

## What to do today

*IMPORTANT Parent or Carer – Read this page with your child and check that you are happy with what they have to do and any weblinks or use of internet.*

### 1. Watch a video about a train to London.

- Watch the video of the sleeper train to London.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZWHVRx-6xo>
- Make notes about 5 things that you learn – you can watch it more than once. Would you like to go on this journey? Why?

### 2. Read the second part of Skimbleshanks.

- Read *Skimbleshanks – Part 2*. Listen to your favourite performance from Day 4.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLEeHj6e\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLEeHj6e_Y)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKY5ag8qhlQ>
- Highlight any of the vocabulary in the poem that you are not sure about. You can look up words at <https://kids.wordsmyth.net/we/>

### 3. Practise parentheses

Use the *Revision Card* to remind yourself about commas, brackets and dashes for parentheses. Complete *Skimbleshanks Vocabulary*. These are sentences about the vocabulary in the poem but they need commas, brackets or dashes.

### Try these Fun-Time Extras

- Try learning some of the second part of the poem off by heart.
- Use the *Railway Times* template to make a newspaper article about Skimbleshanks.

## Skimbleshanks – Part 2

Oh, it's very pleasant when you have found your little den  
With your name written up on the door.  
And the berth is very neat with a newly folded sheet  
And there's not a speck of dust on the floor.  
There is every sort of light - you can make it dark or bright;  
There's a handle that you turn to make a breeze.  
There's a funny little basin you're supposed to wash your face in  
And a crank to shut the window if you sneeze.  
Then the guard looks in politely and will ask you very brightly  
"Do you like your morning tea weak or strong?"  
But Skimble's just behind him and was ready to remind him,  
For Skimble won't let anything go wrong.  
And when you creep into your cosy berth  
And pull up the counterpane,  
You ought to reflect that it's very nice  
To know that you won't be bothered by mice -  
You can leave all that to the Railway Cat,  
The Cat of the Railway Train!



In the watches of the night he is always fresh and bright;  
Every now and then he has a cup of tea  
With perhaps a drop of Scotch while he's keeping on the watch,  
Only stopping here and there to catch a flea.  
You were fast asleep at Crewe and so you never knew  
That he was walking up and down the station;  
You were sleeping all the while he was busy at Carlisle,  
Where he greets the stationmaster with elation.  
But you saw him at Dumfries, where he speaks to the police  
If there's anything they ought to know about:  
When you get to Gallowgate there you do not have to wait--  
For Skimbleshanks will help you to get out!  
He gives you a wave of his long brown tail  
Which says: "I'll see you again!  
You'll meet without fail on the Midnight Mail  
The Cat of the Railway Train.

*By T.S. Eliot*



# Revision Card

## Parenthesis

- Parenthesis is **extra information** added into a complete sentence.
- The original sentence makes sense without it.
- The extra information can be separated using **commas**, **brackets** or **dashes**.



Skimbleshanks is indispensable to the railway.

complete sentence

Skimbleshanks, **an ever reliable character**, is indispensable to the railway.

extra added information

## Commas

**Commas** are used often – they do not draw much attention to the extra information and hardly break up the sentence at all.



Everyone looked for Skimbleshanks around the station.

complete sentence

Everyone looked for Skimbleshanks, **the cat of the railway train**, around the station.

extra added information

## Brackets

**Brackets** are used to draw more attention to the additional information. The reader knows that they are being told something extra.



The eyes of Skimbleshanks are always watching.

complete sentence

The eyes of Skimbleshanks (**whose attention is complete**) are always watching.

extra added information

The writer might want to draw attention to important or funny extra information.

Skimbleshanks (**who likes a drop of whisky in his tea**) never stops watching.

## Dashes

**Dashes** are commonly used in informal writing. They break up the sentence more than commas or brackets, and therefore draw attention to the extra information.



We started to behave when we saw old Skimbleshanks coming towards us!

complete sentence

We started to behave when we saw old Skimbleshanks **—that terror of the train—** coming towards us!

extra added information

## Skimbleshanks Vocabulary

*Rewrite these sentences adding punctuation to make the meaning clearer. Decide whether to use commas, brackets or dashes.*

*Think about end of sentence punctuation too!*

1. Third-class train tickets which originally meant that passengers were transported in an open box car were ended in 1956
2. The Northern hemisphere the part of the planet north of the equator has ninety percent of the world's population
3. In the event of an accident or other emergency a train guard can take charge of the train
4. Scotch is a drink an alcoholic one made in Scotland
5. Fleas those small flightless insects can jump around thirty thousand times in a row
6. Have you or anyone you know ever visited Crewe or Carlisle
7. Elation which is a state of great happiness and exhilaration could be a response to seeing an especially good friend
8. The national police force for the railways the British Transport police look after six million passengers every day
9. A fixed bunk on a means of transport particularly a ship or a train is often called a berth
10. A counterpane is a type of bedspread a bit like a duvet popular particularly in the first half of twentieth century



# RAILWAY TIMES



*HEADING*

*Stick  
picture  
here*

## Skimbleshanks Vocabulary – Possible Answers

1. Third-class train tickets, which originally meant that passengers were transported in an open box car, were ended in 1956.
2. The Northern hemisphere, the part of the planet north of the equator, has ninety percent of the world's population!
3. In the event of an accident (or other emergency) a train guard can take charge of the train.
4. Scotch is a drink - an alcoholic one - made in Scotland.
5. Fleas (those small flightless insects) can jump around thirty thousand times in a row!
6. Have you, or anyone you know, ever visited Crewe or Carlisle?
7. Elation, which is a state of great happiness and exhilaration, could be a response to seeing an especially good friend.
8. The national police force for the railways (the British Transport police) look after six million passengers every day.
9. A fixed bunk on a means of transport, particularly a ship or a train, is often called a berth.
10. A counterpane is a type of bedspread - a bit like a duvet - popular particularly in the first half of twentieth century.