Novel Notes

The Giggler Treatment
The Giggler Treatment

Mister Mack is on his way to work when, all of a sudden, he is distracted by a talking seagull. Looking behind him, he does not notice that his next footstep is headed straight for a very unpleasant item left by a dog on the footpath. Giggles are heard coming from behind a wall, where three small furry creatures are watching and waiting for the accident to happen.

The Gigglers are baby-sized creatures that look after children. They follow children around to make sure adults are being nice to them. Any adult who is mean to a child gets the ‘Giggler Treatment’, otherwise known as ‘poo on the shoe’. Mister Mack upsets the Gigglers when he sends his sons Jimmy and Robbie to their room for accidentally breaking a window.

It emerges that the Gigglers get their nasty supply from a local dog named Rover. He receives twenty pence for his troubles, which he buries inside bones. The Gigglers have kept Rover so busy over the years that he is now a secret millionaire.

Jimmy and Robbie are outside playing with their baby sister Kayla, when they happen upon a Giggler who tells them that their father is seconds away from stepping in dog poo. The Giggler explains why Mister Mack is getting the Giggler Treatment. The boys realise there’s been a terrible misunderstanding – their father only sent them to their room briefly before inviting them back down for dinner.

They enlist the help of their mother Billy Jean, Rover the dog and the littlest Giggler, and embark on an exciting journey to save their father. Mister Mack is still inches from the unpleasant item, on account of his very stiff trousers and the chattering seagull.

Rover takes the family on a magical shortcut through the Sahara Desert, Egypt and past the Eiffel Tower. Finally, they appear out of a rabbit-hole tunnel to stop Mister Mack in his tracks, just in time.

Rover calls out to warn Mister Mack who believes that this warning is coming from Kayla. He is very excited, believing that she has just said her first words. The Gigglers apologise to Mister Mack and explain that they are off to dish out some more Giggler Treatment. This time they are visiting a woman who would not let her children watch TV because they did not eat all of their parsnips.

Mister Mack hears the train leaving the station and realises he is going to be late for work. Just as he is bidding Kayla farewell, she inspires him with an idea. Mister Mack will invent chocolate-covered cream crackers for the biscuit factory where he works. He runs off to the station a very happy man.

Themes and issues addressed in this novel include justice and equality, conduct, parents and children, manners and understanding.
Roddy Doyle is an Irish writer who was born in Dublin in 1958. He always loved reading and had a great passion for books from an early age. He studied at University College Dublin (UCD) and went on to teach Geography and English at a school in North Dublin. In 1987, he wrote his first book *The Commitments* which was made into a very successful film in 1991.

In 1993, after fourteen years of teaching, Doyle decided to become a full-time writer. That same year he was awarded one of the highest honours in literature, when he won the Man Booker Prize for his book *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha*. He is considered one of Ireland’s finest comedic writers and is famous for writing lively stories about working-class life in Dublin.

Doyle’s books use lots of dialogue and slang words. When he writes, he likes to describe people and things just the way they are. *The Giggler Treatment* is his first children’s book and a *New York Times* bestseller. He continues to write children’s books and lives in Ireland with his wife and children.

### Objectives

**Curriculum Objectives**

The child should be enabled to experience a shared response to fiction through the use of a class novel; engage in talk about books (setting, plot, character, motive, favourite authors), continue to develop a range of comprehension strategies to deal with narrative; expository and representational reading material, use simple dictionaries effectively and understand the relationship between text and illustration.

### Learning Outcomes

- Produce a script from part of the story.
- Write an email from a character in the story.
- Write a diary entry for a character in the story.
- Compose an alternate ending to the book.
- Act out scene(s) from the book in a class play.
- Debate on the concept of the ‘Giggler Treatment’.
- Discuss possible uses for a class Giggler.
Cross-curricular Links

**Visual Arts**
The children can design and make Gigglers from clay for the classroom. They can also choose a chapter to illustrate from the book.

**Maths**
The book measures distance in inches. Children can explore measurements in standard units; centimetres and metres.

**Geography**
The book references places from around the world such as Paris and Egypt. Children can choose one country and locate it on a map and globe. Children can also research the climate and landscape of that country.

**Science**
Children can find out what the litter laws in Ireland say about dog fouling.

**Drama**
Children can re-enact a scene from the story as a class.

Suggestions for Classroom Work

- Rewrite a section of the book in the form of a script.
- Compose an email from Rover the dog to his girlfriend in Galway.
- Write a diary entry on a day in the life of a Giggler.
- Act out a script based on the book in the form of a class play.
- Class debate on the Giggler Treatment – is it fair?
- Discuss what the class would do if they had their own Giggler.
- Write an alternate ending for the book.
Web Links

About the author, Roddy Doyle:
http://www.roddydoyle.ie/

Litter law in Ireland:

Pre-reading Activities

Oral Pre-reading Questions

Chapter 1
What, do you think, is the ‘Giggler Treatment’?

Chapter 2
Who, do you think, are the ‘little people’?

Chapter 3
What, do you think, will happen next?

Chapters 4 & 5
Do you think these are funny titles for the chapters?

Chapter 6
What exciting thing, do you think, will happen at the end of this chapter?

Chapter 7
What, do you think, should this chapter be called?

Chapter 8
Why do you think the Gigglers were doing this to Mister Mack?

Chapters 9 & 10
Would you give these chapters different titles? Why?

Chapters 11 & 12
Do you think these titles are clever? Why?

Chapters 13 & 14
The author named chapters after his mother and his fridge. Who or what would you name a chapter in a book after and why?

Chapter 15
Look at the illustration on page 56 of the book. Describe what you see in the picture and predict what will happen next.

Chapters 16 & 17
Do you like the chapter titles? Why?

Chapters 18, 19 & 20
Look at the pictures at the beginning of these chapters and describe what you can see.

Chapter 21
What, do you think, is Rover’s point of view in the story?

Chapters 22, 23 & 24
How far do you think Mister Mack’s shoe is from the poo now?
Chapters 25 & 26
Who is giving their side of the story?

Chapters 27, 28 & 29
Look at the picture and say what you think will happen next.

Chapters 30 & 31
Why do you think a seagull gets to tell his side of the story?

Chapters 32 & 33
How do you think this story will end?

Vocabulary

Create a classroom word wall for new words in the novel. Encourage children to use a dictionary to find the meaning of new words and to put these new words into sentences. Incorporate games for teaching new vocabulary, such as vocabulary Xs and Os and matching pairs.

Comprehension Activity Sheets

Presented below are a selection of both lower and higher order questions for each section of this novel, which the teacher may choose from.
1. What is Mister Mack’s job?

2. Why is Mister Mack looking forward to work?

3. How many types of biscuits are made each year?

4. What kind of bird speaks to Mister Mack?

5. Why is it a pity that Mister Mack looked back as he was walking?

6. Why does Mister Mack think fig-rolls are clever?

7. Would you like to do Mister Mack’s job? Why?

8. If you were Mister Mack, what would you have done when the bird spoke to you?
1. What is different about the pile of dog poo?

2. How has the poo come to be on the path?

3. Why would someone want Mister Mack to step on dog poo?

4. Do you think it was just a coincidence that the bird distracted Mister Mack before he reached the poo?

5. How would you feel if you stepped on dog poo?

6. Have you ever had an accident because you were not looking where you were going? Describe what happened.
1. What stops Mister Mack from turning around?

2. What does Mister Mack hear?

3. How many Gigglers are on the other side of the wall?

4. What are the Gigglers standing up on?

5. How, do you think, do the Gigglers feel as they wait for Mister Mack to step on the poo?

6. What do you think of the Gigglers’ plan? Is it a nice plan or a nasty plan? Why do you think so?
1. Do you prefer long or short chapters when you read a book? Why?

2. What are the first two sounds that the Gigglers listen out for?

3. What is the distance between Mister Mack’s shoe and the ‘you-know-what’?

4. Which of the Gigglers makes the calculation?

5. Why does the middle-sized Giggler shove her fist into her mouth?

6. Have you ever tried to hide a fit of giggles? Describe the situation.
Chapter 6

1. Who are the Gigglers? How long have they been around?

2. How are the Gigglers like chameleons?

3. What is the Giggler Treatment?

4. What does an adult have to do to make the Giggler Treatment stop?

5. Do you think it would be better if adults knew about the Gigglers? Give reasons for your answer.

6. Do you think the Giggler Treatment is a fair system? What changes would you make to it, if any?

7. How would you set about proving that Gigglers really existed? Write about what you would do.
1. What do the Gigglers expect Mister Mack to do when he first steps on the poo?

2. What type of fish does the bird think is ‘Yeuk!’?

3. What does the middle-sized Giggler do to keep from laughing?

4. Why does the middle-sized Giggler make no noise when she falls?

5. Why, do you think, does the author pretend that the grass can talk?

6. How would you be feeling if you were a Giggler in this situation? Why?

7. The Gigglers are spying on Mister Mack. Have you ever behaved like a spy? Write about it.
1. What are the Mack brothers’ names?

2. How do they break the window?

3. What was Mister Mack doing when the window was broken?

4. Why does Mister Mack think Jimmy is being cheeky?

5. List four frustrating things that happened to Mister Mack that day.

6. What kind of soup is in Mister Mack’s flask?

7. How would you feel if you were Jimmy? Why?

8. Do you think Mister Mack deserves the Giggler Treatment for sending the boys to their room? Why do you think so?
1. Why does the middle-sized Giggler fall off the bike again?

2. Who is Billie Jean Fleetwood Mac?

3. What does Billie Jean say to defend the boys?

4. Why are the Mack family able to understand Kayla’s language?

5. Why don’t the Gigglers hear Mister Mack?

6. Billie Jean describes Mister Mack’s work as dangerous. Would you describe his work this way? What kind of jobs do you think are dangerous?

7. Would you like to be able to understand baby language like the Macks can? Give reasons for your answer.
1. Why is it taking so long for Mister Mack’s shoe to reach the surprise the Gigglers have left for him?

2. Why does Rover dislike being made go outside?

3. Why is the smallest Giggler so excited?

4. What job does the littlest Giggler have as part of the mission?

5. What does Rover always do after his owner goes to bed?

6. Where does Rover hide his fortune?

7. Do you think Rover is a clever dog? Why?

8. How would you feel and what would you think if you saw a dog using a toilet?
1. Why does Jimmy Mack fall off the stool?

2. How does Billie Jean keep herself fit for mountain climbing?

3. Name three places where Billie Jean has climbed mountains.

4. What person did Billie Jean name a mountain after?

5. What do the boys use to stick Kayla to the wall?

6. Where does Jimmy discover the monster?

7. Do you think Kayla’s idea is a ‘mega-brilliant’ one? Why?

8. Do you have any big dreams or ambitions like Billie Jean? Write about them.
Chapter 15  ‘Chapter Two Million and Seven’

1. Why are the children able to see the smallest Giggler?

2. Why does the Giggler say it was a terrible waste of poo?

3. What did Rover do to try and appear more dog-like?

4. What excuse does Rover give when the Giggler asks him to jump over the wall?

5. Do you think they are doing the right thing by trying to stop Mister Mack from stepping in poo? Why?

6. Rover makes an excuse to try and avoid going to the Gigglers. Have you ever made an excuse to avoid doing something? Write about it.

7. How would you feel if you met a talking dog? What kinds of questions would you ask it?
1. Why can Mister Mack not see the poo, even after he turns around?

2. How far away from the poo is Mister Mack's shoe?

3. Why does Mister Mack lose interest in the bird?

4. What is special about Rover's paws?

5. What kinds of shops do they pass?

6. What type of shoes is Billie Jean wearing on her feet?

7. What is Rover's motto? What do you think it means?

8. Do you have a motto? If you do, write it down and if you don't make one up.
Chapters 18, 19 & 20

1. Do you think the cream crackers deserve their own chapter? Why?

2. Do you agree that this story has lots of sides? Explain your answer.

3. What kinds of shops are mentioned in ‘A Real Chapter’?

4. What does Rover say to the doggies in the window?

5. Do you think Rover is wise not to speak in front of Billie Jean? Why do you think so?

6. Do you think that chapter twenty is a ‘real chapter’ like the title suggests? Why?
1. Who did Rover write an email to the week before?

2. What question does Rover’s owner ask when he comes down and sees the computer?

3. How does Rover feel about the work that the Gigglers do?

4. How does Rover feel about Mister Mack?

5. What one thing does Rover want to say in this chapter?

6. Rover says that his owner is ‘not exactly a master detective’. Do you think that this is a fair statement?

7. What would you do if you found paw marks on your computer? Would you try to find out where they came from? How?

8. There is an expression which says there are two sides to every story. What do you think this means?
1. Describe what is happening in ‘How Many Inches Now?’.

2. Name two things Rover has to jump across.

3. How does Robbie make it across the river?

4. How, do you think, does Billie Jean feel on this adventure? Why?

5. What sound is music to the Gigglers’ ears?

6. What sound can Mister Mack hear?

7. What is music to your ears? Write about your favourite sounds.

8. Do you think there is a lot of team work going on in this part of the book? Why? Do you think team work is a good thing?
1. ‘Kayla Gives her Side of the Story’ is written in baby language. Write a translation for this chapter to tell Kayla’s side of the story.

2. What do Jimmy and Robbie think about the Giggler Treatment?

3. Do the boys feel responsible for breaking the window? Why?

4. Name one thing Mister Mack would not allow his sons to do.

5. Do you think Mister Mack was right to stop Robbie from sliding off the roof with Kayla? Why?

6. Do you think the boys would have stopped the Giggler Treatment sooner if they could have?

7. What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you? Write about it.

8. What kind of boys do you think Robbie and Jimmy are? Why?
1. What desert does Rover run through?

2. What river do they come across?

3. How does the Giggler travel across the river?

4. Why does Billie Jean hold on to Jimmy’s trousers?

5. What is unusual about the crocodile in the river?

6. Would you like to visit any of the places mentioned in these chapters? Which ones? Why?

7. Write about a place you visited that you really liked. Use lots of descriptive words to describe what you saw there.
1. How does the seagull feel about fish? Why?

2. What is the man with the video camera wearing?

3. What does Rover say to the man?

4. What does Rover find under the Eiffel Tower?

5. How is Rover feeling as he runs towards the light?

6. Why did the author decide to start over with this part of the story? Do you think this was a good idea?
1. Why, do you think, does the author pay so many compliments to Rover in ‘Rover Saves the Day’?

2. Where does Kayla land?

3. Why is everyone able to see the Gigglers?

4. What does Mister Mack think Kayla’s first words are?

5. Who really says those words?

6. What does the expression ‘it’s a dog’s life’ mean?

7. What is Rover’s final message in the book?

8. What do you think of Kayla’s idea for cream crackers? How would you make cream crackers more exciting?

9. Do you like how this story ends? Why?

10. What do you think is the strongest message in this story? Write about it.
**Book Report Sheet**

If you don’t have enough space to write your answers, use the notes section on the following pages.

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<th>Describe your favourite character:</th>
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<th>Describe your favourite part of the story:</th>
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**This book was:**  
- Exciting  
- Boring  
- Complicated

**Tick all that apply:**  
- Interesting  
- Slow-moving  
- Imaginative  
- Scary  
- Fast-paced  
- Amusing

Did you like the book? Why? / Why not?

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