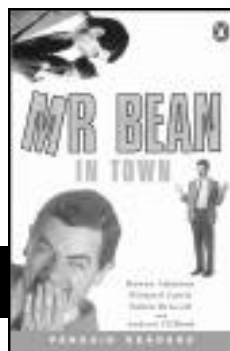


Teacher's notes

Mr Bean in Town

by Rowan Atkinson, Richard Curtis,
Robin Driscoll and Andrew Clifford



SUMMARY

Mr Bean in Town contains two very funny stories.

'Steak Tartare'

Mr Bean goes to a restaurant for a birthday dinner. He orders a steak tartare but he doesn't like it. He tries to hide it: in a mustard pot, in a vase of flowers, and elsewhere. A man with a violin comes and Mr Bean puts some meat down the back of the man's trousers! The waiter drops some plates on to Mr Bean's table. The manager takes him to a clean table. Mr Bean smiles and is happy again. The waiter brings him a plate of food. It is a large plate of steak tartare!

'The Launderette'

Mr Bean takes his dirty clothes to the launderette. To pay for the wash he takes his pound coin hidden in his trousers at the end of a piece of string. A young man pushes him away from his machine. Mr Bean is angry but doesn't say anything because the man is taking a karate suit out of his bag. Mr Bean puts his clothes in another washing machine. He realises he is wearing Wednesday's underpants and takes them off. On getting dressed again, he accidentally puts on a young woman's skirt instead of his trousers. The woman puts his trousers with her washing.

Mr Bean gets a cup of black coffee and changes it for the young man's conditioner. The young man puts the 'conditioner' into his washing, and his karate suit turns brown. He is very angry. Mr Bean tries to find his trousers. He looks in the young woman's dryer and then climbs into the machine. The woman puts some clothes into the dryer and turns it on. Mr Bean begins to go round and round!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Rowan Atkinson was born in Consett, County Durham, England in 1955. His father owned a farm in the area. He went to public school, then took a degree in electrical engineering at Newcastle University before going to Oxford in 1975. It was at Oxford that he met screenwriter Richard Curtis, with whom he wrote and performed comedy revues at the Oxford Playhouse. In 1978, Atkinson joined the BBC's 'Not The Nine O'Clock News' team – a show based on spoof news-reporting. The show

recorded hugely successful albums, released several best-selling books, won an International Emmy Award, and the British Academy Award for 'Best Light Entertainment Program of 1980'. In 1983, Atkinson co-wrote (with Richard Curtis) and starred in the television show 'Black Adder'. Atkinson and Curtis co-created Mr Bean for television in 1990. Atkinson himself starred as Mr Bean. After an extremely successful two-year run of the series, there followed a series of videos, cassettes and books and, in 1997, a feature-film version. Atkinson is a very private person. He lives in Oxfordshire with his wife and two children.

Richard Curtis is a very popular and successful writer. He co-wrote 'Black Adder' and 'Mr Bean' with Rowan Atkinson. He also wrote the 1994 hit movie 'Four Weddings and a Funeral' and the romantic comedy 'Notting Hill'. In 1999, Curtis was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement Award at the British Comedy Awards.

Robin Driscoll and Andrew Clifford are both writers contributing to the Mr Bean stories.

BACKGROUND AND THEMES

Mr Bean is a near-silent British television comedy series (1990-1992) that revolves around an accident-prone character, who drives around in a little yellow car, creating chaos wherever he goes. Mr Bean is a child at heart. He enjoys carnival rides, reading adventure comics, playing mini-golf and hugging a teddy bear. Mr Bean also enjoys experimenting with different contraptions as well as solving problems through mechanical means.

The beauty of Mr Bean is that it uses actions and body language, rather than words and dialogue, in its comedy. It is able to cross linguistic barriers, so the Mr Bean stories are accessible to people worldwide. Another reason why Mr Bean is so popular is that people are able to relate to his character and experiences – there are times when everyone does silly things, just to cover up mistakes or to make things go their way.

A typical Mr Bean episode consists of three stories, with each one usually having a different setting. In each story, Mr Bean finds himself in a situation which he has to find



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a way out of, with hilarious consequences. In 'The Exam', he doesn't know the answer to a single question on the exam paper; on 'On the Beach', he is trying to change into swimming trunks without taking off his trousers; in 'The Church', he desperately tries to stay awake.

Mr Bean stories have been made into videos, cassettes and books, and in 1997, a film version was made. In the film, Bean is sent by the London National Gallery to accompany a painting to a new home in Los Angeles.

Communicative activities

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the reader, and supplement those exercises. For supplementary exercises covering shorter sections of the book, see the photocopiable Student's Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers but, with the exception of discussion and pair/groupwork questions, can also be used by students working alone in a self-access centre.

ACTIVITIES BEFORE READING THE BOOK

- 1 Ask students if any of them have seen the film 'Bean'. If so, ask them to tell the other students about it. Did they like the film? Did they like the story?
- 2 Divide the class into two groups: those who are familiar with the character Mr Bean, and those who are not. Ask them to look at the pictures of Mr Bean on the cover of the book. They describe Mr Bean and say what he is like as a person.

Then compare descriptions as a class. How similar are the descriptions of the two groups?

- 3 Photocopy the pictures from both stories in the book. Cut off the captions. Divide the class into two teams: A and B. Give each student in team A a picture or caption from 'Steak Tartare'. Give each student in team B a picture or caption from 'The Launderette'. Ask teams to match the captions with the pictures. The team with the most correct matches is the winner.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING A STORY

'Steak Tartare'

- 1 Put students into small groups. They tell the story of 'Steak Tartare'. Each student in the group says a few sentences, then the next student continues with the story.
- 2 Ask students to work in groups of three. They role-play a conversation between the manager, the waiter and the woman at the next table to Mr Bean. They all talk about what they think about Mr Bean.

- 3 Put students into pairs. Ask them to discuss the following questions. Then discuss the questions as a whole-class activity.

Do you think Mr Bean has a lot of friends? Why/Why not?

'The Launderette'

- 1 Put students into small groups. Ask them to write ten sentences summarizing the story. Then groups join with another group and read out their summaries. They can correct each other's English if necessary.
- 2 Put students into pairs. They role play a conversation between the young man with the karate suit and the manager. The young man tells the manager what has happened. The manager tries to sort out the problem.

ACTIVITIES AFTER READING THE BOOK

Put students into small groups. Ask them to try to agree which story in the book is best. Why is it best? Then they tell the rest of the class what they think and why.

Glossary

It will be useful for your students to know these new words. They are practised in the 'Before You Read' sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary.)

'Steak Tartare'

bread roll (n) a small round loaf of bread for one person
coin (n) a piece of money made of metal
cover (n) something that covers and protects something else
hide (v) to go to or stay in a place where no one can see or find you
manager (n) someone who is in charge of a bank, shop, restaurant, etc.
mustard pot (n) a round container used for storing mustard
napkin (n) a small piece of cloth or paper, used for protecting your clothes or cleaning your hands when you are eating
pretend (v) to behave as if something is true when you know it is not
smell (v) to put your nose near something and breathe in, to discover what kind of smell it has
vase (n) a container used for putting flowers in or as a decoration
violin (n) a musical instrument that you play by pulling a special stick across the strings, while holding it under your chin

'The Launderette'

machine (n) a piece of equipment that uses power such as electricity to do a job
launderette (n) a place where you pay money to wash your clothes in a machine
conditioner (n) a liquid used to soften something when it is washed
karate suit (n) a set of clothes that you wear for doing karate
pair (n) something made of two similar parts that are joined together
underpants (n) a short piece of underwear worn on the lower part of the body
partition (n) a thin wall that separates one part of a room from another
string (n) a thin rope made of several threads twisted together, used for tying things



Student's activities

Photocopiable

These activities can be done alone or with one or more other students. Pair/group-only activities are marked.

Activities before reading the book

- 1 Work with some other students or write your answer. Look up the word 'comedy' in your dictionary, then talk about these questions.
 - (a) Do you like comedy programmes? Say why/why not.
 - (b) Which comedy programme do you like best?
- 2 Look at the name of each story in the book. What do you think each one will be about? Write down your ideas. Show them to a student.

Activities while reading the book

'Steak Tartare'

Page 1 to page 5, line 12

- 1 Answer these questions.
 - (a) Why did Mr Bean think the restaurant was a good restaurant for his birthday dinner?
 - (b) Why did Mr Bean pull the chair away from the manager?
 - (c) Why does the waiter think that Mr Bean is stupid?
 - (d) Why did the woman look angrily at Mr Bean?
 - (e) Why did Mr Bean think he was clever?
 - (f) What happened to Mr Bean's napkin?
- 2 Who said or thought these things? Explain the situation.
 - (a) 'How are you?'
 - (b) 'What's he doing?'
 - (c) 'Are you ready, sir?'
 - (d) 'That man's really stupid!'
 - (e) 'I'll try that!'
- 3 Talk with another student or write your answer. Why did Mr Bean order steak tartare? Do you think he knows what steak tartare is? Why/why not?

Page 5, line 13 to page 8, line 14

- 1 Finish these sentences.
 - (a) Mr Bean couldn't see the food because ...
 - (b) Mr Bean smelled the meat because ...

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- (c) Mr Bean wasn't happy with the steak tartare because ...
 - (d) Mr Bean had to eat the meat because ...
 - (e) Mr Bean pretended to smell the flowers because ...
 - (f) Mr Bean ate the middle of the bread roll so that ...
- 2 Talk with other students or write your answer. Why do you think the waiter took the money that Mr Bean gave him? Was he right to do this? Why/why not?
 - 3 You are at the table next to Mr Bean. Write a letter to your friend. Describe how Mr Bean hides his meat.

Page 8, line 15 to end of story

- 1 These sentences are wrong. Make them right.
 - (a) Mr Bean saw a man with a trumpet.
 - (b) The people at the other tables sang 'Happy Birthday!'
 - (c) The meat fell inside the man's shoes.
 - (d) The waiter fell over a chair.
 - (e) The manager took Mr Bean to the kitchen.
 - (f) The manager took the cover off the plate and Mr Bean started smiling.
- 2 Work with another student.

Student A: You are Mr Bean. Tell the manager where your steak is and why.

Student B: You are the manager. Find out about the steak. Make Mr Bean happy again.
- 3 What do you think Mr Bean will do next? Talk with another student. Write 5–10 lines.

'The Launderette'

Page 13 to page 16, line 4

- 1 Find the two halves of the sentences.
 - (a) Mr Bean put his dirty clothes
 - (b) Mr Bean took two one-pound coins out of his jacket and put them
 - (c) The young woman was
 - (d) Mr Bean put the five-pence coin back
 - (e) The young man pushed Mr Bean
 - (f) The young man put his white karate suit

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ELEMENTARY

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Student's activities

- (i) next to the big washing machine.
 - (ii) into the machine.
 - (iii) on top of the machine.
 - (iv) into a very large black bag.
 - (v) into his jacket.
 - (vi) away from the washing machine.
- 2 Answer these questions.
- (a) Why couldn't Mr Bean get in through the launderette door?
 - (b) Why did Mr Bean want another one-pound coin?
 - (c) Why did Mr Bean pull some string out of his trousers?
 - (d) Why didn't Mr Bean say anything when the young man pushed him?
- 3 Talk with another student or write your answer. Look up the word kind in your dictionary, then look at the picture on page 15. What kind of person is the young man? Was Mr Bean right not to say anything to him?

Page 16, line 5 to page 19, line 9

- 1 This is what happens on pages 16–19. Put these words in the right places.
- Mr Bean started to put his (a) into his washing (b) There were some (c) of underpants. He was (d) Wednesday's underpants, so he had to (e) them off. He went behind a (f) near the washing machines. He took off his brown (g) and put them down near a young woman's clothes. He took off his underpants, put his hand round the partition and took a brown (h) The young woman put his trousers into the (i) machine. Mr Bean tried to (j) the skirt with his hands. The young man (k) at Mr Bean. Mr Bean was (l)
- 2 Work with another student.
- Student A: You are the young man. Tell your friend why Mr Bean is wearing a skirt. Think about why you are unkind to Mr Bean.
- Student B: You are the young man's friend. Ask him why he is unkind to Mr Bean.

- 3 Talk with another student or write your answer. Look at the picture on page 19. What do you think Mr Bean will do?

Page 19, line 10 to end of story

- 1 What happens first, second, third, fourth ...? Write 1–8 next to the sentences.
- (a) Mr Bean changed the young man's cup of conditioner for his cup of black coffee.
 - (b) The young man showed the brown karate suit to the manager.
 - (c) Mr Bean pretended to drink his cup of 'coffee'.
 - (d) The manager asked the young man to go to his office.
 - (e) The young man put the 'conditioner' into the top of his washing machine.
 - (f) The young man ran across to the cup and smelled it.
 - (g) Mr Bean went to the coffee machine and got a cup of black coffee.
 - (h) The karate suit was brown now.
- 2 Answer these questions.
- (a) Why couldn't Mr Bean find his trousers in the woman's bag of clothes?
 - (b) Why did he climb into the dryer?
 - (c) What did the woman do with the brown trousers?
 - (d) Why did Mr Bean shout 'Help!'?
- 3 Put these words together. Put a word or phrase from A with a word or phrase from B.
- A: a pound black a pair of karate
teach him launderette coffee
- B: suit manager coin a lesson coffee
trousers machine

Activities after reading the book

- 1 Work in small groups. Write down a different name for each story. Write five sentences to say what happens in each story.
- 2 Work with another student or write your answer. What do you think about Mr Bean? Do you like him? Why/why not?
- 3 Write your own funny story about Mr Bean.

