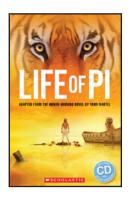## A FREE RESOURCE FOR TEACHERS!

LIFE OF PI

Level 3

This level is suitable for students who have been learning English for at least three years and up to four years. It corresponds with the Common European Framework level B1. Suitable for users of TEAM magazine.

SYNOPSIS

Pi's story begins in Pondicherry, in India, where his parents run the town zoo. He also describes his love of God, which led him to join three religions, becoming a Hindu, a Christian and a Muslim. When Pi is fifteen, because of political problems in India, the family decide to leave for Canada.

The Patel family and many of their animals begin their journey to Canada on a large ship called the *Tsimtsum*. After a few days in the Pacific Ocean, however, the ship sinks. Pi finds himself the only human on a lifeboat with four animals - an injured zebra, a hyena, an orang-utan and a tiger called Richard Parker. Soon only Pi and Richard Parker remain. They survive on the lifeboat for 227 days. Pi has to learn many skills, such as catching fish, desalinating water and learning to train an adult tiger. Their adventures include a terrible storm, a meeting with a survivor in another lifeboat, and a strange island that turns out to be deadly.

After 227 days, when all hope is gone, Pi and Richard Parker finally reach land. Richard Parker disappears into the Mexican jungle and Pi is taken to hospital. Two men from the Japanese shipping company come to interview him. They want to hear his story and learn why the *Tsimtsum* sank. But they don't believe his story about the animals. So Pi tells them another story, where his mother and two crew members are with him in the lifeboat. Events lead to everyone dying, except for Pi. The reader can decide which story to believe.

THE BACK STORY

The fantasy adventure story *Life of Pi* became a big success when it won the UK's biggest book prize, the Man Booker prize, in 2002. More than three million copies of the original English version were sold in ten years.

The author, Yann Martel, is Canadian but was born in Spain in 1963. Today, Yann lives with his young family in Canada.

People said that it was impossible to film *Life of Pi*. The novel is about ideas and philosophy, as well as Pi's adventure, which are hard things to film in an exciting way. Director Ang Lee loved the story, however, and decided to try. He knew it would be difficult. 'Kid, water, big special effects, animals – and they have to be in a small boat on water,' he said. The film took four years to make. The result was spectacular, and the film won four Oscars in 2013, including the award for Best Director.

MEDIA LINKS

CD: An audio recording of *Life of Pi* accompanies the Scholastic Reader.

Book: Life of Pi by Yann Martel (2001) has been translated into thirty languages.

Internet: Find out more about Yann Martel and *Life of Pi* at **www.canongate.tv/authors/yannmartel**.

DVD: Ang Lee's *Life of Pi* is available on DVD in 2D or 3D.

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOLASTIC READER

Choosing and motivating

Is this the right story for your class? Have the students heard of *Life of Pi*? Have they seen the film based on the novel? Motivate them with background information (see The Back Story above) and by reading aloud the first page of the story with dramatic atmosphere.

Organising

Plan a class reading schedule. Decide how many pages to set for reading each week. Select exercises from the Self-Study section at the back of the reader and extra activities from this resource sheet to go with each chunk of reading. (All answers are on page 4 of this resource sheet.)

Using the CD

Students can listen and follow in their books. They can listen and then read. They can read and then listen. All these activities will improve their reading speeds and skills.

Glossary

Go to 'New Words' at the back of the reader. Translate the words with the class or ask students to find meanings at home. The Vocabulary Builder on page 3 of this resource sheet practises the new words in a different context. There is an additional 'Equipment list' in this reader, giving the items that Pi finds in the lifeboat survival cupboard (see pages 30–1).
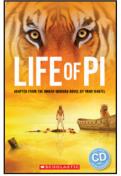
Fact File

The Fact File at the end of the reader can be used as self-study or for whole class work. It provides an introduction to the three religions that Pi Patel joins as a young boy in India – Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. You can use the Fact File as a starting point for a comparative study of the world's biggest religions.

What did they think?

Get everyone to do a written or spoken review of *Life of Pi*. Compare opinions. Will they read the original novel, either in English or their own language? Did *you* like it? Let us know at: **readers@link2 English.com**.

LIFE OF PI

People and places

Complete the sentences with these words.

Canada   Pondicherry   ~~Ravi~~   *Tsimtsum*   zoo

a) ……… *Ravi* ……… is Pi's older brother.

b) The Patel family lives in …………………… .

c) Mr and Mrs Patel own a …………………… .

d) They decide to move to …………………… .

e) They sail on a ship called the …………………… .

Chapter 1: Writer's note

Put these events (a–f) in the right order.

a) He meets an old man who tells him about Pi Patel. ☐

b) He finds Pi Patel in Toronto. ☐

c) The writer spends many months in India. ☐ 1

d) Pi tells the writer his story. ☐

e) He visits Pondicherry in the south of India. ☐

f) He returns to Canada. ☐

Part One: Chapters 2–11

1 Circle the correct words in italics.

a) Pi thinks that most people have the *right /* (*wrong*) ideas about zoos.

b) Pi's teacher, Mr Kumar believes in *science and religion / science, not religion*.

c) Mr Kumar wishes *animals were like politicians / politicians were like animals*.

d) Father wants to teach his boys that animals are *wild and dangerous / wild but friendly*.

2 Complete the sentences with these words.

church   mosque   ~~temple~~   Christian   Hindu   Muslim

a) He first found religion in a …… *temple* …… .

b) He felt afraid when he first entered a ……………… .

c) Pi felt the love of God when he prayed in a ……………… .

d) He became a ……………… as a baby.

e) He became a ……………… on a street in Pondicherry.

f) He became a ……………… on holiday in Kerala.

3 Talk with a partner. You are Pi and Ravi. You have just found out that you are moving from Pondicherry to Canada. How do you feel? What will your new lives be like?

Part Two: Chapters 12–29

1 Choose animals from the box. You can use each animal more than once.

hyena   orang-utan   tiger   zebra

Which animal …

a) … has a broken leg? ……… *the zebra* ……

b) … is the last to join the boat? …………………

c) … runs around the boat? …………………

d) … eats the zebra's leg? …………………

e) … is seasick? …………………

f) … hides under the lifeboat bench? …………………

g) … kills the zebra? …………………

h) … kills the orang-utan? …………………

i) … kills the hyena? …………………

2 Match the equipment to its use.

a) blanket   i) You carry water in this.

b) flare   ii) You use this to move the boat.

c) oar   iii) You tie things with this.

d) bucket   iv) This keeps you warm.

e) rope   v) You cut up fish with this.

f) knife   vi) The bright light of this may bring help.

3 In Chapter 27, Pi makes three plans to save his own life. Talk to a partner. Why does Pi decide against each of these plans? What plan does Pi decide on in the end?

Part Two: Chapters 30–42

1 Correct these sentences in your notebook.

a) Pi believes that the solar stills will work.

   Pi doesn't believe that the solar stills will work.

b) Pi catches his first fish and is happy to kill it.

c) The lifeboat travels from east to west across the Pacific Ocean.

d) The frightening storm lasts twelve hours.

e) A huge ship sees them.

f) The fish hit Richard Parker in the face because he could not hear.

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES

2 Which of these things does Pi find on the island?

a) seaweed that he can eat ☑

b) pools of fresh water ☐

c) another human ☐

d) a lot of meerkats ☐

e) dead saltwater fish ☐

f) sandy beaches ☐

g) thirty-two human teeth ☐

3 Talk to another student. There are four big events in this section of the book - the storm, the passing ship, the meeting with the second survivor and finding the island. Pi feels disappointed after each of these events. Why?

Part Three: Chapters 43–50

1 Choose the correct words in italics.

a) Mr Okamoto thinks the man on the second lifeboat was actually (the cook) / a sailor from the ship.

b) Mr Okamoto and Mr Chiba speak *in Japanese / very quietly* when they don't want Pi to hear them.

c) Mr Okamoto thinks that bananas *float / don't float*.

d) Mr Okamoto *thinks / doesn't think* a boy can survive in a boat with a tiger.

e) He *can / can't* explain the meerkat bones.

2 Put these events (a–f) in the correct order.

a) The cook built a raft so that they could catch fish. ☐

b) Pi lost a big fish and the cook hit him. ☐

c) Four people survive the sinking of the *Tsimtsum*. ☐1

d) Pi killed the cook. ☐

e) The cook cut off the sailor's leg. ☐

f) Pi's mother hit the cook. ☐

g) The cook killed Pi's mother. ☐

3 Mr Okamoto and Mr Chiba prefer Pi's first story. Why do you think this is? Talk to a partner.

FINAL TASKS

1 You are Pi Patel. You have just left the seaweed 'island'. You and Richard Parker are both strong and well after your time on the island. But now you are back in the middle of the ocean. Write a page in your diary.

2 Pi Patel wakes up in a Mexican hospital after his rescue. A nurse sits by his bed. Write their conversation.

3 Imagine Pi is on the lifeboat with one of the other animals instead of the tiger. How is his adventure different? Is it easier to survive or harder?

VOCABULARY BUILDER

Look at the 'New Words' at the back of *Life of Pi*. Find words to complete these sentences.

1. My dog …*growls*…. if you take her …………… away.

2. When it's really cold, I ……………… my hands together to keep them warm.

3. ……………… is a very popular food in East Asia.

4. There's something wrong with my dad's car – the ………………'s making a funny noise.

5. We went on a sailing holiday. There was a ……………… of three people who sailed the boat. We all shared the jobs. I had the worst job – washing the ……………… !

6. My grandmother kept a parrot in a ……………… in her sitting room.

7. This plastic fork ……………….. on water, but this metal spoon ……………… to the bottom.

8. Our cat is called Scruffy. Her ……………… is grey and she has seven toes on each of her front ……………… .

9. In Africa, lions live in families, called 'prides'. Each pride has its own ……………… where other prides cannot go. The lions ……………… loudly if a strange lion comes near.

10. I went to the Paralympic Games and watched a ……………… football match. The ball makes a noise, so the players know where it is.

11. I hate exams! I always ……………… from nerves before I go into the exam room.

12. I live in New Zealand, and we love sport here. My favourite sport is riding along a wild river on a ……………….. .

13. Will ……………… visit Mars soon? I don't think so!

Casual language

- **'the top cat'** (p.40). This is the most important or powerful person in a situation. On page 40, Pi says Richard Parker accepts that Pi is 'the top cat'. There is also a play on words here as Richard Parker is a cat.
- **'well'** (p.25). We use 'well' to give ourselves time to think before we say something. On page 25, Pi uses this while he considers how to describe his mother. 'A mother, well, a mother is the sun above you.'

Complete the sentences with the Casual language expressions.

1. His wife is doing very well. She works at the bank and she is …………………… .

2. A: What time can you meet?

   B: ……………… , how about 11.30?

FACT FILE FOLLOW-UP

THREE RELIGIONS (pages 58–9)

Pre-reading

Give students these questions before they read the Fact File. How many can they answer? They read pages 58–9 to check their answers.

1. Which is the world's oldest religion?
2. Which is the world's largest religion?
3. Which religion celebrates Diwali – the 'festival of lights'?
4. Which religion has Five Pillars – or rules – that believers must follow?
5. Which religion has the Bible as its holy book?
6. Which religion asks its followers to fast once a year?

(Answers: 1 Hinduism 2 Christianity 3 Hinduism 4 Islam
5 Christianity 6 Islam)

Festival facts

The Fact File describes an important festival in each of the three religions. Ask students to choose another festival from one of the three religions, or a festival from their own religion, and find out and present the following information: name of festival, dates, where it is celebrated, decorations, special meals, holy events. Some possible festivals: Holi (the Hindu festival to celebrate the beginning of spring, where Hindus throw coloured water and paint powder at each other); Easter (the Christian festival that remembers the death and resurrection of Christ, when Christians exchange chocolate eggs as gifts); Eid-ul-Adha is the second most important Muslim festival, when Muslims visit the mosque and exchange presents with family and friends.

Students write up their research as homework or a class project, including photos or drawings. Display their work in the classroom if possible.

DISCUSSION

Religion is obviously a very sensitive topic and you may prefer not to have a class discussion. If students are interested and open-minded about religion, here are some possible discussion topics:

- Religion should be an important part of daily life. A religion is a big family where people can feel loved and important.
- Without religion, people cannot fully experience life.
- Learning about religion is an important part of your education.
- You can love God without being part of a big organisation.
- You cannot prove that God exists, therefore there is no God.

DVD/CD FOLLOW-UP

DVD: The island

When you are reading Chapter 41 – where Pi and Richard Parker reach the seaweed island – ask students to imagine the island, the trees, the meerkats, the pools and the fruit containing human teeth. After you finish the chapter, ask students to describe what they think the island looks like. Students can also draw the island if they wish. Play the scenes set on the island from the film of *Life of Pi*. Afterwards, students say how the film is similar to or different from what they imagined.

CD: Listening for key words

Choose three key words or phrases from a chapter of the reader and write them on the board. Now play the CD recording of the chapter and ask students to note down one piece of information to go with each of the key words as they listen.

Example: (Chapter 29) whistle
Possible answer: Richard Parker roared when he heard the whistle.

ANSWER KEY

Self-Study Activities (pages 60–3)

1 a) cage b) priest c) cricket d) human e) growls f) holy g) temple
2 a) *Possible answer:* Because he lives in a zoo. b) Pondicherry, in India c) Canada, across the Pacific Ocean d) fifteen
3 a) the writer b) Pi c) They like it. d) the rhinos and goats e) There aren't enough visitors.
4 Open answers.
5 a) ii b) vii c) iv d) v e) vi f) iii g) i
6 a) It sank. b) He landed in the lifeboat.
   c) Because a zebra jumped into the lifeboat and the ropes broke.
   d) He jumped into the sea. e) Because the hyena and the zebra were still alive. f) Because he was worrying about himself.
7 a) F. The hyena kills the orang-utan. b) T
   c) F. He eats nine in half an hour. d) F. Richard Parker eats a rat.
   e) F. He plans to keep him alive.
8 He can keep warm, eat, build a raft, write and drink.
9 Open answers.
10 a) rub b) blind c) seaweed d) fur
11 a) worse b) easy c) upset d) deeper e) his mother's
12 He uses fish, water and a whistle.
13 a) T b) F. It passes one metre from the lifeboat.
   c) T d) F. The tiger's sight returns too. e) T
   f) F. The inside of the seaweed tastes good. g) T h) T
14 Open answers.
15 Open answers.
16 *Possible answers:* a) Because he was so hungry in the lifeboat, he takes any food that people offer him. b) Bananas.
   c) Because nobody has ever seen it. d) Pi went slowly across the ocean and looked at everything. e) The police haven't found the tiger. f) He says you can't see a tiger in a rainforest.
   g) The cook on the *Tsimtsum*. h) He says they were from the ship. i) Because there weren't any meerkats on the ship.
17 a) the cook b) the cook c) the sailor d) Pi's mother
   e) the cook f) Pi g) the cook h) Pi
18 Open answers.

Resource Sheet Activities

People and Places
b) Pondicherry c) zoo d) Canada e) *Tsimtsum*

Chapter 1: Writer's note
The correct order is: c, e, a, f, b, d.

Part One: Chapters 2–11
1 b) science, not religion c) politicians were like animals
   d) wild and dangerous
2 b) church c) mosque d) Hindu e) Muslim f) Christian
3 Open answers.

Part Two: Chapters 12–29
1 b) the orang-utan c) the hyena d) the hyena e) the orang-utan
   f) the tiger g) the hyena h) the hyena i) the tiger
2 b) vi c) ii d) i e) iii f) v
3 Open answers.

Part Two: Chapters 30–42
1 b) Pi catches his first fish but is not happy to kill it. c) The lifeboat sails towards the east/from west to east. d) The storm lasts 24 hours. e) A huge ship sails past/does not see them. f) The fish hit Richard Parker in the face because he could not see.
2 He finds: a, b, d, e and g.
3 Open answers.

Part Three: Chapters 43–50
1 b) in Japanese c) don't float d) doesn't think e) can't
2 The correct order is: c, e, a, b, f, g, d.
3 Open answers.

Vocabulary Builder
1. growls, bone 2. rub 3. Seaweed 4. engine 5. crew, deck
6. cage 7. floats, sinks 8. fur, paws 9. territory, roar 10. blind
11. suffer 12. raft 13. humans

Casual language
1. the top cat 2. Well