

## Level 6

<b>Suitable for:</b>	young learners who have completed up to 300 hours of study in English
<b>Type of English:</b>	American
<b>Headwords:</b>	1200
<b>Key words:</b>	20 (see pages 2 and 7 of these Teacher's Notes)
<b>Key grammar:</b>	past continuous, present perfect simple, common phrasal verbs, first conditional, reported speech, reflexive pronouns, indefinite pronouns ( <i>everyone, someone</i> ), pre-determiners ( <i>all</i> )

## Summary of the story

Lightning McQueen is a young race car trying to win the famous Piston Cup prize for the first time. He is young and handsome and much too confident. He believes that he has nothing to learn, that he does not need a team, and that he is the best race car in the world! In his first race, he races against Chick Hicks and an old racing star, The King, but all three cars finish at the same time. They will race again the following week in California. However, Lightning gets lost on the way there and finds himself in a sad, old town called Radiator Springs. He is driving so fast when he arrives that he tears up the road and gets into trouble with the Sheriff.

At court, a young lawyer, Sally, and the town's judge, Doc Hudson, tell him that he must mend the road before he can leave for the race in California.

As he mends the road, Lightning learns more about Radiator Springs. Forty years ago, it was a busy, popular town. Then they built an Interstate highway and cars preferred to travel on the faster road. They forgot about Radiator Springs.

Lightning begins to like the town. He makes friends with Mater, a tow truck who is very kind but not very smart. And Lightning finds that he likes Sally a lot. Lightning also discovers a secret. He finds a Piston Cup in Doc's garage and realizes that Doc was once a famous race car. At first, Lightning thinks that he has nothing to learn from Doc, but soon he begins to understand that he does not

know everything and that it is better to work with others as a team.

Lightning's team finds him in Radiator Springs and takes him to the race. He says a sad goodbye to his new friends, but he is very happy when they decide to come to the race to help him. They are his new "team", and Lightning has finally learned that friends are more important than prizes.

## Background information

*Cars* was released in 2006 and was Pixar's seventh full-length movie production.

The story was partly inspired by the famous "Route 66" road in the USA. The moviemakers took many trips along Route 66 and used a lot of the characters and scenes they found there as material for the movie.

The movie was the winner of Best Animated Feature Film at the Golden Globe Awards®. In 2011, a sequel to the movie, *Cars 2*, was released.

## Did you know ... ?

There are no human characters in *Cars*. Every character is a type of car, and even flowers and insects in the movie are car related.

## The characters

**Lightning McQueen** is the main character. He is a red race car who is young, handsome, and fast.

**The King** is an old blue race car and one of the greatest cars in the racing world. He has won the Piston Cup seven times.

**Chick Hicks** is a green race car who really wants to win the Piston Cup.

**Mack** is Lightning's truck. He drives Lightning to his races.

**The Sheriff** is the police officer in the town of Radiator Springs.

**Mater** is a friendly tow truck. He is funny and does silly things, and he becomes Lightning's very good friend.

**Doc Hudson** is the judge in Radiator Springs.

**Sally** is a beautiful blue sports car. She is a lawyer and Lightning really likes her.

**Red** is a fire truck.

**Luigi** owns the tire store in the town.

**Guido** works with Luigi, and is his best friend.

**Fillmore** is a Volkswagen campervan who lives in the town.

## Topics and themes

**Transport** Cars are a large theme in the story and we see many different types. Ask the students to describe the different cars by looking at the pictures and by thinking about the characters. They can then choose their favorites. Speed is a related theme too, and the students could think about which types of transport are quicker than others. This would be a good way to practice comparative and superlative adjectives. A classroom chart could then be made, putting the modes of transport in order of speed. You could also discuss which types of transport are better for the environment. (See also Activity 3 on pages 4–5 of these Teacher's Notes.)

**Sport / Racing** Several scenes in *Cars* are set at the racetrack and there is the opportunity to learn about this sport through the story. The students could compare racing to other sports

## Key words

(see page 7 of these Teacher's Notes for the Key words in context)

attention (n)	lead (n) / lead (v)
blow out (v)	prize (n)
confident (adj) / confidence (n)	quit (v)
courthouse (n)	racetrack (n)
crash (v)	roll (v)
gas (n)	ruin (v)
helicopter (n)	sheriff (n)
Interstate (n)	spark (n)
judge (n)	tear (v)
lawyer (n)	tire (n)

they know. What equipment is needed for each sport? Perhaps set up a matching activity where the students match the equipment to the correct sport (*goggles – swimming*). They could also discuss where different sports take place (*a swimming pool, a football ground*). Then they could discuss their favorite sports in small groups, explaining why they like them.

**Friendship and teamwork** Lightning learns about the importance of friendship and teamwork in the story. Using the story as a starting point, ask the students to describe Lightning's "journey". What does he learn? Why does he begin to realize the value of friendship and teamwork? How does he change from the beginning of the story to the end?

**Different generations** Early in the story, Lightning is very rude to Doc Hudson, who is older than him. He does not think he has anything to learn. At the end of the story, he understands that Doc knows things which he does not and he understands that he should have listened to him. Ask the students to discuss the people in their lives who are older than them. What have they learned from them? What can they teach to people who are younger than them? They could make a *What I knew then* chart, showing each year of their life. It might look something like this:

- Age 1: I knew how to walk. I knew how to say “Mom”.
- Age 2: I knew how to run. I knew how to do a jigsaw. I knew how to climb.
- Age 3: I knew how to read some words. I knew how to dress myself.

**Environments** Lightning comes from the big city and at first he does not like Radiator Springs because it is a small town. Radiator Springs is also far away from any big cities. Where do the students live? What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a big city or a small town? Where would they like to live when they grow up? Ask the students to imagine that they visited Radiator Springs and met some of the characters who live there. This could lead to a writing activity where they describe their visit as a story. (See also Activity 4 on pages 5–6 of these Teacher's Notes.)

**History** How has transport changed over the years? Did people travel differently 50 or 100 years ago? How were their lives different? How have different types of transport (airplanes, for example) changed people's lives? Do a classroom activity using your town or city as an example. Can you find old photographs of transport in your town or city from 50 to 100 years ago? Ask the students to compare these, or to imagine they live in the past, then they could write about it.

## Class Activities (After Reading)

Here are some activities to do with your class after reading *Cars*.

### 1. Adjective chain game

- Brainstorm adjectives to describe people with the students. For example, *friendly*, *silly*, *smart*, etc. Ask them to tell you the adjectives they learned in the story, as well as any other adjectives they know. Write the adjectives on the board.
- Review the characters from the story, asking students to call out the names (*Mater*, *Doc*, *Sally*, etc.).
- Divide the class into groups of four to six students.
- The students take turns to say sentences about the characters using the adjectives that they know to describe them. Student A says a sentence about a character they choose, then tells Student B which character they are, describes the character using one adjective, then invites Student B to describe that character using another adjective. Student B then turns to Student C and repeats the chain. Here is an example of how the chain should develop:

**Student A:** I am Mater. I am *friendly*.

**Student A:** You are Lightning. You are *young*.

**Student B:** I am Lightning. I am young and *fast*.

**Student B:** You are Doc. You are *old*.

**Student C:** I am Doc. I am old and *smart*.

**Student C:** You are ...

Encourage the students to be as imaginative as possible by using as many different adjectives as they can to describe the characters.

- As an additional challenge the students could mime or act out the qualities as they say them. The students could also repeat all the previously mentioned qualities in a chain that gets longer each time.
- When the groups have finished, ask another student in the group to start the chain game

again, starting with a different character. You could also mix up the groups and play the game again.

### 2. Piston Cup poster

**Materials:** large sheets of paper; colored pens / pencils / paints

- Ask the students to describe Lightning McQueen. Do they remember who he competes against in the Piston Cup race? Ask them to describe his competitors, too.
- Tell the students to imagine that the Piston Cup race is taking place the following year and Lightning is competing against a new race car this time. They are the new race car.
- The students are going to invent a new race car to compete against Lightning. They should think about who they would like to be if they were race cars. Write on the board the things they should consider for their cars: a name, a color, a number, the type of car, any special features, etc.
- The students then design posters for the Piston Cup race showing their race cars and Lightning McQueen as the two main competitors for this year's competition. They should include the names of the two hot favorites on the posters.
- When the posters are finished, the students take turns to present them to the class, describing their new race cars and why they should win the Piston Cup this year.
- As follow-up work, the students could write short stories about their new race cars or create cartoon strips about them.

### 3. Balloon-powered race cars

**Materials:** 4 plastic bottle cap lids; a rectangle of thick cardboard (approx 8cm x 10cm); 2 straight straws and 1 bendy straw; 2 bamboo skewers; a balloon; a rubber band; tape; plasticine; scissors; colored pens / pencils / paints

- Tell the students that they will make race cars

to compete in the class's very own Piston Cup race. Divide the class into groups of three or four students. Each group will make a race car.

- The bottle cap lids are for the wheels of the car. Assist each group in making a hole in each lid using a sharp object, such as a pair of scissors. Only allow the students to carry out this task under your supervision. Each hole should be big enough for a bamboo skewer to fit through.
- Take the rectangle of cardboard and place the two straight straws near the shorter sides of the rectangle. Tape the straws into place. Thread a bamboo skewer through each straw to make the wheel axles. Then put the lids onto the skewers and use plasticine to hold the wheels in place if necessary.
- Next, cut the bendy straw in half and discard the half that does not have the bend in it. Put the neck of the balloon over one end of the bendy straw and hold it in place with the rubber band. Make sure the rubber band is tight around the neck of the balloon. You should be able to blow up the balloon by blowing through the straw.
- Tape the bendy straw along the length of the top side of the car so that the balloon rests in the middle of the cardboard and the straw pokes out over the end to allow you to blow into it. Inflate the balloon by blowing through the straw and pinch the straw so that the air does not come out. Place the car on a clear, smooth surface and let it go.
- Ask the students why they think the car moves. The balloon-powered car is a good example of Newton's third law of motion. In this case, the air is pushed out of the straw in one direction and the car is pushed in the opposite direction.
- When the cars are ready, the groups, or teams, can race their cars against each other to see whose is the fastest. The groups can decorate their rectangles of cardboard if they wish to give their team cars a special design, color, and number, and perhaps use a balloon and bottle lid colors to match.

#### 4. Project: Route 66

**Materials:** internet access and / or reference books; map of the USA; colored pens / pencils; safety scissors; glue

- Ask the students if they know anything about Route 66 in the USA. Do they know which two American cities the famous highway runs between (*Chicago and Los Angeles*)? Explain that *Cars* is set in a fictional place, but is based on the area of Route 66 traveling through the states of Arizona and New Mexico and into California. This area has a predominantly desert landscape, which appears often in many of the scenes from the movie.
- Show the students the route on the map and tell them that they will do a project about the area of Route 66 where the movie is set.
- Write on the board some key points for students to find out, such as: How long is Route 66? Which cities does it travel between? Which states does it cross? Which state is the town of Peach Springs in? Which state is the town of Gallup in? Which Interstate road now bypasses these towns? Why did they build the Interstate? What is the landscape like along Route 66 in New Mexico and Arizona? Where is the Grand Canyon? What other famous landmarks are in this part of the USA? Can you find out any more interesting facts about this region?
- Ask the students to do their research in pairs. They make notes, draw the route on a map of the USA, and locate the small towns that Radiator Springs is based on (*Gallup and Peach Springs*), as well as the cities Route 66 travels between.
- Students then write out their description of Route 66 in the area where the movie is set, describing the landscape and the small towns. They could also draw some pictures of some of the famous landmarks in this area, such as the Grand Canyon, or print out pictures from the internet to include as part of their project. (This activity could also be done as homework.)



- Display the information around the class. Discuss the interesting facts with the students.

## 5. Interview Lightning McQueen

- Divide the class into pairs. Explain that they are going to perform an interview with Lightning McQueen after his race in California, at the end of the story.
- Ask the students to decide who will be Lightning and who will be the reporter for *The Daily Exhaust* newspaper. The students then write their scripts.
- Explain to the students that the reporter should be asking questions such as how Lightning feels about not winning the race, why he helped The King, how he feels about his new team, etc. The students in the role of Lightning should be prepared to answer these questions.
- Allow the students to interview each other. Go around the class and monitor their work.
- Students can then swap roles, and work with another pair to carry out the same task.
- Ask some volunteers to perform their interviews in front of the class.

## 6. Cars flickbook

**Materials:** sheets of paper cut into 10cm x10cm squares; pencils; colored pens / pencils; a heavy-duty stapler

- Before the session, make your own *Cars* flickbook:
  - Take around 10 to 15 squares of paper and draw a simple line drawing of Lightning McQueen on the first square of paper. Color it if you wish.
  - On the next square, draw the same picture but with a slight difference (the car a little more towards the centre, for example).
  - Continue on the other squares of paper, drawing the “frames” of this simple animation until the flickbook is complete. It could show

Lightning moving along very fast in the race, for example.

- Staple the pieces of paper along the left-hand side to make a book.
- Show the students your book and flick the pages so they can see Lightning “racing” along.
- Explain how to make the flickbook. Tell the students to decide what they would like Lightning or another character to do in their animation.
- Give the materials to the students and allow them to complete their own flickbook drawings. Offer help and suggestions where needed.
- Staple each book as you did with your own and let the students enjoy flicking their own and other students’ books. They should describe the animations they see in English.

## Key words

**attention** .....Lightning loved attention. (p. 4)

**blow out**.....Then suddenly, Lightning's back tire blew out. (p. 7)

**confident** .....There was no car more confident than Lightning. (p. 3)

**courthouse** ...Mater took Lightning to the town courthouse. (p. 12)

**crash** .....When Chick Hicks made some of the cars crash, Lightning raced around them. (p. 6)

**gas** .....“He needs gas and new tires,” they said. (p. 6)

**helicopter**.....“Can you get me a ride in a helicopter?” he asked, excitedly. (p. 21)

**Interstate**.....The cars drove very fast on the Interstate. (p. 26)

**judge** .....The town's judge, Doc Hudson, was angry. (p. 12)

**lawyer** .....Suddenly, the town's lawyer, Sally, drove into the courtroom. (p. 13)

**lead**..... ... Lightning raced around them. He was in the lead! (p. 6)

**prize** .....Lightning was thinking about the cameras, but he was also thinking about the big prize, the Piston Cup. (p. 4)

**quit** .....“I didn't quit. I crashed,” said Doc. (p. 27)

**racetrack**.....At the racetrack, Lightning smiled for the cameras and the crowd. (p. 4)

**roll** .....Lightning slowly rolled out the back of the truck and onto the Interstate. (p. 9)

**ruin** .....He was just the young car who ruined their road. (p. 14)

**sheriff**.....The Sheriff was very angry. He took Lightning and locked him in a dirty old yard. (p. 11)

**spark** .....Sparks were coming out the back of Lightning when he passed the finish line ... (p. 7)

**tear**.....Everyone was angry at Lightning for tearing up the town's road. (p. 12)

**tire** .....Lightning went to Luigi's tire store. “Give me the best tires you've got!” he said. (p. 28)

## While-Reading activities

### Activity 1 (pages 3–8)

Write *True* or *False*.

- 1 Lightning McQueen is a fast, red race car who wants to win the race of his life.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2 The King wanted to win his first Piston Cup. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 Chick Hicks did not want his tires changed. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 Lightning did not listen to his team during the race. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 The three fastest cars crossed the finish line together. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 The cars would race again one week later at the same racetrack.  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Activity 2 (pages 9–13)

Order the sentences.

- |   |   |                          |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| a | Lightning rolled out the back of the truck and onto the Interstate.             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b | Lightning was not sorry for tearing up the road. It was an accident.            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c | The Sheriff was very angry with Lightning and locked him up.                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d | Lightning met a tow truck named Mater.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e | Lightning traveled to California in a big truck named Mack.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f | Lightning could not leave the town of Radiator Springs until he fixed the road. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| g | Suddenly, he heard a police car. He drove really fast.                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| h | Lightning went to the courthouse. All the cars from the town were there.        | <input type="checkbox"/> |



### Activity 3 (pages 14–17)

Check ☒ the right answer.

- 1 Who helped Lightning to mend the road?
  - a Doc Hudson ☐
  - b Bessie ☐
  - c Mater ☐
- 2 Did Lightning work carefully on the road at first?
  - a Yes, but the road was not finished after an hour. ☐
  - b Yes, it looked better than before. ☐
  - c No, it looked awful. ☐
- 3 Who wanted to have a race with Lightning?
  - a Sally ☐
  - b Doc Hudson ☐
  - c the Sheriff ☐
- 4 What happened in the race?
  - a Lightning crashed. ☐
  - b Lightning won. ☐
  - c Doc could not race on a dirt road. ☐
- 5 Did Lightning mend the road after the race?
  - a No, he was a race car and could not mend roads. ☐
  - b Yes, and he finished it in an hour. ☐
  - c Yes, and it looked great. ☐

### Activity 4 (pages 18–22)

Write the correct name in each space.

Doc Lightning Mater Sally

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ gave Lightning advice about driving on the dirt road.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ was funny, but he was not very bright.
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ was a little crazy, Lightning thought.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ started to like Radiator Springs.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ thanked Lightning for mending the road.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ wanted to know about the Piston Cup.
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ invited Lightning to stay at the motel.
- 8 \_\_\_\_\_ had a lot to think about after meeting his new friends.

### Activity 5 (pages 23–29)

Circle the right words.

- 1 Lightning found **an old photograph** / **Piston Cups** in Doc's garage.
- 2 Doc was a **race car** / **judge** when he was younger.
- 3 Sally stayed in Radiator Springs because everyone was so **intelligent** / **friendly**.
- 4 Sally's favorite place was on **the highway** / **a hill**.
- 5 Radiator Springs had more visitors **before** / **after** they built the Interstate.
- 6 Doc quit racing because he **lost** / **crashed**.
- 7 Luigi owns a **gas** / **tire** store in the town.
- 8 After mending the road, Lightning mends the **lights** / **stores** in the town, too.

## Activity 6 (pages 29–38)

Who said it? Copy each sentence under the correct picture.

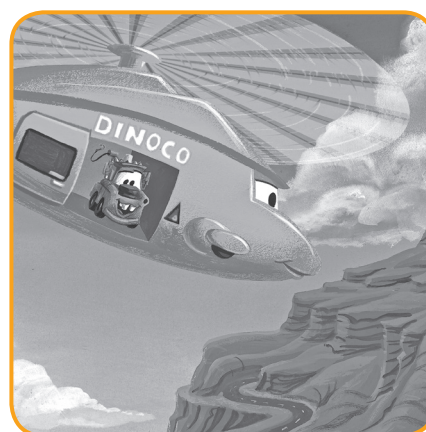
- a “I didn’t come all this way to hear you quit.”
- b “I’m so happy!”
- c “I know. Let’s race! ... to dinner!”
- d “What are you doing?”
- e “I need your help! I don’t think I can do this alone.”
- f “I looked everywhere for you!”



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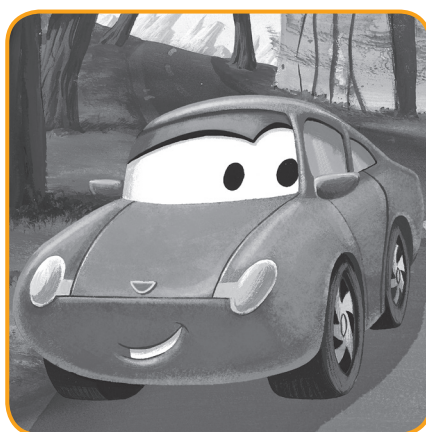
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6 .....  
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## After-Reading activities

### Activity 1

Describe the characters in the story. Use the words in the box.

bright old friendly angry beautiful handsome

- 1 Lightning is a fast, red race car who is very \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 Mater is a funny tow truck, but he is not very \_\_\_\_\_.
- 3 Sally is a \_\_\_\_\_, blue sports car and Lightning likes her a lot.
- 4 The King is an \_\_\_\_\_ race car now, but he was a great star of the racing world for a long time.
- 5 The Sheriff is very \_\_\_\_\_ with Lightning because he ruins the road in Radiator Springs.
- 6 Doc is \_\_\_\_\_ to Lightning at the end of the story.

### Activity 2

Complete the sentences. Use the words in the box.

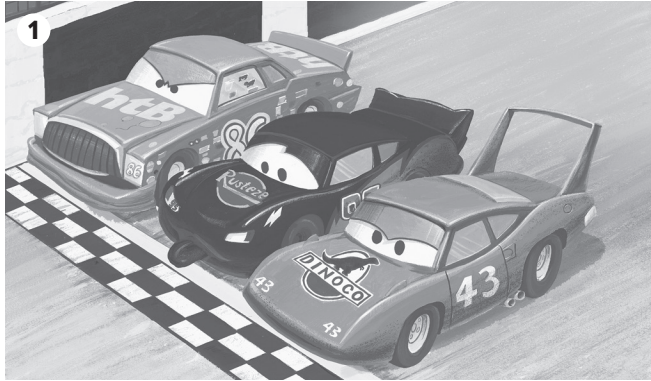
ruined Interstate real lawyer lose right

- 1 Lots of cars were racing that day, but the \_\_\_\_\_ race was between the three fastest cars.
- 2 Suddenly, the town's \_\_\_\_\_, Sally, drove into the courtroom.
- 3 He was just the young car who \_\_\_\_\_ their road.
- 4 "If you win, you go and I'll mend the road. If you \_\_\_\_\_, you'll stay and mend the road."
- 5 Doc tried to give Lightning some advice about driving on dirt. "If you want to go left, you have to turn \_\_\_\_\_."
- 6 "Forty years ago," explained Sally, "the \_\_\_\_\_ was not there. Cars who wanted to cross the country had to go slowly."



### Activity 3

Write one or two sentences next to each picture.

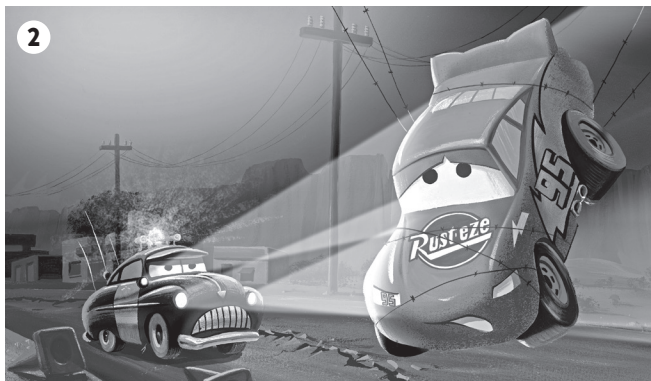



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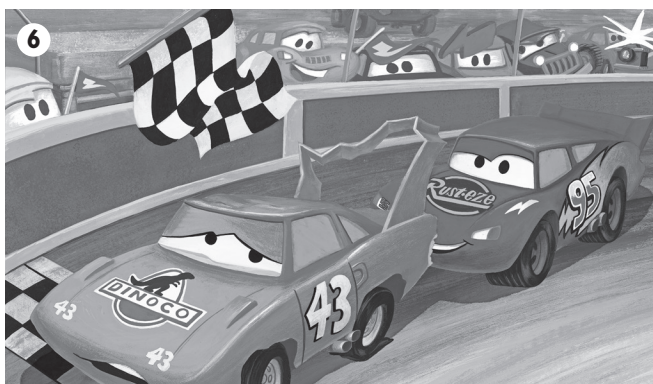


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## Activity 4

**Imagine you are Mater. Write a story about when Lightning arrived in your town.**

This image shows a full page of white paper with ten horizontal dashed lines, typical of primary-ruled notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the entire width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



## Answer Key

### In the back of the Reader

#### Before You Read

1 1 d 2 e 3 a 4 f 5 b 6 h 7 g 8 c

2 Students' own answers.

#### After You Read

1 1 T 2 F 3 T 4 T 5 T 6 F

- 2 a Lightning is ruining the road as he drives into Radiator Springs, followed by the Sheriff.
- b Students can describe the characters as they wish (use the opportunity to teach or practice 'to look + adjective' and 'to look like').
- c Lightning is finding the Piston Cups inside Doc's garage. He is also learning things about Doc that he did not know before.
- 3 1 He is too confident at the beginning of the story, but he learns to accept advice and help from others.
- 2 At first he does not, but then later he sees the importance of this.
- 3 Sally helps him with this. They become good friends.
- 4 Not at first, but then he makes friends and enjoys it more.
- 5 He learns lots: how to be a good friend, how to listen and take advice, that it is better to have a team than to work alone, how to slow down and enjoy life.
- 4 Students write their own answers, but Activity 3 will help them.

### In these Teacher's Notes

#### While-Reading activities

##### Activity 1

1 True 2 False 3 False 4 True 5 True 6 False

##### Activity 2

1 e 2 a 3 g 4 c 5 d 6 h 7 b 8 f

##### Activity 3

1 b 2 c 3 b 4 a 5 c

##### Activity 4

1 Doc 2 Mater 3 Doc 4 Lightning 5 Sally  
6 Mater 7 Sally 8 Lightning

##### Activity 5

1 Piston Cups 2 race car 3 friendly 4 a hill  
5 before 6 crashed 7 tire 8 lights

##### Activity 6

1 d 2 f 3 b 4 a 5 c 6 e

#### After-Reading activities

##### Activity 1

1 handsome 2 bright 3 beautiful 4 old 5 angry  
6 friendly

##### Activity 2

1 real 2 lawyer 3 ruined 4 lose 5 right  
6 Interstate

##### Activity 3

Students' own answers

##### Activity 4

Students' own answers