

The Time Machine

READING

LEVEL
Advanced

NUMBER
C1_3037R_EN

LANGUAGE
English

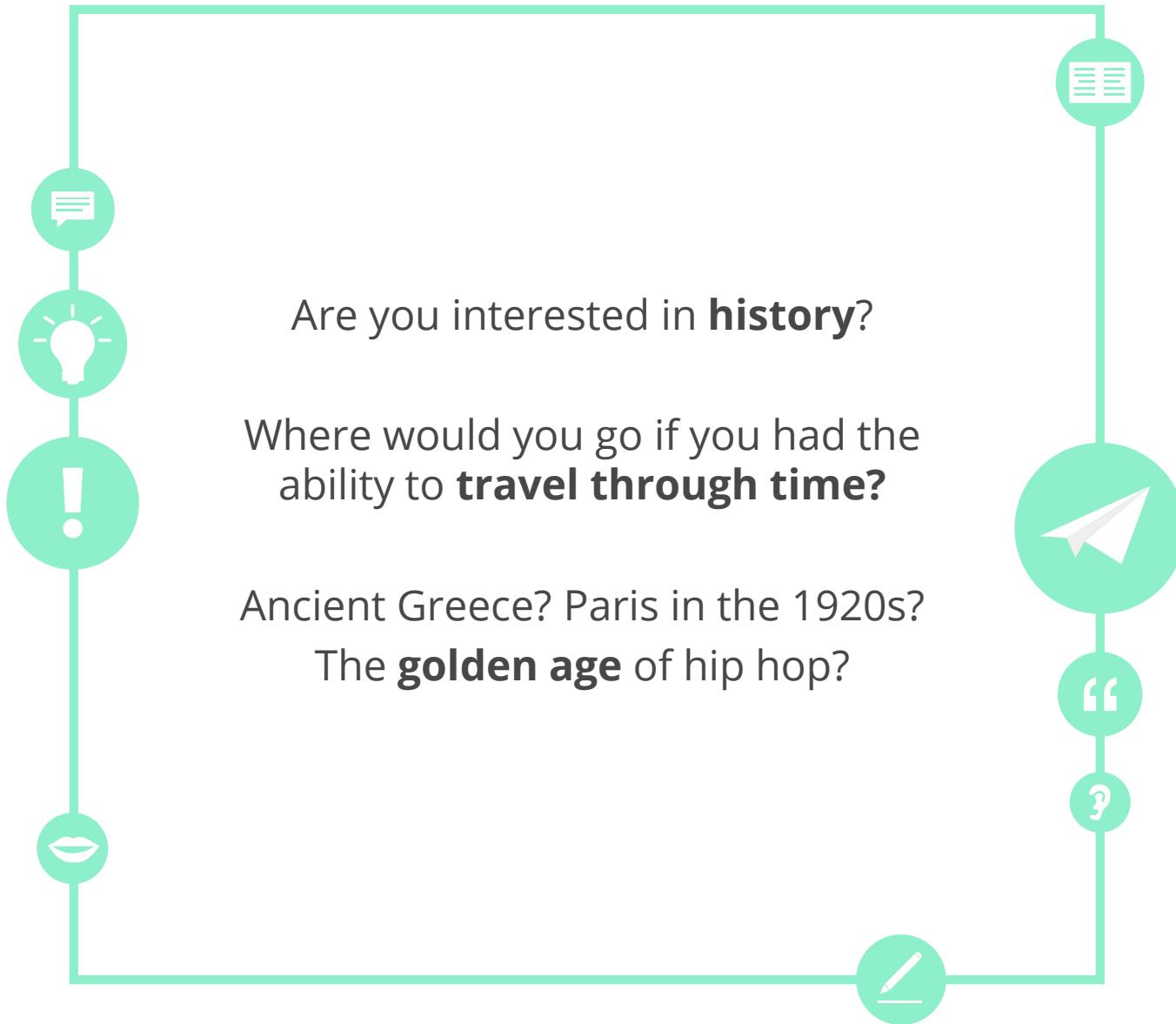




Goals

- Can read and understand a complex literary excerpt from 'The Time Machine' by H G Wells.
- Can identify and give my own interpretation of the themes of change, development and the future in the text.





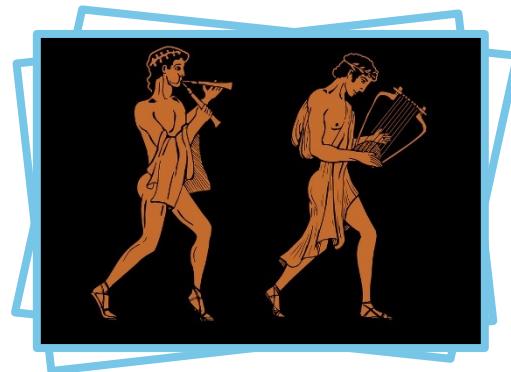


Going back in time

Have you ever thought of going back in time?

Describe the setting in each of the pictures.

Where would you go if you had access to a time machine?





Time travel

Published in 1895, *The Time Machine* is notable for popularising the notion of time travel. What other stories or films have you seen that explore this concept?





Vocabulary



The rapid growth of artificial intelligence feels like we are heading quickly into **futurity**.



His heart was **palpitating** with fear.



Those musicians always surprise me with their **prodigious** talent.



The city stood ruined, silent and **desolate**.



Vocabulary



I entered the classroom with a strong feeling of **apprehension**.

It is distressing how many people allow themselves to be **deceived** by propaganda.



Julie looked at me, her face **aghast**.

We are in **transit** and will see you soon.





The Time Machine

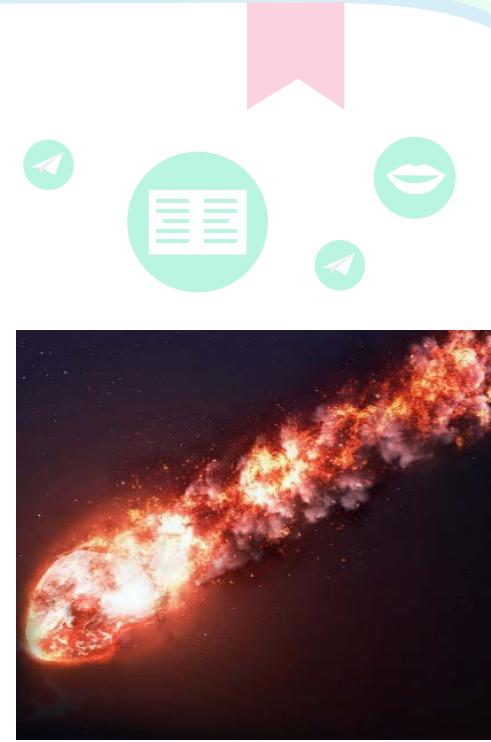


For an indefinite time I clung to the machine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how I went, and when I brought myself to look at the dials again I was amazed to find where I had arrived. One dial records days, and another thousands of days, another millions of days, and another thousands of millions. Now, instead of reversing the levers, I had pulled them over so as to go forward with them, and when I came to look at these indicators I found that the thousands hand was sweeping round as fast as the seconds hand of a watch—into **futurity**.



The Time Machine

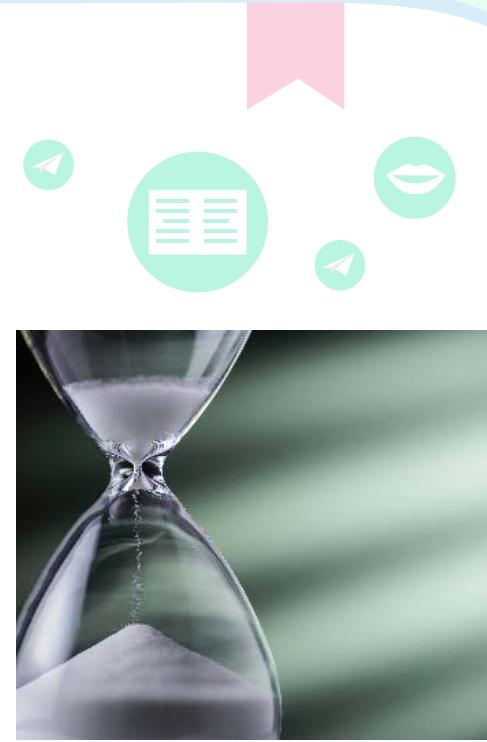
'As I drove on, a peculiar change crept over the appearance of things. The **palpitating** greyness grew darker; then—though I was still travelling with **prodigious** velocity—the blinking succession of day and night, which was usually indicative of a slower pace, returned, and grew more and more marked. This puzzled me very much at first. The alternations of night and day grew slower and slower, and so did the passage of the sun across the sky, until they seemed to stretch through centuries.





The Time Machine

At last a steady twilight brooded over the earth, a twilight only broken now and then when a comet glared across the darkling sky. The band of light that had indicated the sun had long since disappeared; for the sun had ceased to set—it simply rose and fell in the west, and grew ever broader and more red. All trace of the moon had vanished. The circling of the stars, growing slower and slower, had given place to creeping points of light.





The Time Machine

At last, some time before I stopped, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast dome glowing with a dull heat, and now and then suffering a momentary extinction.

At one time it had for a little while glowed more brilliantly again, but it speedily reverted to its sullen red heat. I perceived by this slowing down of its rising and setting that the work of the tidal drag was done. The earth had come to rest with one face to the sun, even as in our own time the moon faces the earth. Very cautiously, for I remembered my former headlong fall, I began to reverse my motion. Slower and slower went the circling hands until the thousands one seemed motionless and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upon its scale. Still slower, until the dim outlines of a **desolate** beach grew visible.



Make these sentence more concise – strip them of verbosity

For an indefinite time I clung to the machine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how I went, and when I brought myself to look at the dials again I was amazed to find where I had arrived.



I didn't know how long I clung to the vibrating, unruly machine for. When I looked at the controls I was amazed to find where I had arrived.

Slower and slower went the circling hands until the thousands one seemed motionless and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upon its scale.



The alternations of night and day grew slower and slower, and so did the passage of the sun across the sky, until they seemed to stretch through centuries.



Very cautiously, for I remembered my former headlong fall, I began to reverse my motion.



At last, some time before I stopped, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast dome glowing with a dull heat, and now and then suffering a momentary extinction.





Discuss

Answer the following questions. Refer back to the text to help you answer.



1

How does the narrator evoke the feeling of travelling through time? What emotions did you feel reading this section?

2

How does the narrator emphasise how far into the future he has travelled? Use examples from the text to illustrate your answer.

3

What changes does the earth go through as the narrator travels forward in time? Do you think this is realistic?



The Time Machine

I stopped very gently and sat upon the Time Machine, looking round. The sky was no longer blue. North-eastward it was inky black, and out of the blackness shone brightly and steadily the pale white stars. Overhead it was a deep Indian red and starless, and south-eastward it grew brighter to a glowing scarlet where, cut by the horizon, lay the huge hull of the sun, red and motionless. The rocks about me were of a harsh reddish colour, and all the trace of life that I could see at first was the intensely green vegetation that covered every projecting point on their south-eastern face. It was the same rich green that one sees on forest moss or on the **lichen** in caves: plants which like these grow in a perpetual twilight.

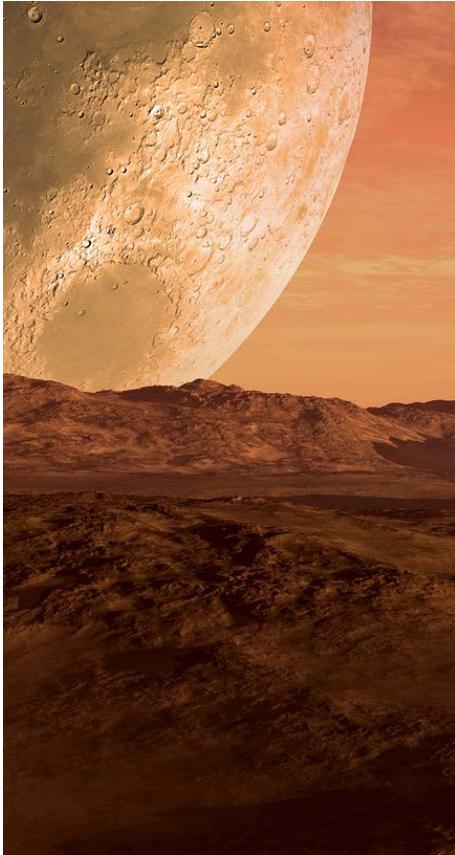


The Time Machine

'The machine was standing on a sloping beach. The sea stretched away to the south-west, to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed that the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt—pink under the lurid sky. There was a sense of oppression in my head, and I noticed that I was breathing very fast. The sensation reminded me of my only experience of mountaineering, and from that I judged the air to be more **rarefied** than it is now.



The Time Machine



Far away up the **desolate** slope I heard a harsh scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of its voice was so dismal that I shivered and seated myself more firmly upon the machine.

So I travelled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth's fate, watching with a strange fascination the sun grow larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebb away.



The Time Machine

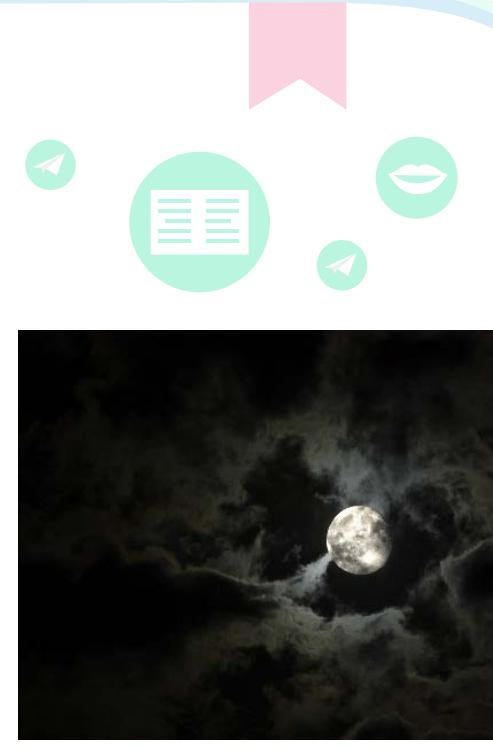
At last, more than thirty million years hence, the huge red-hot dome of the sun had come to obscure nearly a tenth part of the darkling heavens. Then I stopped once more, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts and lichens, seemed lifeless. And now it was flecked with white. A bitter cold assailed me. Rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down.

To the north-eastward, the glare of snow lay under the starlight of the sable sky and I could see an undulating crest of hillocks pinkish white. There were fringes of ice along the sea margin, with drifting masses further out; but the main expanse of that salt ocean, all bloody under the **eternal** sunset, was still unfrozen.



The Time Machine

I looked about me to see if any traces of animal life remained. A certain indefinable **apprehension** still kept me in the saddle of the machine. But I saw nothing moving, in earth or sky or sea. The green slime on the rocks alone testified that life was not extinct. A shallow sandbank had appeared in the sea and the water had receded from the beach. I fancied I saw some black object flopping about upon this bank, but it became motionless as I looked at it, and I judged that my eye had been **deceived**, and that the black object was merely a rock. The stars in the sky were intensely bright and seemed to me to twinkle very little.





New words

rarefied

That horse has a **rarefied** and noble character.

perpetual

After a few hours, the **perpetual** ticking of the grandfather clock started to get to me.

lichen

Jane scrambled over the rocks, slippery with **lichen** and moss.

eternal

The statue stood in **eternal** guard of the palace.



Using colour



The descriptions of the future land make vivid use of colour. What colours can you pick out from the text? What effect does this have?



Explain what each of these adjectives are referring to in the text

dismal

shallow

harsh

inky

bitter

desolate

bright

eternal

pale

indefinable



Vocabulary in context

Use these adjectives from the text in a different context. Make one sentence using each of the words.



harsh

dismal

indefinable

inky

eternal

shallow

desolate

pale

bitter



Talk to the teacher

"A certain indefinable apprehension still kept me in the saddle of the machine"

Why might the narrator be feeling apprehensive?

Talk to your teacher about the apprehensiveness that comes with going back in time. What else makes you feel apprehensive?



fear of the unknown

confusion

uncertainty

a wish to go back home

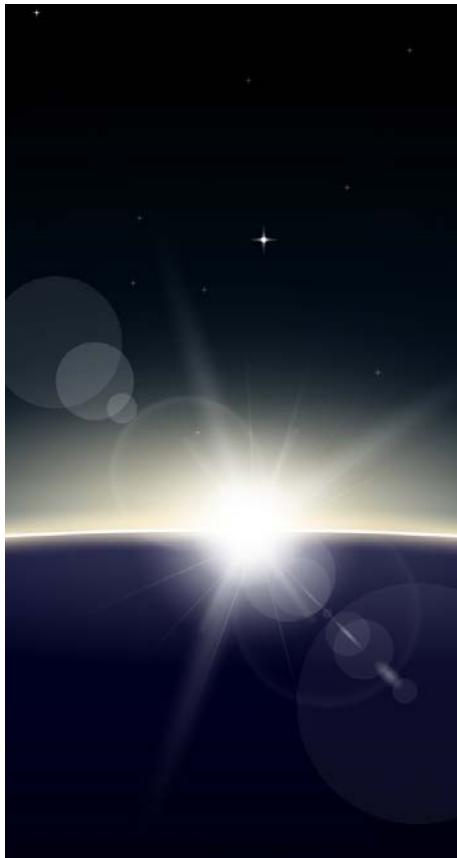


What do you think?

The future described in
the story seems to
contain no trace of
humans.
Why could this be?



The Time Machine



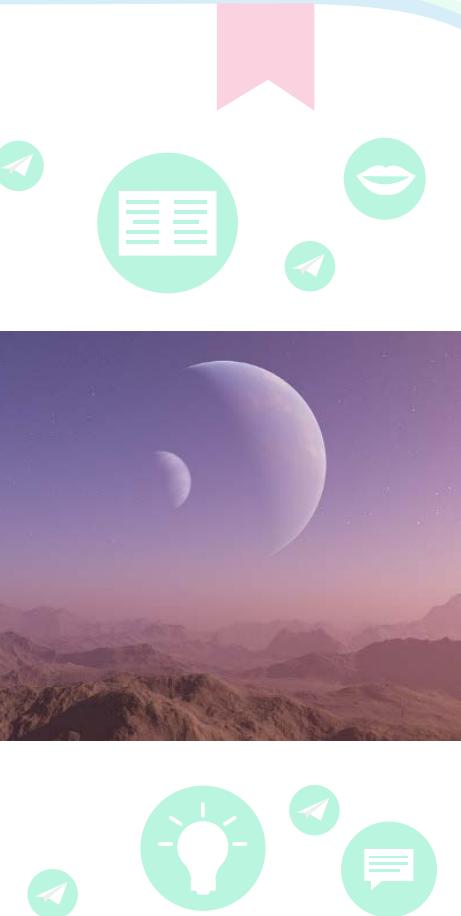
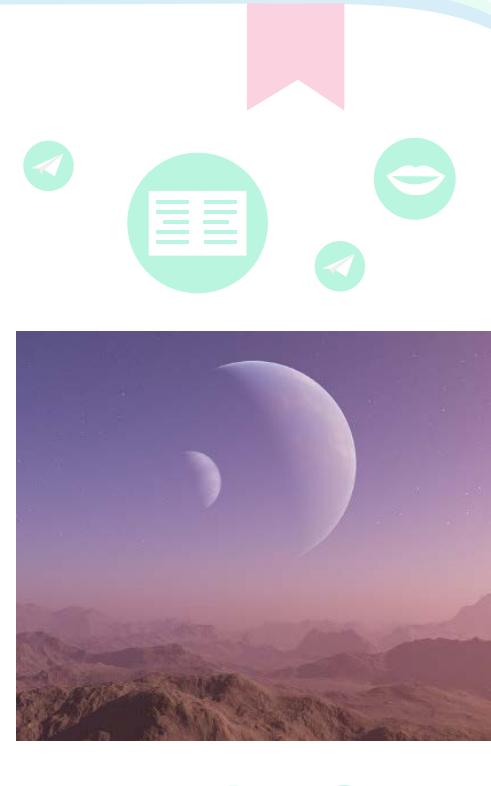
Suddenly I noticed that the circular westward outline of the sun had changed; that a **concavity**, a bay, had appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a minute perhaps I stared **aghast** at this blackness that was creeping over the day, and then I realized that an eclipse was beginning. Either the moon or the planet Mercury was passing across the sun's disk. Naturally, at first I took it to be the moon, but there is much to incline me to believe that what I really saw was the **transit** of an inner planet passing very near to the earth.

The darkness grew **apace**; a cold wind began to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and the showering white flakes in the air increased in number.



The Time Machine

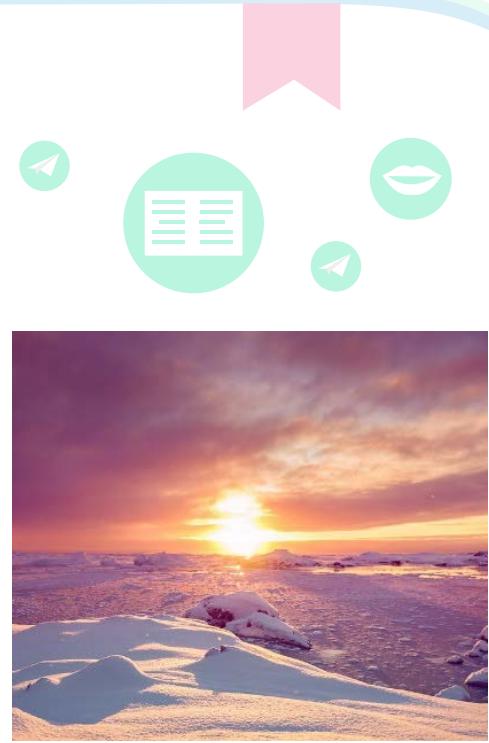
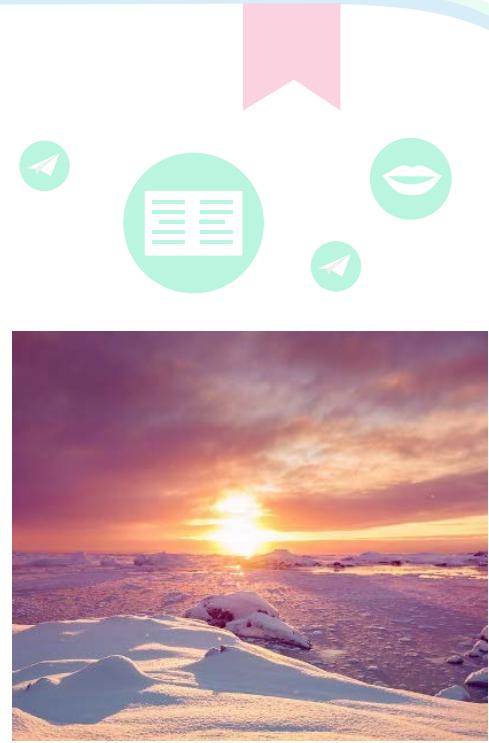
From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives—all that was over. As the darkness thickened, the eddying flakes grew more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, one by one, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze rose to a moaning wind. I saw the black central shadow of the **eclipse** sweeping towards me. In another moment the pale stars alone were visible. All else was rayless **obscurity**. The sky was absolutely black.





The Time Machine

A horror of this great darkness came on me. The cold, that smote to my marrow, and the pain I felt in breathing, overcame me. I shivered, and a deadly **nausea** seized me. Then like a red-hot bow in the sky appeared the edge of the sun.





New words

eclipse

We were lucky enough to witness the solar **eclipse** last night.

apace

Yes, progress on the renovations proceeds **apace**!

obscurity

After releasing some catchy early singles, the band faded into **obscURITY**.

nausea

I was gripped by a persistent, sickening **nausea** which left me bedridden.



Comprehension

“From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of man, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir that makes the background of our lives—all that was over.”

1. What is the narrator describing in the passage above?

2. Talk to your teacher about how the narrator feels:
 - Lonely?
 - Confused?
 - Moved?
 - Hopeless?

3. How would you feel in such a situation?





Future

What vision of the future does Wells present us with in *The Time Machine*?

How far in the future do you think the narrator travelled?



Visions of the future

**Everyone has their own idea of what the future will look like.
Write a reflection on the different opinions below.**



It is inevitable that humans will one day come into contact with other forms of life in the universe – as long as we manage to avoid a nuclear apocalypse!



With the way everything is going with politics and the environment I don't think we will be around very much longer!



With all of the advances in robotics and artificial intelligence, I foresee a future where humans have much more leisure time and even greater levels of connectivity.



I have faith in the future – we are innovative and good at finding ways to thrive in new environments. I hope future generations manage to explore the universe and visit new planets.

apocalypse

An **apocalypse** is a great disaster or catastrophic event that causes massive loss of life and destruction.



He is a very interesting writer, but I get concerned about his pessimism about impending **apocalypse**.



An apocalyptic vision?

Would you describe H G Wells' vision of the distant future apocalyptic? Why (not)?



Apocalypse

There are many who believe that humans will one day manage to wipe themselves out. Pick the most likely apocalyptic scenario below and write a paragraph about it.

Nuclear war

An asteroid collides with Earth

Global warming and climate change

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-



Writing exercise

Popular culture often portrays settings of apocalypse.
Write a description of an apocalyptic landscape using emotive and descriptive language.



The streets were barren, and smoke blotted out the sky overhead. The blackened shells of cars lay forgotten in the parking lots...



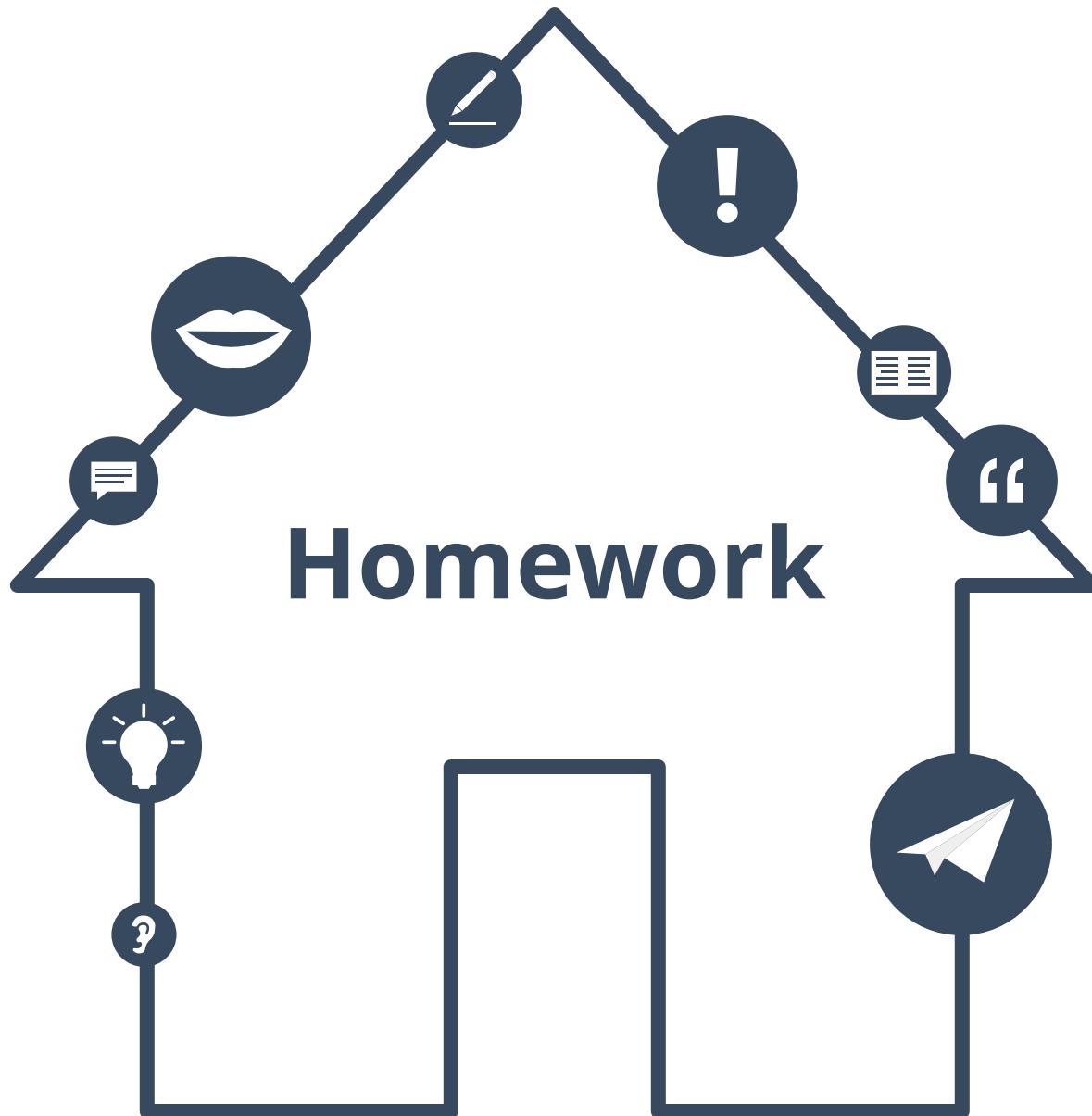


Reflect on the lesson

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!





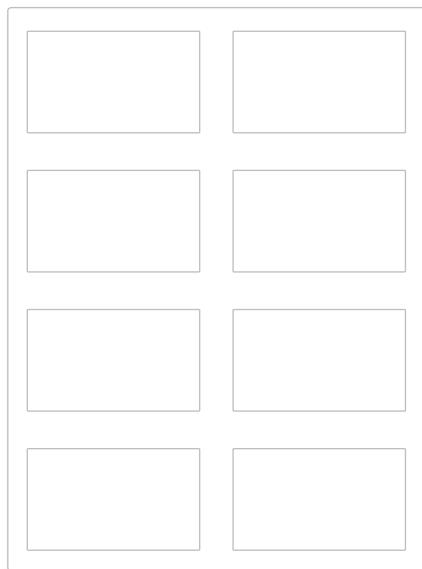


Vocabulary: adjectives

Wells uses a range of rich adjectives in *The Time Machine*.

Create flashcards to develop your vocabulary.

Remember to practise using them so that they enter your active vocabulary!





Describe an experience

You have your own time machine. Write a description of your journey through time.

Try and make use of the vocabulary in the boxes below.

desolate

magical

unbelievable

terrifying

dreamlike

pale

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