Jules Verne was born in 1828 in Nantes, France. He studied law, but was far more interested in theatre. When he was only 22, his first play was shown in a theatre in Paris. He decided to give up law, and spent much time in the national library studying scientific discoveries of the time. He soon had published a series of plays and short stories, with modest success. His novel *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, published when he was thirty-five, was immensely successful and he became well known. He was to publish several dozen novels and novellas, the most famous of them being no doubt *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, *From the Earth to the Moon*, and *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. His novels were often based on explorations or discoveries of the time. *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* was based on an expedition into a volcano by a French geographer. The newly invented steam submarine provided ideas for *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, his next novel. He also wrote literary criticism (a book on Edgar Allan Poe for example).

In 1873, Verne published what was to become his most popular and best-known work, *Round the World in Eighty Days* (also translated as *Around the World in Eighty Days*). The story appeared in weekly magazine instalments, and his readers could hardly wait for the next episode.

Towards the end of Verne’s life, his novels became darker and less optimistic. He explored the bad side of scientific invention, where new ideas were exploited by humans for evil.

Jules Verne was interested in politics, and was an elected town councillor in his home town for many years. He was also a keen supporter of the (then) newly invented proposed international language of Esperanto. He intended to write a novel to vaunt the merits of Esperanto, but did not manage to do this before his death. He died in 1905 and several of his books were only published after his death. The last to be published, *Paris in the Twentieth Century* came out in 1994. Jules Verne is today considered to be a father of science fiction, along with the English writer, H. G. Wells.

His works are extraordinarily popular and have been translated into dozens of languages, and he is in fact one of the top five most translated authors in the world – along with Agatha Christie, Vladimir Lenin and William Shakespeare. His books have been the basis of innumerable film adaptations.

**Summary**

**Chapter 1** A mysterious English gentleman, Mr Phileas Fogg, makes a bet with other members of the Reform Club that he can go right round the world in eighty days. He sets off, with his newly engaged French manservant, Passepartout.

**Chapter 2** A detective, Mr Fix, is convinced that Mr Fogg is in fact a bank robber. He catches up with Fogg in Suez, but does not have an arrest warrant. He determines to follow Fogg. Meanwhile, Passepartout refuses to alter his watch to match the new time zone.

**Chapter 3** In Bombay, Passepartout is beaten for breaking temple rules. Fogg and Passepartout leave on the train for Calcutta. Fix waits in Bombay – he has a new plan. The train stops at a village, since the railway has not been completed. The group continue by elephant; on the way they come across a strange procession.

**Chapter 4** An Indian girl is about to be burned alive with her dead husband. Mr Fogg has some time spare and decides to save her.

**Chapter 5** Passepartout carries out a brilliant plan and saves the woman, who is then taken with them.

**Chapter 6** The party arrives in Calcutta with a few hours to spare, but they are taken into custody by the police. Passepartout is accused of unseemly behaviour in the temple. This accusation has been organized by Fix, hoping to keep Fogg in town until an arrest warrant arrives. They are sentenced to several days in prison, but are allowed to leave after paying £2000 bail.

**Chapter 7** They leave on a ship to Hong Kong, with Fix still following. Passepartout assumes Fix has been sent by
Round the World in Eighty Days

the Reform Club and decides to play some tricks on Fix. The ship arrives a day late in Hong Kong, but fortunately the steamer to Japan has been delayed and has not yet left.

Chapter 8 A last minute change means that the steamer is to leave a few hours earlier than announced. Fix asks Passepartout to help him to keep Fogg in Hong Kong for a few days. He explains about the robbery. Passepartout refuses to help, but drinks so much he passes out, thus being unable to warn Fogg of the change in the departure time.

Chapter 9 Mr Fogg misses the boat, but manages to hire a much smaller boat. He heads for Shanghai in the company of Mr Fix, but without Passepartout.

Chapter 10 A storm hits when they are well on the way, but Fogg insists they must continue to Shanghai.

Chapter 11 Passepartout, in a drunken stupor, has managed to get the steamer in Hong Kong. He awakes to find that Fogg and Aouda are not on board. When he arrives in Yokohama, he has no money. He manages to find a job with a company of Japanese acrobats, before accidentally coming across Mr Fogg.

Chapter 12 They head for America on a ship called the General Grant. Fix is on the same ship. He has received a warrant for the arrest of Fogg but cannot use it since they are no longer inside the British Empire and within the reach of English law. Passepartout attacks Fix in revenge for the trick played on him. Fix tells Passepartout the truth about his plans, but explains that both of them now want Fogg to finish his journey and go back to England.

Chapter 13 Our heroes get swept up in a fight in an electoral rally, with a rude American called Proctor. Fogg promises to deal with Proctor at a later date. They then take the train for New York. Proctor is on the same train, and Fix and Passepartout do all they can to keep Fogg from meeting him.

Chapter 14 The train is unable to cross an unsafe bridge, but the train driver decides to cross at full speed and they get across. Fogg meets Proctor. They decide to fight a duel.

Chapter 15 Just before the duel can begin, the train is attacked by Indians. The passengers, including Aouda, fight back determinedly, but the train must be stopped if they are to be safe. Passepartout carries out a daring plan to stop the train, but when they stop, Passepartout is missing. Fogg turns back to look for Passepartout.

Chapter 16 Passepartout is found safely, but they have missed the train. They continue on a wind-propelled sledge.

Chapter 17 The company miss the New York to Liverpool steamship by forty-five minutes. Fogg cannot hire or buy a ship for Liverpool, so he hires space on a boat heading for Bordeaux. Once at sea he bribes the crew and locks up the captain, then setting sail for Liverpool. But on their arrival, Fix arrests Fogg for the bank robbery in London.

Chapter 18 Since they are running out of coal, Fogg buys the ship and orders that all wooden parts of the ship be burned for fuel. They are nevertheless running out of time. By landing in Ireland and taking fast trains and steamers they are in time when they arrive in Liverpool.

Chapter 19 After wasting several hours in prison, the affair is cleared up and Fogg is released. He hires a special train but arrives in London five minutes after the deadline time. Fogg mopes at home all day. Aouda asks if he will marry her, and he agrees. They decide to get married the very next day. Passepartout is sent out to find a vicar.

Chapter 20 In the Reform Club, the group are confident that Fogg has lost his bet. Yet at the very last moment Fogg walks in. It turns out that Fogg has made a mistake about what day it is. Having gone round the world in an easterly direction, his watch was an hour out with each time zone he passed through, and by the time he returned to England, he had 'gained' an entire day. Thus, in extremis, he wins his bet. Fogg and Aouda are married and, we presume, live happily ever after.

Background and themes

Science: Jules Verne lived at a time when science seemed to offer endless possibilities for progress to the human race. Man’s view of the universe was being re-examined during Verne’s lifetime, particularly after the publication in 1859 of Darwin’s *The Origin of Species*. Verne’s popular tales of adventure were written in a spirit of optimism. They became classics because of his incredible ability to predict future scientific achievements. His story about reaching the moon in a rocket was remarkably similar to what actually happened in 1969, nearly 100 years later, when men first reached the moon.

Travelling: The idea for *Round the World in Eighty Days* came from an actual journey Round the world made in eighty days in 1870 by a very rich American, appropriately
Round the World in Eighty Days

called George Francis Train. Another American, William Perry Fogg, made and wrote about a similar journey in 1872, and Verne gave his name to his fictional hero.

Similar journeys: After Jules Verne’s story was published, several people took up the challenge to get Round the world in eighty days. The quickest time before the arrival of the aeroplane was 54 days. It is an idea that still appeals today, and in 1999 was made into a very popular British television series in which Michael Palin attempted to follow in Phileas Fogg’s footsteps. Palin took the same route as Fogg and the same deadline, and found the deadline as challenging as Fogg had done.

The British Empire: Phileas Fogg represents a stereotypical English gentleman of the Victorian age. Fogg lived when England was beginning to build up a huge geographical empire, with colonies as far afield as Hong Kong and Singapore. In the story, Mr Fix’s warrant for the arrest of the ‘thief’, Phileas Fogg, is valid on the other side of the world, in Hong Kong.

Wealth and generosity: Mr Fogg is able to succeed in his journey largely because of his money which can buy him nearly everything he needs. However, he is generous at the same time and one cannot dislike him for his rather arrogant use of his wealth.

Discussion activities

Before reading

1 Discuss: Seeing the world
Put the students into pairs. Ask each pair to think of the six places they would most like to see in the world. When they have agreed on a list of six, they should work in groups of four and discuss together to come up with a list of just four priorities. Then the whole class should share their ideas to find the two most important places to see in the world.

2 Research and discuss: The seven wonders of the modern world
Ask students to find out at home what are said to be the seven wonders of the modern world. Do they agree with the list? They should then work in pairs to think of other possible candidates for the list, and decide which ones on the list should be dropped to make way for the new candidates. Finally some of the pairs report back to the class.

3 Discuss: Ask your students, in groups, to discuss Fogg’s trip Round the world. Guide them with the following questions.
What forms of transport existed in the 1870s? What forms of transport did not yet exist, which we have today?

Chapters 1–2

After reading

4 Role play: The Reform Club
Ask students in small groups to role play the scene where the bet is placed. One student in each group is Fogg, confident and unemotional. The others are sceptical but gentlemanly. The scene ends with the agreement on the bet.

5 Research and discuss: Clubs in England
Phileas Fogg is a member of the Reform Club. Pubs and clubs have often been important in British cultural history. Ask your students to research on the internet something about the following types of clubs, and to present what they have found to the rest of the class.
– Liberal Clubs
– Working Men’s Clubs
– Conservative Clubs
– the pub

6 Discuss: Betting
Put your students into groups to discuss the bet made by Phileas Fogg. Guide them with the following questions. Why do you think Mr Fogg makes this bet? Why do the other members of the Reform Club agree to bet? Do you yourself like betting? What is the most interesting bet you have ever heard of?

7 Write: Ask your students to imagine they are Passepartout. They should write a letter to a friend they have not seen for some time, explaining how they got a new job and the new life they are having with their new employer. Get them to begin like this ‘Dear Marie, My new employment has turned out to be rather strange …’

8 Map work: Draw or find an empty map of the world. Put London, Calais, Brindisi and Suez on it. Draw a line showing Fogg and Passepartout’s journey, including their methods of transport. Put the date on which they arrive in Suez. Keep this map and add to it later.

Chapters 3–4

9 Role play: Fix in the police station
In Bombay, Mr Fix tries to enlist the help of the local police to arrest Phileas Fogg. Put your students in pairs. One of them prepares and then plays the role of Fix; the other prepares then plays the role of the head of the police in Bombay. Fix explains the situation and asks for the warrant from London, or a local authorization to arrest Fogg. The police chief explains why he cannot help Fix in this matter.

10 Role play: Buying an elephant
Get your students to role play the negotiation between the elephant’s owner and Mr Fogg. They should discuss the price of the elephant and eventually reach a conclusion.
Round the World in Eighty Days

11 Write a telegram: In Verne’s time, the telegram was frequently used for communication. Explain to your students how telegrams are written, what parts of speech are usually omitted. Then ask your students, in pairs, to write a telegram from Fix to his Headquarters in London explaining who he thinks Phileas Fogg is, asking for an arrest warrant, and saying where it should be sent. They should remember that the cost of the telegram depends on the number of words!

12 Map work: Update your map of the journey. Put Bombay, Kohley and Allahabad on it. Write notes about what happens to the travellers on this journey. Put the dates of their arrival in Bombay and Allahabad.

Chapters 5–7
13 Role play: Ask your students to re-read the first part of Chapter 6. Then in pairs, one of them should play Aouda and the other Sir Francis. Aouda has come round from her drugged stupor and explains the last things she remembers. Sir Francis explains in detail how she was saved, and tries to comfort her and calm her down.

14 Research and write: Travel advice
Ask students to imagine that today they are making a similar journey. They are like Passepartout, and they like to see the sights wherever they go. They have just one day in Calcutta and one day in Hong Kong. Split the class into two groups. One group will research on the internet at home what can be done as a tourist in Calcutta in one day; the other will do the same for Hong Kong. In the next class ask them to write a guide ‘How best to spend a day in the city’ and explain to the class why they chose the places and activities they chose.

Chapters 8–9
15 Role play: Ask your students, in pairs, to play the roles of Fix and Passepartout in the conversation in Chapter 8 where Fix asks the Frenchman for help. Then ask some of the pairs to act the scene out in front of the whole class.

16 Write: Passepartout’s diary
Ask students to remember what they know about Passepartout’s personality – his emotiveness and his curiosity about the world. Ask them to re-read Chapters 8 and 9 and write an entry in Passepartout’s personal diary recounting how he experienced these events.

17 Map work: Update your map. Add Benares, Calcutta, Singapore and Hong Kong. Write the dates on which the travellers arrive in Calcutta and Hong Kong. Make notes on what happens in each place.

Chapters 10–11
18 Role play: The British consul
In Chapter 11 Phileas Fogg pays a visit to the British consul in the hope of getting help in his attempt to locate Passepartout. Put your students into pairs, and ask them to prepare then act out the conversation between Fogg and the consul. Fogg explains how they came to lose Passepartout. The British consul, who does not know what has happened to Passepartout, makes suggestions as to where Fogg might look for his servant (hospitals, police stations, etc.).

19 Write a newspaper article: Phileas Fogg is now almost half way through his journey. Ask your students to imagine they have been asked to write a short newspaper article to try to interest readers in Fogg’s fate. Their article should summarize the bet, and give out an atmosphere of suspense concerning the outcome of the trip.

20 Write: On arriving in Yokohama, Fix writes a report to Head Office in London. He summarizes what has happened to Fogg, the difficulties with the warrant, and his own speculations about Fogg’s intentions. He then explains his own plans. Ask your students to write the report.

21 Map work: Update your map. Mark Shanghai and Yokohama and the date of Fogg’s arrival and departure. How many days has Fogg taken to get this far? How many days has he got left?

Chapters 12–15
22 Role play: The scene at the bridge
Divide your students into groups of four. Ask them to read Chapter 14 again, and then to act out the scene. The driver announces the problem with the bridge, passengers complain, and finally discuss the new suggestion of crossing the bridge at full speed, before getting back into the train.

23 Write: A letter of complaint
Ask your students to imagine they are one of the other passengers in the train which stops because the track runs out. They were not informed that the rail track did not go all the way to Allahabad. Get them to write a letter of complaint to the railway company, explaining the situation and asking for compensation. The letter should be indignant but formal. They should begin like this: ‘Dear Sir, I’m writing to you to complain about the train service run by your company between Bombay and Calcutta …’

24 Write a letter: During her travels with Fogg, Aouda has been writing letters to her cousin Tehmina, the daughter of her uncle in Holland. When she is in New York, she writes to tell her cousin what has happened to them in the United States. She explains what an emotional time she has had and her changing feelings towards Fogg. Ask your students to write this letter. They should begin as follows: ‘Dear Tehmina, You remember I told you I was on a voyage round the world with the two gentlemen who saved me in India? Well, when we arrived in America I was sure the adventure would calm down. Not in the least …’
Round the World in Eighty Days

25 Map work: Mark on your map San Francisco, Reno, the Rocky Mountains, Plum Creek Station and Fort Kearney Station. When do Fogg and his friends arrive and leave San Francisco? Make notes on what happens on this part of the journey.

Chapters 16–18
26 Role play: Passepartout and Aouda are waiting in the hotel room, when Fogg arrives in a great hurry, having found space for them on the Henrietta. Ask your students to divide into groups of three and to act out the scene. Passepartout and Aouda discuss the situation, when Fogg arrives and announces what they are to do next, in a great hurry.

27 Map work: Mark on your map Omaha, Chicago, New York, Queenstown, Dublin and Liverpool. Make notes on this part of the journey. When did the travellers arrive in and leave New York, and arrive in Queenstown and Liverpool? How much time has Fogg got left?

Chapters 19–20
Before reading
28 Discuss: Ask your students to discuss in small groups. Guide them with the following questions.
   - How long do you think one needed at this time to travel from Liverpool to London?
   - Do you think Phileas Fogg will win his bet?
   - What other things can still go wrong?
   - What do you think Aouda will do, so far from her home?

After reading
29 Role play: The police station in Liverpool
   Ask your students to play in small groups the roles of Fix, Fogg and the head of the police station in Liverpool. The two men arrive, Fix explains the arrest, and the police chief interrogates Fogg, asking all the details about his justification for his rather strange trip.

30 Role play: Passepartout goes to the Reverend Wilson's house to arrange for the celebration of Fogg's wedding the following day. Ask your students, in pairs, to role play the conversation. Passepartout explains what is required. The Reverend explains the problem of which day it is, and Passepartout leaves in a hurry.

31 Write and speak: Passepartout is to be best man at the wedding of Fogg and Aouda. There will be many guests who know little of how Fogg met her and how they courted. Ask students to write a short speech which Passepartout will give as best man at the wedding meal. Students could first of all discuss what kind of speech one gives at weddings.

32 Role play: A TV presenter's speech
   Ask your students to imagine that the adventure is taking place today. Ten minutes before the deadline, in front of the Reform club, a TV presenter is explaining live to viewers the situation. Ask students to write the presenter's speech, as he or she takes the audience through the suspense of the situation, the expectation that Fogg will not make it, and the last-minute surprise when he does. They should then act out the speech to the class, being especially careful with intonation and the expression of emotion.

33 Write a formal letter: Ask students to imagine they are members of the Reform Club who have lost the bet. One of the signatures in Fogg's passport is difficult to read. Ask them to write a formal letter to the Consul in Calcutta to request confirmation that Phileas Fogg really did go through Calcutta on his journey.

After reading
34 Write: Ask your students to imagine that Fogg and Aouda have now been married five years. Split them into two groups. They will all write a letter from Aouda to an old friend back in India. One half should write a very positive letter – marriage has changed Fogg and he is easier to live with. The other half should write a rather negative letter – living with Fogg, who is so precise and unemotional, is a nightmare.

35 Write a cinema trailer: Explain to students how a typical cinema trailer is made – several very short dramatic excerpts from the story, and a melodramatic commentary. Ask them to work in groups of four to write and then act out or record on audio tape a cinema trailer. Ask them to pay particular attention to intonation and the expression of emotion.

36 Write an advertisement: A few years after Phileas Fogg's adventure, he has become quite famous. A travel agency in London is now offering to its clients a special tour 'Follow in the footsteps of Phileas Fogg'. Ask your students to write a short advertising brochure trying to persuade clients to buy a place on this round-the-world tour.

37 Research and present: Jules Verne is famous for several other books: From the Earth to the Moon, Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea, Journey to the Centre of the Earth, and Five Weeks in a Balloon, to name but four. Ask your students in pairs to do research at home about one of these books, or another book by Jules Verne. They should then present the book to the whole class. The class can vote on which work they find the most interesting.

38 Artwork: Design a book cover. Ask the students to choose a book by Verne, apart from Round the World in Eighty Days, which they find the most intriguing. They should design a book cover for this work. They may either draw paint or make a collage.

Vocabulary activities
For the Word List and vocabulary activities, go to www.penguinreaders.com.