

# King Solomon's Mines

READING

LEVEL  
Advanced

NUMBER  
C1\_2057R\_EN

LANGUAGE  
English





## Goals

- Can read and understand a lengthy and complex excerpt from H. Rider Haggard's 'King Solomon's Mines'.
- Can evaluate the protagonists' attitudes towards indigenous races.







## Adventure stories

What kind of adventure stories are you familiar with? Create a plot you'd be likely to come across for each image.





## King Solomon's Mines

Are you familiar with *King Solomon's Mines*? What do you think the story could be about, based on the title?





## Vocabulary



Elizabeth strode down the aisle **majestically**.



The skyscrapers **loomed** above us intimidatingly.



We rode through the valleys and **undulating** peaks of the countryside.



A **diaphanous** mist enveloped the scene, covering the horizon in a mysterious haze.



## Vocabulary



Yes, the silk dress is quite **luxuriant!**



With a **sullen** look, Jennifer turned away.



Juice **issued from** the fruit as he peeled it.



The scene was defined by layers of moss and **vegetation**.



## King Solomon's Mines

"When we are among the Kukuanas, my good friend Infadoos, we do as the Kukuanas do," I said **majestically**, and turned round quickly to address Good, who was tramping along **sullenly** behind, his mind fully occupied with unsatisfactory attempts to prevent his flannel shirt from flapping in the evening breeze. To my astonishment I butted into Umbopa, who was walking along immediately behind me, and very evidently had been listening with the greatest interest to my conversation with Infadoos. The expression on his face was most curious, and gave me the idea of a man who was struggling with partial success to bring something long ago forgotten back into his mind.



## King Solomon's Mines



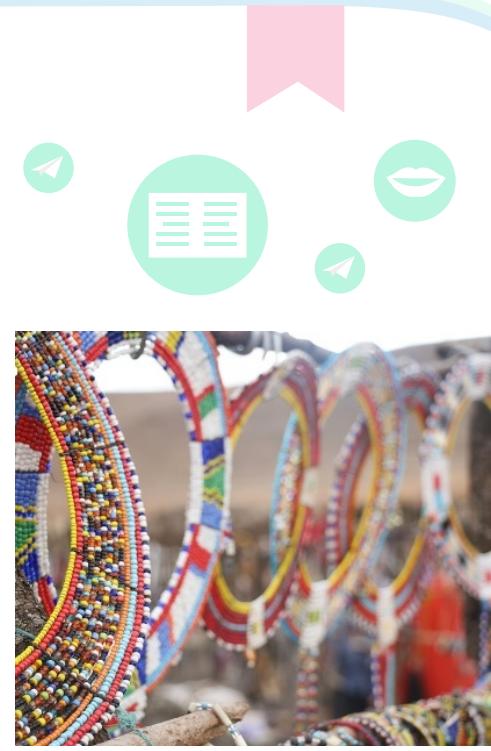
All this while we had been pressing on at a good rate towards the **undulating** plain beneath us. The mountains we had crossed now **loomed** high above our heads, and Sheba's Breasts were **veiled** modestly in **diaphanous** wreaths of mist. As we went the country grew more and more lovely. The **vegetation** was **luxuriant**, without being tropical; the sun was bright and warm, but not burning; and a **gracious** breeze blew softly along the **odorous** slopes of the mountains. Indeed, this new land was little less than an earthly paradise; in beauty, in natural wealth, and in climate I have never seen its like. The Transvaal is a fine country, but it is nothing to Kukuanaland.



## King Solomon's Mines

So soon as we started Infadoos had despatched a runner to warn the people of the **kraal**, which, by the way, was in his military command, of our arrival. This man had departed at an extraordinary speed, which Infadoos informed me he would keep up all the way, as running was an exercise much practised among his people.

The result of this message now became apparent. When we arrived within two miles of the kraal we could see that company after company of men were **issuing from** its gates and marching towards us.





## New words

**kraal**

A **kraal** is a South African term for a traditional village of huts, which may be surrounded by a fence.

**gracious**

Wolfgang was a very **gracious** loser after he lost the game of pool.

**odorous**

The **odorous** scent of the wet dog woke me from my daydream.

**to veil**

The other half of the room was **veiled** by a curtain.



## Describe the pictures

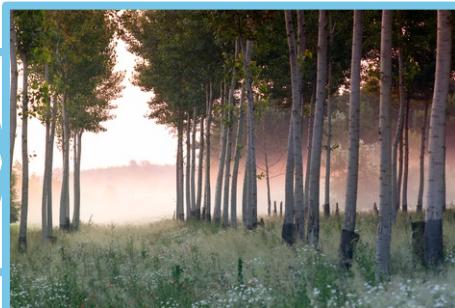
Use adjectives and rich descriptive vocabulary to describe these landscapes



beach



hills



woods



plains



**Rewrite the sentences, making them more interesting, in your own words. Use lots of similes and metaphors!**

1. The sun reflected off the water very beautifully.



The sun sparkled on the surface of the water, glinting like diamonds on the sea.

2. Big mountains were visible in the distance.



\_\_\_\_\_

3. The desert was as dry as a bone..



\_\_\_\_\_

4. The snow lay undisturbed like a big white pillow.



\_\_\_\_\_

5. Dew glistened off the leaves, and the earth was damp under our feet.



\_\_\_\_\_



## Describe a landscape



"The vegetation was luxuriant, without being tropical; the sun was bright and warm, but not burning; and a gracious breeze blew softly along the odorous slopes of the mountains. Indeed, this new land was little less than an earthly paradise; in beauty, in natural wealth, and in climate."

Write a description of the most magnificent landscape you have ever seen.



## King Solomon's Mines

Sir Henry laid his hand upon my arm, and remarked that it looked as though we were going to meet with a warm reception. Something in his tone attracted Infadoos' attention.

"Let not my lords be afraid," he said hastily, "for in my breast there dwells no guile. This regiment is one under my command, and comes out by my orders to greet you."

I nodded easily, though I was not quite easy in my mind.



## King Solomon's Mines

About half a mile from the gates of this kraal is a long stretch of rising ground sloping gently upwards from the road, and here the companies formed. It was a splendid sight to see them, each company about three hundred strong, charging swiftly up the rise, with flashing spears and waving **plumes**, to take their appointed place. By the time we reached the slope twelve such companies, or in all three thousand six hundred men, had passed out and taken up their positions along the road.

Presently we came to the first company, and were able to gaze in astonishment on the most magnificent set of warriors that I have ever seen. They were all men of mature age, mostly veterans of about forty, and not one of them was under six feet in height, whilst many stood six feet three or four.



## King Solomon's Mines



They wore upon their heads heavy black plumes of Sakaboola feathers, like those which adorned our guides. About their waists and beneath the right knees were bound circlets of white ox tails, while in their left hands they carried round shields measuring about twenty inches across. These shields are very curious. The framework is made of an iron plate beaten out thin, over which is stretched milk-white ox-hide.



## King Solomon's Mines

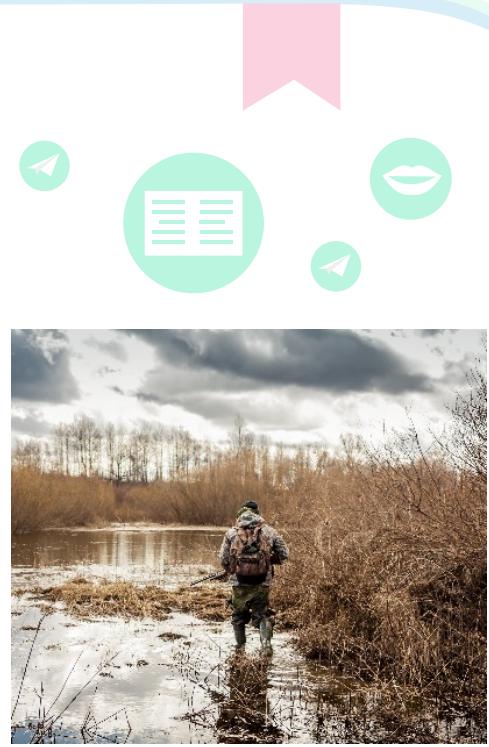


The weapons that each man bore were simple, but most effective, consisting of a short and very heavy two-edged spear with a wooden shaft, the blade being about six inches across at the widest part. These spears are not used for throwing but like the Zulu "*bangwan*," or stabbing assegai, are for close quarters only, when the wound inflicted by them is terrible. In addition to his *bangwan* every man carried three large and heavy knives, each knife weighing about two pounds.



## King Solomon's Mines

One knife was fixed in the ox-tail girdle, and the other two at the back of the round shield. These knives, which are called "*tollas*" by the Kukuanas, take the place of the throwing assegai of the Zulus. The Kukana warriors can cast them with great **accuracy** to a distance of fifty yards, and it is their custom on charging to hurl a **volley** of them at the enemy as they come to close quarters.





## King Solomon's Mines

Each company remained still as a collection of bronze statues till we were opposite to it, when at a signal given by its commanding officer, who, **distinguished** by a leopard skin cloak, stood some paces in front, every spear was raised into the air, and from three hundred throats sprang forth with a sudden roar the royal salute of "Koom." Then, so soon as we had passed, the company formed up behind us and followed us towards the kraal, till at last the whole regiment of the "Greys"—so called from their white shields—the crack corps of the Kukuana people, was marching in our rear with a tread that shook the ground.





## New words

**distinguished**

The officer stood proudly, **distinguished** by his bravery.

**accuracy**

The arrows landed with perfect **accuracy**.

**volley**

The regiment fired a **volley** at the charging cavalry.

**plumes**

The exotic bird had a stunning **plumes** of feathers.



Which words are accurate descriptions of the narrator's perspective towards the indigenous population?

untamed

refined  
nobl

magnificent

i civilised

savage

cultivate

d

untrustworth

primitive



## Colonial perspectives

**Talk to your teacher about the attitudes of the narrator towards the Kukuana people. Use the questions in the boxes below to guide your discussion.**



What kind of words does he use to describe the Kukuana?

Does he view them as equals?

What kind of prejudices does he hold?

What is his opinion of the Kukuana's character?

What is his view of their society?



## Intentions

What intentions do you think the narrator and his party have? Why are they visiting Kukuanaland?



## Speculate

**Read over the quote taken from the text below. Allan Quartermain (the narrator) doesn't feel very comfortable. Discuss with your teacher why this might be.**

“

I nodded easily, though I was not quite easy in my mind.

”



## King Solomon's Mines



At length, branching off from Solomon's Great Road, we came to the wide fosse surrounding the kraal, which is at least a mile round, and fenced with a strong palisade of piles formed of the trunks of trees. At the gateway this fosse is spanned by a primitive drawbridge, which was let down by the guard to allow us to pass in. The kraal is exceedingly well laid out. Through the centre runs a wide pathway intersected at right angles by other pathways so arranged as to cut the huts into square blocks, each block being the quarters of a company.



## King Solomon's Mines



The huts are dome-shaped, and built, like those of the Zulus, of a framework of wattle, beautifully thatched with grass; but, unlike the Zulu huts, they have doorways through which men could walk. Also they are much larger, and surrounded by a verandah about six feet wide, beautifully paved with powdered lime trodden hard.



## King Solomon's Mines

All along each side of this wide pathway that pierces the kraal were ranged hundreds of women, brought out by curiosity to look at us. These women, for a native race, are exceedingly handsome. They are tall and graceful, and their figures are wonderfully fine. The hair, though short, is rather curly than woolly, the features are frequently aquiline, and the lips are not unpleasantly thick, as is the case among most African races. But what struck us most was their exceedingly quiet and dignified air. They were as well-bred in their way as the *habituées* of a fashionable drawing-room, and in this respect they differ from Zulu women and their cousins the Masai who inhabit the district beyond Zanzibar. Their curiosity had brought them out to see us, but they allowed no rude expressions of astonishment or savage criticism to pass their lips as we trudged wearily in front of them.



## King Solomon's Mines

Not even when old Infadoos with a surreptitious motion of the hand pointed out the crowning wonder of poor Good's "beautiful white legs," did they suffer the feeling of intense admiration which evidently mastered their minds to find expression. They fixed their dark eyes upon this new and snowy loveliness, for, as I think I have said, Good's skin is exceedingly white, and that was all. But it was quite enough for Good, who is modest by nature.



## King Solomon's Mines



When we reached the centre of the kraal, Infadoos halted at the door of a large hut, which was surrounded at a distance by a circle of smaller ones. "Enter, Sons of the Stars," he said, in a magniloquent voice, "and deign to rest awhile in our humble habitations. A little food shall be brought to you, so that ye may have no need to draw your belts tight from hunger; some honey and some milk, and an ox or two, and a few sheep; not much, my lords, but still a little food."

"It is good," said I. "Infadoos; we are weary with travelling through realms of air; now let us rest."



## King Solomon's Mines



Accordingly we entered the hut, which we found amply prepared for our comfort. Couches of tanned skins were spread for us to lie on, and water was placed for us to wash in.



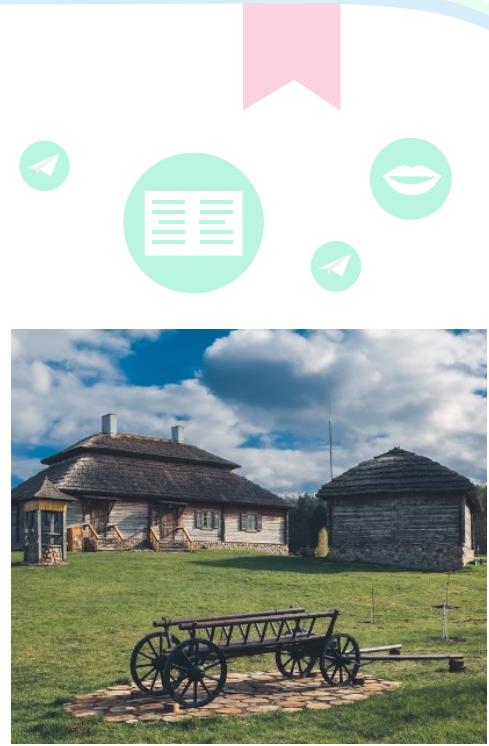
## King Solomon's Mines

Presently we heard a shouting outside, and stepping to the door, saw a line of damsels bearing milk and roasted mealies, and honey in a pot. Behind these were some youths driving a fat young ox. We received the gifts, and then one of the young men drew the knife from his girdle and dexterously cut the ox's throat. In ten minutes it was dead, skinned, and jointed. The best of the meat was then cut off for us, and the rest, in the name of our party, I presented to the warriors round us, who took it and distributed the "white lords' gift."



## King Solomon's Mines

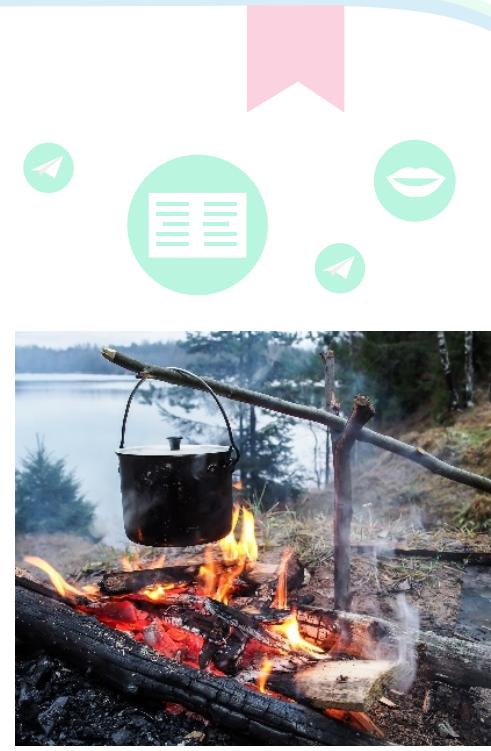
Umbopa set to work, with the assistance of an extremely prepossessing young woman, to boil our portion in a large earthenware pot over a fire which was built outside the hut, and when it was nearly ready we sent a message to Infadoos, and asked him and Scragga, the king's son, to join us.





## King Solomon's Mines

Presently they came, and sitting down upon little stools, of which there were several about the hut, for the Kukuanas do not in general squat upon their haunches like the Zulus, they helped us to get through our dinner. The old gentleman was most affable and polite, but it struck me that the young one regarded us with doubt. Together with the rest of the party, he had been overawed by our white appearance and by our magic properties; but it seemed to me that, on discovering that we ate, drank, and slept like other mortals, his awe was beginning to wear off, and to be replaced by a sullen suspicion—which made me feel rather uncomfortable.





## Big question

**What do you think  
of the way in which  
the women are  
described in the  
text?**

appearance

equal

condescending

primitive

object



## Have your say



Imagine you are one of the Kukuana women. Step forward and give Allan Quartermain a piece of your mind! Draft out what you're going to say based on your answers in the previous activity.



## Summarise the narrative

Try to summarise the events in the excerpt. Try to write concisely.



1

The narrator's party is travelling through the unexplored Kukuanaland, led by a native guide.



## Add description

**Imagine you have joined the adventure and are travelling with Quartermain and his companions. Write some sentences to describe the landscape of your journey through Kukuanaland.**



1

Try to summarise the events in the excerpt. Write concisely.



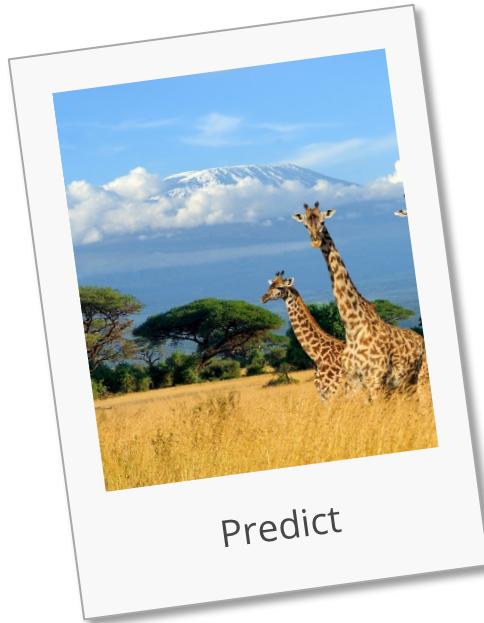
2

As we followed our able guide the undulating hills gave way to a vast valley, verdant with rich tropical vegetation. From our vantage point we could see...



## Predict what happens next

Talk to your teacher and predict what might happen next in the story.



1

Summarise the events in the excerpt. Write concisely.

2

Describe the landscape of Kukuanaland.

3

After their meal, the travellers sat discussing the merits of the meal and the hospitality of the Kukuanas. As they were relaxing...

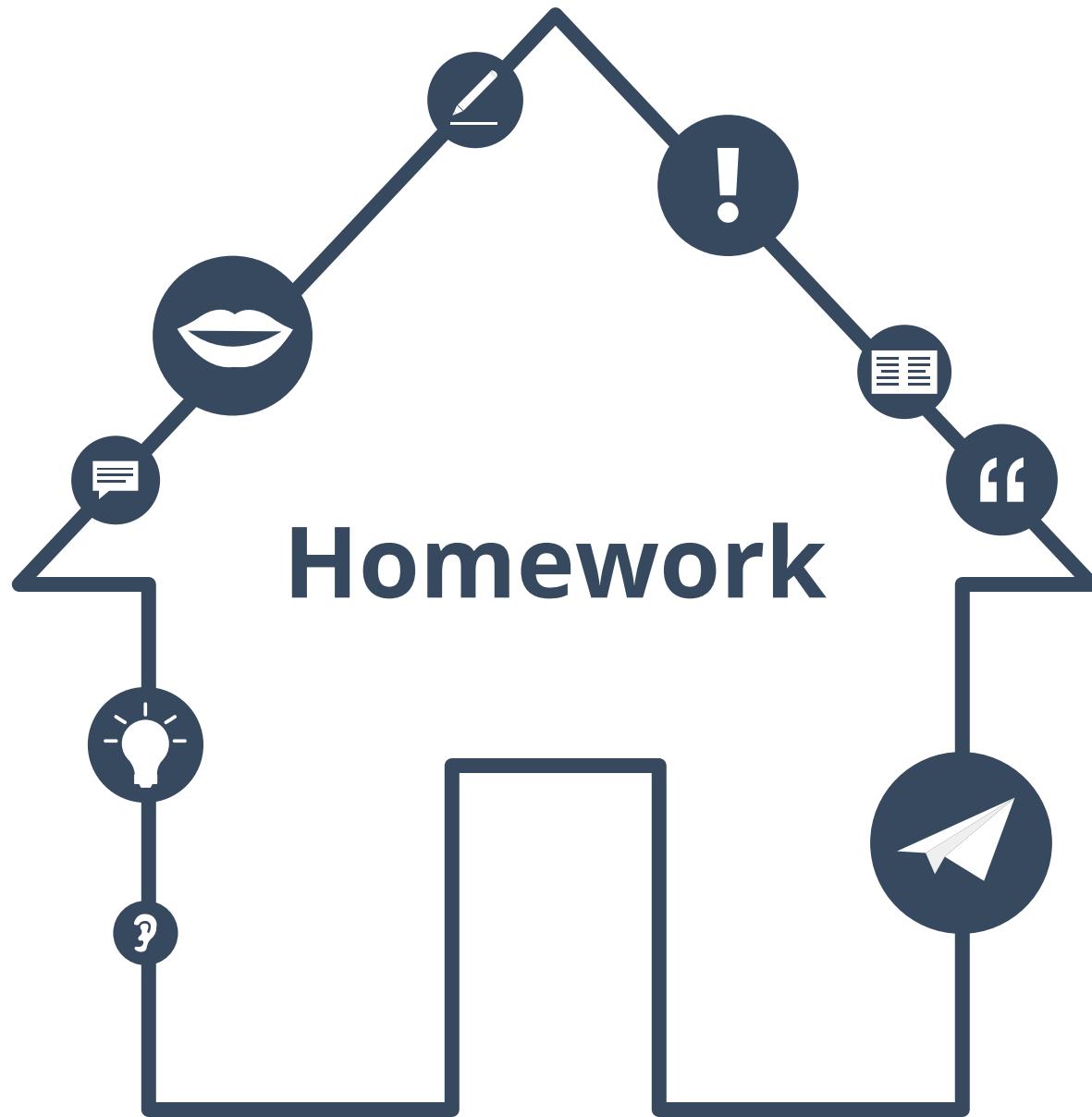


## Reflect on the lesson

Take a moment to review any new **vocabulary, phrases, language structures** or **grammar points** you have come across for the first time in this lesson.

Review them with your teacher one more time to make sure you don't forget!







## Fill in the gaps

We came upon the opening to the cave, hidden along the \_\_\_\_\_ side of the mountain. After three hours of climbing, the view stretched out below, a rich green carpet of \_\_\_\_\_ jungle. \_\_\_\_\_ clouds spread from the east, obscuring the sun behind them.

After entering the \_\_\_\_\_ cavern it took a while for our eyes to become adjusted to our surroundings. The flickering candle created \_\_\_\_\_ which danced along the walls like ghosts in our periphery.

In the centre of the \_\_\_\_\_ room there lay a \_\_\_\_\_, dark pool. Something was unnerving about its \_\_\_\_\_, as if below the surface lay something sleeping and undisturbed. A \_\_\_\_\_ mood came over our party, and we crept past in silence, as if under a spell.

waters

shadows

rugged

ominous

gloomy

hesitant

subterranean

verdant

still



## Adventure!

You've been on an adventure of your own to an unknown and unexplored country. Having been deep in the wilderness for so long you have had no access to the internet. Now you are back in civilisation, you should send an email back home to let everyone know about your trip. Aim for 200 words, and try to use rich descriptive vocabulary to describe the places you saw.

-

To:

Subject:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I have finally made it back to the city after my trip to \_\_\_\_\_!

It is such an amazing place, and being relatively unexplored we saw a great many fascinating sights...



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