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# NOT BORING MEDIA

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## THE MAN WHO DUG A POOL WITH A SPOON

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High-Interest Nonfiction Reading Passage

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ Reading Passage
- ✓ Comprehension Questions
- ✓ Answer Key
- ✓ Teacher Guide

**GRADES 4-6 • LEXILE ~750L • DOK LEVELS 1-4**

*Reading they'll actually do.*

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### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ High-interest nonfiction reading passage (300-400 words)
- ✓ 6 comprehension questions spanning DOK levels 1-4
- ✓ Complete answer key with explanations
- ✓ Teacher guide with standards, pacing, and extensions

Questions or feedback? Leave a review or message us through TPT!

# THE MAN WHO DUG A POOL WITH A SPOON

In the 1960s, a British man named Keith Davison wanted something most suburban homeowners only dream about: a swimming pool in his backyard. The problem was simple but seemingly insurmountable—he couldn't afford to hire contractors to build one. So Davison made a decision that his neighbors thought was absolutely insane: he would dig the entire pool himself, using nothing but hand tools. It took him 10 years of weekends and evenings, but he eventually completed a full-sized swimming pool entirely through his own labor.

Davison started with basic equipment: a pickaxe for breaking the hard ground, a shovel for moving dirt, and an endless supply of determination. His property had heavy clay soil that was exhausting to dig through even in small amounts. Every evening after work, he would go outside and excavate for a few hours. On weekends, he spent entire days in the growing hole. Progress was measured in inches rather than feet.

His neighbors watched the project with a mixture of amusement and disbelief. Some offered to help, but Davison preferred working alone. He found the repetitive physical labor meditative and deeply satisfying. 'Every bucket of dirt was one bucket closer to my goal,' he later explained to reporters who covered his unusual story.

As the excavation deepened, new challenges appeared that Davison hadn't anticipated. He had to learn basic engineering principles to prevent the clay walls from collapsing inward. He taught himself plumbing to install proper drains and filtration systems. He researched concrete work to line and seal the pool correctly. What had started as simple digging evolved into a comprehensive self-taught education in construction trades.

When the pool was finally completed in the early 1970s, Davison held a celebration party for everyone who had doubted him. He dove in first, marking the culmination of a decade of persistent effort. The pool worked perfectly and remained in use for decades.

Davison's story became local legend and eventually attracted newspaper coverage. He always emphasized that the satisfaction came not from the pool itself, but from knowing he had accomplished something that most people said was impossible. Sometimes the longest road to a goal is also the most rewarding one.

Word Count: 365 | Lexile: ~750L | Grades 4-6 | Source: BBC News

## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

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

**1** How long did it take Davison to dig the pool?

- ☐ A) 1 year
- ☐ B) 5 years
- ☐ C) 10 years
- ☐ D) 20 years

**2** What tools did Davison start with?

- ☐ A) Power tools and machines
- ☐ B) A pickaxe and shovel
- ☐ C) Explosives
- ☐ D) He hired help

**3** What skills did Davison have to learn?

- ☐ A) Swimming only
- ☐ B) Engineering, plumbing, and concrete work
- ☐ C) Accounting
- ☐ D) Nothing new

**4** Why did Davison prefer working alone?

- ☐ A) No friends
- ☐ B) He found the labor meditative and satisfying
- ☐ C) Others were slow
- ☐ D) It was illegal

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**What was more satisfying than the pool itself?**

- ☐ A) The newspaper coverage
- ☐ B) Knowing he accomplished something others said was impossible
- ☐ C) Swimming
- ☐ D) Money saved

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**What does this suggest about effort and meaning?**

- ☐ A) Quick results are always better
- ☐ B) Long challenging projects can provide deeper satisfaction than easy ones
- ☐ C) Pools aren't worth building
- ☐ D) Everyone should dig pools

## ANSWER KEY

### The Man Who Dug a Pool With a Spoon

1. C) 10 years

*DOK 1 — Recall.*

2. B) A pickaxe and shovel

*DOK 1 — Recall.*

3. B) Engineering, plumbing, and concrete work

*DOK 2 — Inference.*

4. B) He found the labor meditative and satisfying

*DOK 2 — Inference.*

5. B) Knowing he accomplished something others said was impossible

*DOK 3 — Analysis.*

6. B) Long challenging projects can provide deeper satisfaction than easy ones

*DOK 4 — Extended Thinking.*

## **TEACHER GUIDE**

The Man Who Dug a Pool With a Spoon

### **STANDARDS ALIGNMENT**

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.1 — Refer to details and examples in a text
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.4 — Determine meaning of words and phrases
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.8 — Explain how author uses evidence

### **PACING OPTIONS**

- Quick Read (10-15 min): Passage + questions 1-4
- Standard (20-25 min): Full passage + all questions
- Deep Dive (35-40 min): Add discussion + extension

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Davison found the work 'meditative.' What tasks do you find satisfying even when they're difficult?
- Would the pool have meant as much to Davison if he'd hired contractors? Why or why not?
- His neighbors thought he was crazy. When is persistence admirable versus foolish?

### **EXTENSION ACTIVITIES**

- Calculate approximately how many buckets of dirt Davison would have moved to dig a standard pool.
- Interview someone about a long-term project they completed and what it taught them.
- Set a small personal goal that requires daily effort for a month and journal about the experience.

### **DIFFERENTIATION**

- Struggling: Pre-teach vocabulary, partner reading
- Advanced: Add research, compare to related events
- ELL: Visual supports, pre-teach context

### **SOURCE**

- BBC News / Moroccan media