READING GUIDE AND ACTIVITIES FOR
THE LONDON EYE MYSTERY
By Siobhan Dowd
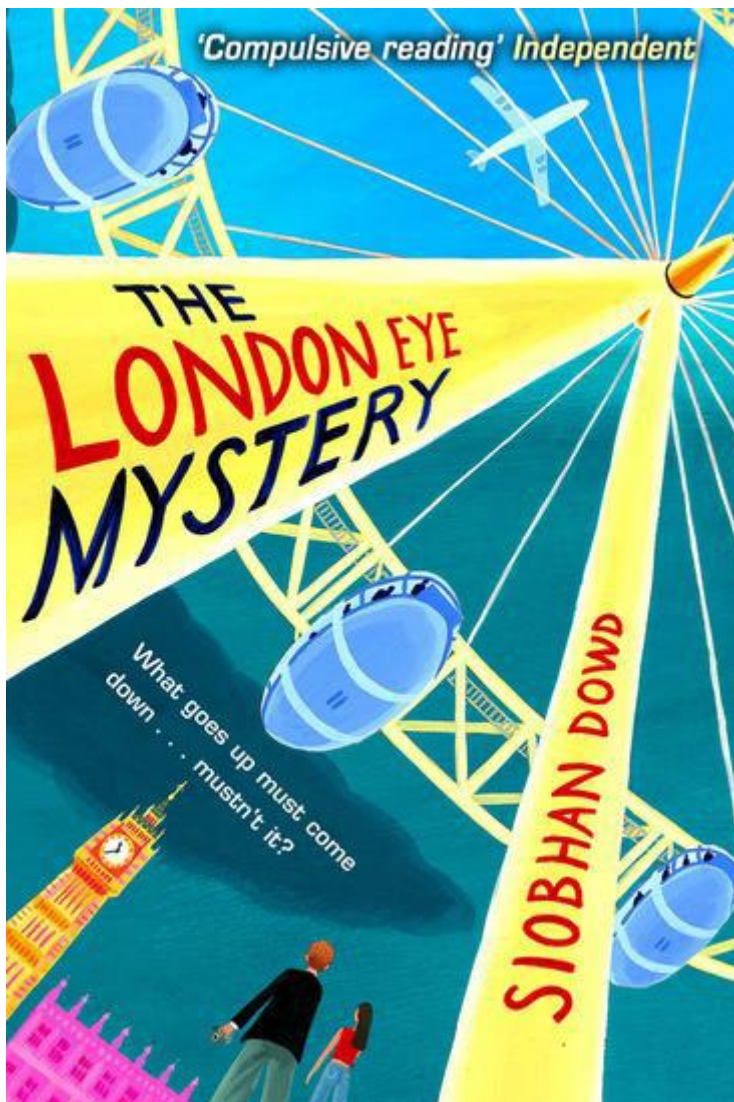
NAME ....

PRE- READING ACTIVITIES
1. UNDERSTANDING THE STORY

REFLECT UPON THE STORY
How would you feel if a relative of yours disappeared in front of your eyes?
Have you ever felt different from other people? Why?
The genre of this book Mystery Fiction or Detective Fiction, what do you know about this genre? Do you know any famous author or character?

SYNOPSIS
When Ted and Kat watched their cousin Salim get on board the London Eye, he turned and waved before getting on. After half an hour it landed and everyone trooped off - but no Salim. Where could he have gone? How on earth could he have disappeared into thin air? Since the police are having no luck finding him, Ted and Kat become sleuthing partners. Despite their prickly relationship, they overcome their differences to follow a trail of clues across London in a desperate bid to find their cousin.

TED A UNIQUE AND LIKEABLE CHARACTER
Ted Spark is the main character in the book. The story is told **in the first person,** from his point of view. He tells us early on that he is a little different from other people, that **his brain has a "different operating system" than other people.** We are not told his age in the story but we can guess that he is 11 or 12 years old and younger than his sister Kat and his cousin Salim.
We see from the very beginning that **he is very mathematical and logical in his thinking**. **He counts everything**, from his breakfast shreddies to the number of postage stamps needed to cover his front garden. **He is fascinated with weather** and he wants to be a meteorologist when he grows up. He listens to the shipping forecast on B.B.C. radio every night. His room is neat and tidy and full of fact books and encyclopaedia. **He is very observant** and remembers little details other people don't, such as what people are wearing.
He wears his school uniform (trousers, shirt and tie) every day, even weekends and holidays. We are told that he has some "syndrome" or other but not exactly what it is. Perhaps it is Asperger's Syndrome or perhaps not. The author deliberately doesn't tell us. Why? Salim says that Ted has "Some weird syndrome that made him think like a giant computer". He also tells us about some physical symptoms: he gets "shakes" in his right arm and hand and a strange feeling in his oesophagus (food-pipe to stomach) especially when he is scared, nervous or excited.
However, it is other people who are his biggest problem. **He finds it difficult to relate with people socially**. Ted treats everything in the same way... literally, logically, and at face value. **He doesn't fully understand the complexity and subtlety of human relationships**. He finds it difficult to read a person's facial signals and body language, something his sister does naturally. For Ted people "just look like who they are". **He also doesn't quite understand his feelings and emotions**. He says he has only one friend, Mr. Shephard, his teacher. Mr. Shephard is working to teach Ted about people and emotions.
Language is also a challenge for Ted. He listens to people speaking and takes things "literally". But people often use images, or old expressions, or slang words when talking. When Ted hears expressions like 'raining cats and dogs' or speak of the devil', he thinks literally of cats and dogs and devils. His dad teaches him how to decipher language. We learn that everyday language is full of such 'non-logical' talk.

He is a very likeable character who grows up a lot during the course of the big adventure. Again, the story is written in the first person. **However we don't ever feel that we are inside the mind of someone weird, odd, disabled or handicapped in any way**. In fact we enjoy the journey with all its logical and mathematical observations. We enjoy Ted's non-sense of humour and his literal understanding of words and language. We enjoy the way Ted sees the world through logical eyes and we learn that he is not odd or strange but unique and talented.

2. ANALYSING THE STORY

FROM CHAPTER 1 TO CHAPTER 7

FROM *A GIANT BICYCLE WHEEL IN THE SKY* TO THE WHEEL TURNS

CHAPTER 1

1. On what date and at what time did Salim board The London Eye?
_____
_____

2. What two London landmarks does Ted mention?
_____
_____

3. Do you believe that Salim ran away and was kidnapped or was he just lost? What in the text makes you think this?

CHAPTER 2
1. This chapter starts with a flashback (going back in time). Explain it
_____
_____
_____

2. What does A.W.O.L. stand for? What does it refer to?
_____
_____
_____

3. What is "Barrington Heights"? Remember this name because it is going very important for the denouement of the story
_____
_____
_____

4. Can you find any paragraph in this chapter in which Ted literally understands things said by other members of his family?
_____
_____
_____

CHAPTER 3.

1. Compare the two versions of the letter about their Aunt Gloria

_____
_____
_____

CHAPTER 4

1. How does Ted describe his Aunt Glory and his cousin Salim?
-

_____
_____
_____

2. On page 31, Ted describes himself. What does he call himself? Copy the quotation from the book and say why he compares himself to Andy Warhol. Find a picture of Andy Warhol on Internet, if possible glue it here. Who was he?

WORKING WITH WORDS
Sometimes the way characters say things is not the same every single time. So the narrator uses verb such as *mutter, shriek, mumble or giggle* to emphasize the emotions of the characters and the tone of their words. Some other expressions would refer to body language, such as *nod* or *blink at*. Let's translate some of them:

- Hiss   - giggle   - whisper

- Squeak   - mutter

- Screech   - mumble

- Grunt   - moan

- Gasp   - scream

- Sigh   - reply

- Groan   - chuckle

Body language
- Shrug   - blink at

- Nod   - stroke

CHAPTER FIVE

1. What do Salim and Ted have in common?

_____
_____

2. Explain the meaning of the expression " a cool dude"

_____
_____

CHAPTER SIX AND SEVEN

1. What is a topological map?

_____
_____

2. Name the London landmarks appearing in chapter 6.

_____
_____
_____

3. How did Salim get a free ticket?

_____
_____

4. Go to page 55 and find 4 synonyms for the *expressing to drive someone bananas*

_____
_____
_____

FROM CHAPTER 8 TO CHAPTER 14
FROM WHAT GOES UP DOESN'T NECESSARILY COME DOWN TO EIGHT THEORIES

CHAPTER 8
1. Record emotions and questions that might be rushing through children's minds after Salim disappears.

_____
_____
_____

CHAPTER 9
2. Why is Ted talking about dodos, lords and brigantines in chapter 9?

_____
_____
_____

3. At the end of chapter 9 Ted feels very pleased with Kat. Why? Find the quotation in the book to justify it.

_____
_____
_____

CHAPTER 11
4. Explain the expression *you could have cut the atmosphere with a knife*

_____
_____
_____

5. What was the name of the Detective in charge of the case?

_____
_____

6. Fill in this report as if you were Detective Inspector Pearce

INCIDENT REPORT

Case number: 771210AJ

Investigating officers:

Date and time:

Type of investigation: Disappearance

Crime reported by: _____

Details of persons involved: _____

_____

Witnesses: _____

Details of disappearance: _____

_____

_____

Other Information: _____

_____

_____

_____

Further leads to follow up: _____

_____

_____

_____

Signature: _____

CHAPTER 14

8. Which of the nine theories mentioned in the book makes the most sense to you? Why does that one make more sense than the others?

_____
_____
_____

FROM CHAPTER 15 TO CHAPTER 18

FROM INFINITY TO THE NINTH THEORY

1. Chapter 15 is one of the most tense, sad and touching chapter so far. Explain why.

_____
_____
_____
_____

CHAPTER 16.
2. Explain Kat's plans. What does Ted think about them? Are they successful at the end?

_____
_____
_____
_____

CHAPTER 18.
3. On page 147, Ted talks about body language. What does he say about it? What does this paragraph show up about him?

_____
_____
_____
_____

FROM CHAPTER 19 TO CHAPTER 25

## FROM THE BOY ON THE TRAIN TO THE TV CREW

CHAPTER 19
1. Why does Inspector Pearce say to Ted *"if only some of my officers had half of your brains"?*

_____
_____

CHAPTER 20
2. Explain the meaning of the word *eavesdropping*. What is the relation of the title of the chapter and what is going on in this part of the story?

_____
_____
_____

From chapter 21 to chapter 24, Ted and Kat find out a very important clue which will get them closer to Salim's disappearance.

Draw a timeline from the first moment they see it in the printed photo till they decipher the meaning of the letters.
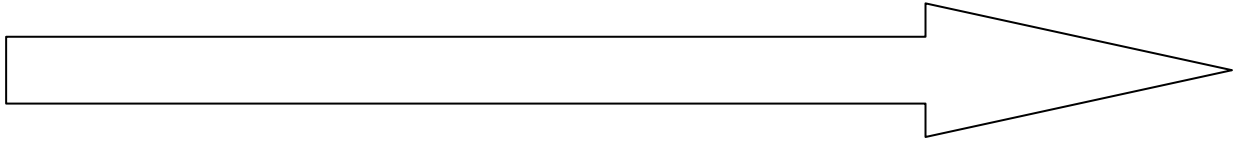
FROM CHAPTER 25 TO CHAPTER 30
FROM THE TV CREW TO THE ROAD TO NOWHERE
CHAPTER 25

1. How has Ted changed from the beginning of the story?

_____
_____
_____

2. What is the first lie Ted tells his mum? Why does he do it?

_____
_____
_____

CHAPTER 26

1. According to Ted's explanation, what is *the Coriolis Effect*? Explain it briefly with your own words. What do you think is the relation between this effect and Salim's disappearance?

_____
_____
_____

2. Why does he talk about *Sherlock Holmes* on page 209? What is a *train of thought*?

_____
_____
_____

CHAPTER 27
7. What was the weather like when Ted got the Motorcycle Show?

_____
_____

8. What does Ted mean by *"her eyes and mouth were wide and round like three flying saucers*? (page 218)

_____
_____
_____

9. What three scenes do Ted and Kat watch in the 18 TV screens at the television shop?

_____
_____
_____

10. Christy is suspicious of having some information. What do you think it is?

_____
_____
_____

FROM CHAPTER 31 TO CHAPTER 33

FROM TORNADO TOUCHDOWN TIME TO THE SOUND OF THE STORM

1. When and where does Ted find out how Salim has vanished?

_____
_____
_____

2. Now quote the paragraph in which he expresses it using weather metaphors (page 249)

_____
_____
_____

3. Why does Ted call Inspector Pearce? What has he tried to do before calling her?

_____
_____
_____

4. At this point of the story, Ted is doing his best with language and its interpretations of reality and he uses more and more metaphors as the story continues. Explain the meaning of the following metaphor he uses on page 250. *'When you try to talk to people in the middle of a storm, they can't hear. They can't catch your words for the sound of the storm'*

_____
_____
_____

FROM CHAPTER 34 TO CHAPTER 37

FROM SMOKE TO SALIM SUPREME

CHAPTER 34
1. Why does Ted's father say *Houston Calling Planet Pluto?*

_____
_____
_____

2. Ted's explanation confirms that his theory _____ was right. But in which particular moment something went wrong?

_____
_____

CHAPTER 37.
MARCUS' STATEMENT

1. Who is Marcus? What do we know about his family according to his statement?

_____

_____

2. Why did Salim change his life at school?

_____

_____

3. Where did they pick up the clothes they used in the Eye?

_____

_____

4. Why did Salim change his mind about going to Manchester?

_____

_____

5. Where Did Marcus last see Salim?

_____

_____

6. Describe and list the different emotions Marcus feels in his narration of the events.

_____

_____

7. Why is the camera an essential element to track where Salim is?

_____

_____

8. Where had the employee Jacky Winter been for a couple of minutes? What happened to him?

_____

_____

9. Which are the three lies Ted has told throughout the story?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____