip 'the world of good'. Can people change for the better because of an awful experience?

## Chapter 26

Pages 196–207

### Vocabulary

heist	p. 196
snookered	p. 197
reservations	p. 198
swanky	p. 198
trajectory	p. 202
anecdote	p. 204

### Comprehension

- Con wants to change his life. Why? What is his dream?

### Conversation

Have you ever had to listen to a talk that you found boring?

## Chapter 27

Pages 208–215

### Vocabulary

mugshots	p. 209
relinquished	p. 214

### Comprehension

- Why does Boofer ask Rob whether he needs a hand?
- Why does Boofer yell 'cupcake'?

### Conversation

Flip and Boofer fight over the remote. Do you think Flip is right to give it to Rob?

# Chapter 28

Pages 216–222

## Vocabulary

chided	p. 217
finicky	p. 221
lucrative	p. 222

## Comprehension

- How is Con able to escape from prison?
- What did Rob do with the warehouse insurance money?
- How does Uncle Rex explain the late arrival of his parcel to the postmaster?

## Conversation

Why, do you think, does Rob return Uncle Rex's remote?



## Worksheet 4

TR Page 17

Write a review of *Taking Stock*.

## After you finish

Do characters in *Taking Stock* change? If so, do they change for better or for worse?

Why would Boofer make a good friend?

Debate the topic: 'Money isn't everything.'

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Worksheet 1

One of Uncle Rex's heroes is 'the king of rock 'n' roll', Elvis Presley. Draw Uncle Rex strumming an imaginary guitar and imitating this famous musician's moves.

Write a short story about the importance (or unimportance?) of money.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Outline a plot for a story about villains who prey upon gullible people. In your outline, these villains make a stupid mistake that leads to their arrest.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# Worksheet 4: Book review

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Is *Taking Stock* a mystery, an adventure, fantasy fiction, realistic fiction, non-fiction . . . ?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Plot outline:** *What happens in the beginning, middle and end of this book?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Characters:** *What changes do characters like Uncle Rex and Roger Benson make to their lives?  
Why do you feel they make these changes?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Opinion:** *What was your favourite part and why? Did the story have a moral? What was it?*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

My rating: 