

THE SHARK AND THE SCAR

Extracts and notes for KS2

Suitable for: Ages 10 +

Explore themes of:

- The impact of scars
 - Relationships
 - Memories
- The relationship between a father and son
 - Mental health and well-being
 - Recovery
 - Sharks

Subject checklist:

- Literacy
- Science
- Geography
 - PSHE
 - Art



Contents

Pre-reading Task

Objectives:

- To set the scene; discuss key themes related to the book; identify key elements from initial questions.

Extract 1: Remembering (taken from Chapter 1)

Objectives:

- Consider the significance of the language and how Jay is feeling
- Create a visual using the language from Jay's vivid memories
- Write a short prediction on what you think will happen in the rest of the story

Extract 2: A Terrible Event (taken from Chapter 1)

Objectives:

- Understand how Jay is feeling by considering and sharing ideas to support him
- Discuss the positive and negative points of talking about a terrible event
- Create a bottle of feelings based on Jay's words and share them together

Extract 3: Loneliness (Taken from Chapter 1)

Objectives:

- Discuss some key questions around the topic of loneliness and isolation
- Write down some advice to give Jay's dad based on your own understanding of how Jay is feeling

Extract 4: A Total Barge (Taken from Chapter 12)

Objectives:

- Discuss Jess's behaviour and answer the questions
- Understand the advice Jess's mum gave her, discuss if you agree with this advice

Extract 5: Sharks (Taken from Chapter 17)

Objectives:

- Create a mini presentation based on further research on sharks and shark attacks
- Write a paragraph using key words related to sharks and their behaviour

Reflection Task: Post-reading

Objectives:

- Consider how you would react to someone having a scar; write a diary entry from Jay's perspective
- Create hashtags summarising your understanding of the book



Pre-reading *The Shark and the Scar*

What predictions can you make about the story from the title?

Work in pairs or small groups and predict ten key words you think you will see in this book.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Pre-reading questions

- What do you think is the possibility of actually surviving a shark attack?
- What is a scar? What do you think are the impacts of having a big scar on your body?
- The blurb says, 'but what if his dad is lying?' Do you think it was a shark attack? If it wasn't, what else could have caused Jay to have a big scar on his body?



Extract 1

'You're in hospital, buddy,' he said, leaning forward, studying his son's face. 'You're OK. I've been right here the whole time.'

There were semi-circles of grey – like stains or bruises – under his dad's eyes.

And in the breath of that moment a collection of images came back to Jay, flung in confusing order on the beach of his disjointed memory.

The sparkle of the sea; a sudden frenzied chaos; a churning, a splashing; his body, caught up in an unwilling slow-motion dance; a reddening explosion of blood; a feeling of being pushed up above the surface, gasping for air; the raggy groan of his own voice; a horrible roar, like an engine or a lion; a scream somewhere, high-pitched and hysterical.

He could remember a sickening, dragging pain and how this had overtaken him and that he had not been able to withstand the pull of the dark. There had been a tiny instant of peace as his world had blurred and faded. And then after that: nothing.

Nothing, that is, until he'd woken to find himself here in a hospital bed with the bleeping machines and the high walls and the tired face of his father in this strange new season of blankness.

Drops of liquid fell in wet, clear beads from a tiny opening in a tube above him and inched along a milky pipe, making their way into his arm.

'Pain control, just for the moment,' his dad explained. 'Might make you feel a bit woozy.' It was true. Jay's head felt full of fog and everything seemed blurred and distant; even his dad, who was right there.

Discussion questions

- What is the significance of 'the semi-circles of grey – like stains or bruises' under Jay's dad's eyes?
 - Jay's dad refers to Jay as 'buddy', does this tell you anything about their relationship? What other words are similar to 'buddy'?
- 'It might make you feel a bit woozy.' Can you think about what the word 'woozy' means in this context? Can you think of any synonyms for the word 'woozy'?
- 'Jay's head felt full of fog.' What does this expression mean? What is fog? How do you think Jay was feeling at this moment in time?

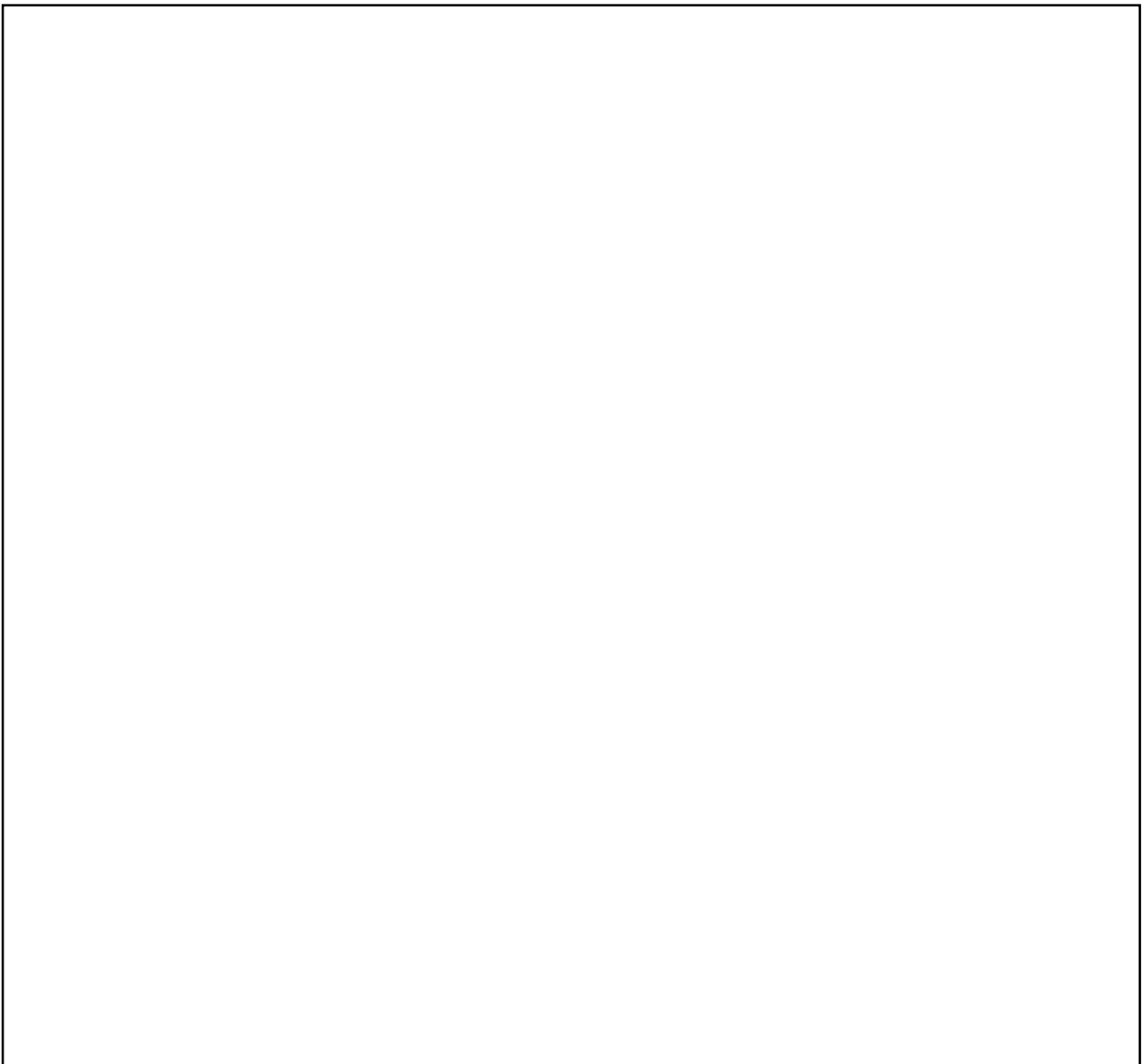


Activity 1a

Memory can often be extremely visual.

Can you draw the key details Jay is remembering from this extract?

- The sparkle of the sea
 - Splashing
 - His body
- A reddening explosion of blood
 - Gasping for air
 - A horrible roar
 - A scream



Activity 1b

Working in a pair or small group, consider the memories Jay is describing. What do you think happened? Can you connect the title of the book *The Shark and the Scar* and write a prediction based on what you know so far?



Extract 2

'Hey, Jay,' he said one day. 'Your dad has asked me not to talk about the accident, so I won't. But if you ever want to ask me about your injury, just let me know, OK?'

Jay said no thanks.

But a couple of days later, Tom said, 'You know, you don't always have to close your eyes for this bit. Maybe if you saw it, it wouldn't feel so scary.'

'What's it like?' Jay found himself able to ask.

'Well, I wouldn't exactly call it beautiful. But it's getting a lot better,' Tom said, carefully unwrapping the wound. 'Why don't you have a quick look? You'll need a mirror for some of it. I can hold one up if you like.' Tom pulled a round mirror with a handle from his bandage bag to show Jay what he meant. It was this gentle advice and this practical suggestion that gave Jay the courage to face his injury for the first time.

In the mirror he could see that it started right up at his neck, just underneath his ear, carving a wide bloody, jagged stripe down the whole right side of his body, with metal stitches like gigantic staples.

But it wasn't the crooked bruised bits on his neck or on his chest or torso that shocked him. What had been most difficult to look at was where, at the top of his thigh, the injury darkened and deepened. It felt like his leg had been replaced with someone else's.

It was bloated and purple, twice its normal width, as if he'd been badly sewn together like some horror-movie monster.

'It won't always look like that,' said Tom, glancing at Jay's face, which had started to tremble.

'The swelling protects your body. Helps it mend. Are you OK?'

Jay said he was fine, just tired and in need of sleep.

In those foggy days the distant, dreamy feelings often made it hard for him to tell the difference between what was real and what was the fake invention of his scrambled mind. A thousand times he longed to talk to his best friend, Louis, or to text his other friends from school or the gang from the surf club, but a thousand times the impulse would evaporate in a mist of drowsiness. Vaguely he wondered where his phone was. He hadn't seen it since he'd woken up.

'When am I going to get out of here?' he sighed when he woke again, and when Tom had gone and his dad was settled in the bedside chair. But his dad didn't reply, and Jay wondered whether or not he'd asked the question or just imagined having asked it and either way he felt too weak and flat to ask it again.

Personally he couldn't imagine himself ever being able to stand up straight, or walk, or run, or jump or do the things he once thought he'd always be able to do.

Discussion questions

- How do you think Jay is feeling?
- How important do you think it is to discuss things rather than bottle things up?
 - Why do you think Jay's dad doesn't want him to know about the accident?
- On the blurb of the book it says, 'but what if Jay's dad is lying?' – What do you think this could mean? Do you think Jay's dad is lying about something from the accident?
 - Do you think the nurse, Tom, did a good thing by allowing Jay to see his scar?



Activity 1a

Imagine Jay was your best friend. Work in pairs and small groups and think about all the different ways you could support Jay to help him feel better.

Activity 1b: Class Discussion / Debate

Discuss the positive and negative points about talking about an accident or a terrible memory.

Positive points about talking about something bad that has happened:	Negative points about talking about something bad that has happened:

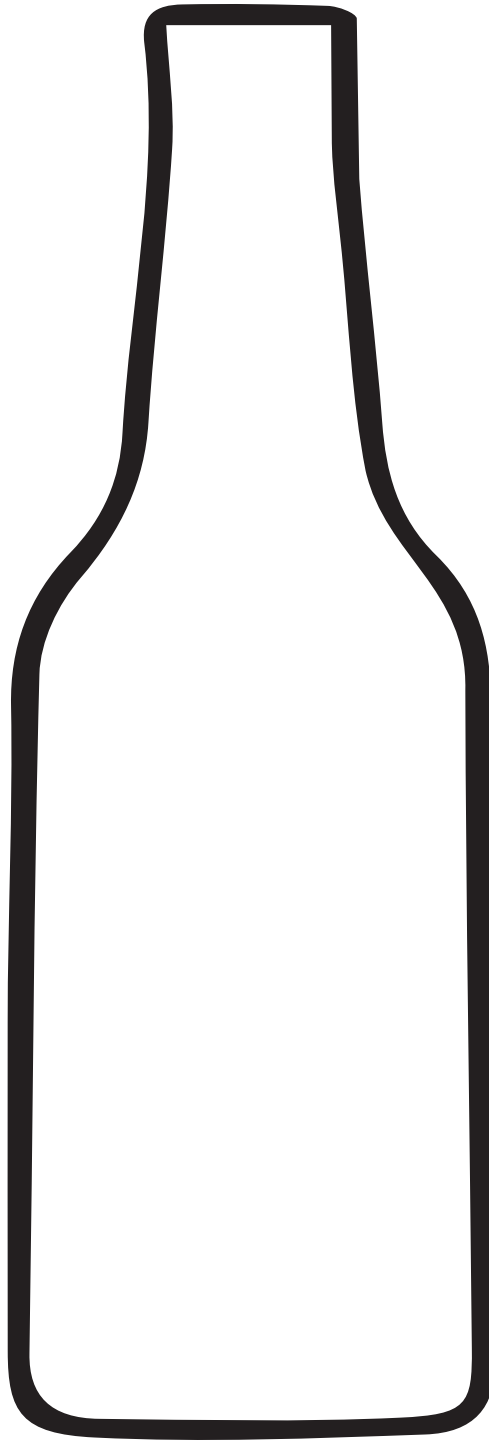


Activity 1c: Jay's bottle of feelings

Read through the extract again and consider how Jay is feeling. Write each of his feelings down in the bottle below. Look through each of his memories, thoughts and feelings and think about helping Jay.

Share your ideas together.

Once you have all of the feelings in the bottle, imagine asking Jay, when he feels ready, to read out a memory or feeling one by one. Do you think this could be a positive technique to help Jay in his recovery process?



Extract 3

'If your emotions were a colour, what colour do you think they would be?'

Jay shrugged. It was hard to explain. Nothing had a colour really. He didn't feel happy and he didn't feel sad. He didn't feel hope and he didn't feel despair.

He was tempted to say 'blizzard-white' or 'foggy grey' but somehow he didn't think those were the answers Lonnie was looking for. Instead, he said, 'Maybe red? Dark red?' And Lonnie said this was excellent, and Jay felt as if he'd passed some sort of test.

'Do you have any questions you'd like to ask? Is there anything you'd like to discuss?' But whenever she said this, Jay's dad would lean in closer and speak loudly and say, 'It's OK, Lonnie, if Jay has any more questions, he's going to ask me. Isn't that right, Jay?'

Jay felt a weird loneliness. He longed for the days when he wasn't surrounded by a medical team. He missed his friends. He missed the apartment and the sound of the waves when he slept. He missed his surfboard and his chats with Louis. He even missed school.

But Pierre had been right. There were better days ahead. The day, when changing his bandages, Tom said, 'Look, Jay, I think you should look at this again,' and when he did, he saw that the scar, while still red and still huge, wasn't quite as horrible any more. The day they took away the drip with the strong drugs, and Jay found that he could bear a pain that no longer felt so deep or sharp. The day he got out of bed and stood. The day he went to the exercise room and began to test his growing strength. He was summoning some steel, like Pierre had said, and even though a big part of him still felt bleak and scared, there was a glimmer of brightness now. At least that's what everyone told him.

Discussion questions

- 'Jay felt a weird loneliness' – What impact do you think this had on Jay's mental health?
- How important do you think it is to consider some normality after such a terrible time?
- Lonnie asks Jay a question: 'If your emotions were a colour, what colour do you think they would be?'
What colour do you think Jay's emotions are at this point?
- At the end of this extract, it says, 'there was a glimmer of brightness now.' What do you think a glimmer of brightness is and what is it referring to?



Activity 1a

Jay describes how lonely he is feeling and how he longs for some normality from his life before the accident. Work in pairs or small groups. What advice would you give to Jay's dad based on Jay's feelings of loneliness? Make a note of your ideas and share them with your class.



Extract 4:

The next morning I woke to the banging fear.

'Oh GOD! I hate myself so much,' I groaned, slouching at the kitchen table in my dressing gown, a mug of tea misting the space in front of me.

'What is it now?' Esme was making a smoothie, temporarily being nice.

'Last night!' I had to shout over the whizz of the blender.

'What about last night?'

'I was a total barge! I asked Jay Danagher all these personal questions that he didn't want to answer and then I took his scarf off him, and he was mortified, and he hates me now!'

'You don't know that,' Esme said, pouring deep blue sludge into tall glasses.

'I do know it. Did you see the way he looked at me? Total scorn. He thinks I'm the biggest loser of all time. And, oh no, I asked him to dance! With me!'

'Did you?' said Esme, dipping a finger into her drink.

'Yes! Round the fire! Did you not see me?'

'Nope,' replied Esme, licking the same finger.

'You must be the only one. And the awful thing is, he had a *reason* for the scarf; it was covering a huge scar. Jay Danagher has a fabulous and mysterious past that he doesn't want to talk about! And I pulled his scarf off and stared at him and asked him what happened. I mean, who does that? I will literally never recover from the shame.'

Discussion questions

- Jess calls herself 'a total barge'. What do you think this means and what is it referring to?
- How do you feel when someone stares at you? Was Jess in the wrong for staring at Jay?
 - What does Jess realise about Jay and his scarf?
- Should Jess feel shameful about her reaction towards Jay?
 - How do you think she should have reacted?



Activity 1

Charlie, Mam and Dad came crowding into the kitchen then, and I only had a few seconds to explain to Mam what happened.

'That's an exaggeration, I'm sure, sweetie,' she said, kissing me on the head. 'But always remember, for future reference, it's much the best thing not to ask personal questions of anyone. People who want to talk about themselves will do it anyway; they don't need anyone to invite them. And people who don't will appreciate not being prodded for information they have no wish to give away. Now stop making mountains out of molehills and hug your brother.'

Look at the advice and reassurance Jess's mum gave her. Is this good advice? Discuss and share your ideas together. Jess's mum says, 'now stop making mountains out of molehills and hug your brother.'

What does stop making mountains out of molehills mean in this context?

Can you think of words with a similar meaning?

Activity 2

What predictions can you make about Jess and Jay's relationship after this incident?



Extract 5: Sharks

'How's the research?' she shouted, shielding her eyes from the glare of the water.

'Fine. Do you need this?' He held up her phone and Jess shook her head.

'Knock yourself out. I'm in no hurry,' she replied.

And so he did some more googling.

According to the Shark Trust website, sharks are not lurking underwater planning to devour you as soon as you go for a swim. They'd much prefer to stay out of the way of humans and they pretty much wish humans would do the same for them.

More than seventy-three million sharks are killed by humans every year, and every year about six humans are killed by sharks and most of those are probably just accidents. Sharks don't like the way humans taste. The largest of humans wouldn't be as fatty or juicy as a seal, for example, which has a layer of blubber that sharks find delicious.

He probably meant to take a small nibble, Jay thought, strangely comforted, before realising, Mum might have died for no reason, because when he found out I was a scrawny human, he would have spat me out and sped away like a torpedo.

Discussion questions

- What is the significance of the phrase 'The shark that attacks you is the shark you do not hear' and Jay wearing his headphones in the water?
 - Should sharks be a protected species?
 - Are people at risk from shark attacks when the probability is so low?
- Look at the information below about shark attacks, does this make you change your opinion about protection for sharks?

73 million sharks are killed by humans every year.

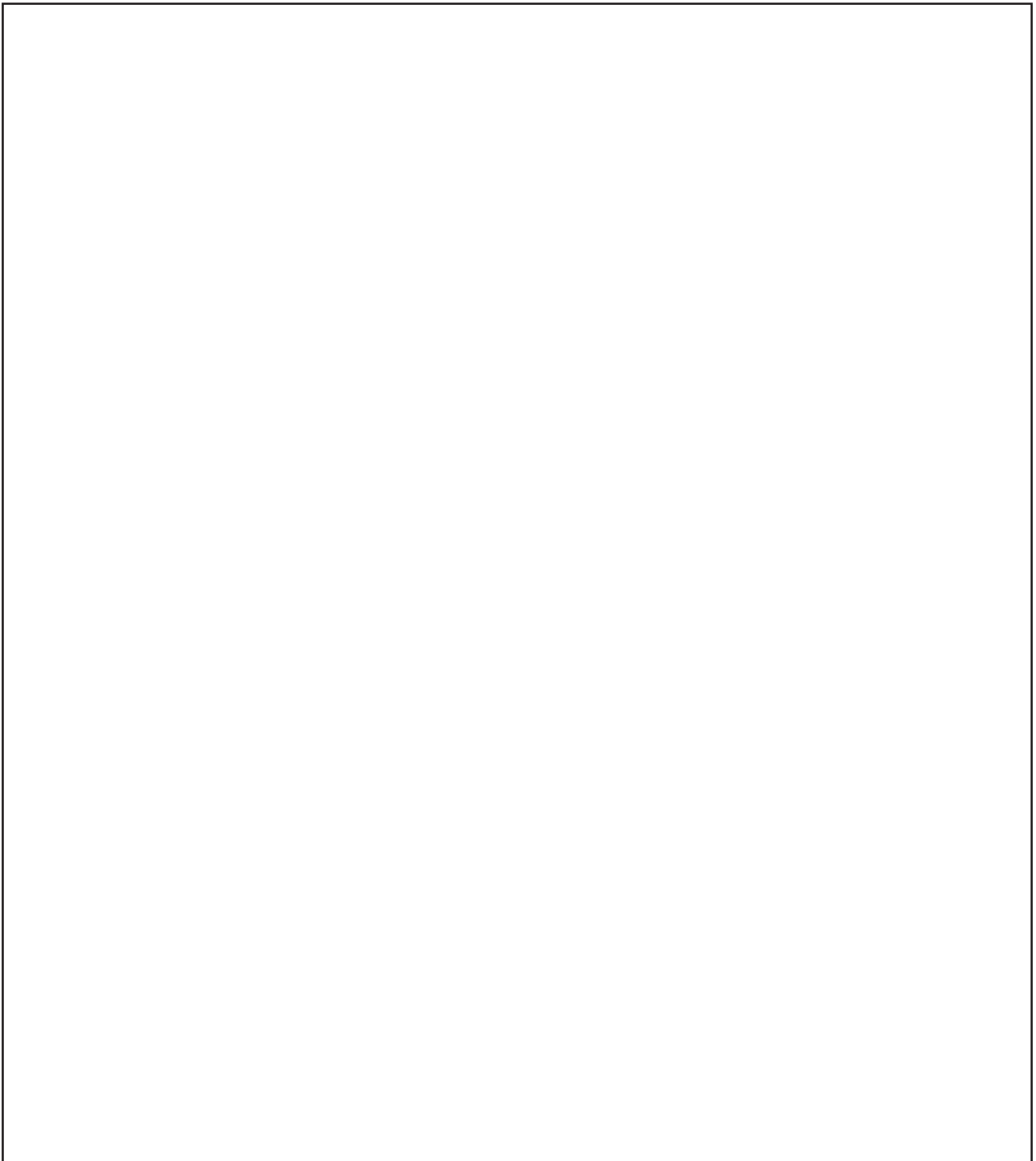
6 humans are killed by sharks every year.

There is a 1 in 11 million chance of being attacked by a shark.



Activity 1a

Further research task – can you do some research on shark attacks? Work in pairs and small groups and collect as much information as you can in the form of data, percentages and actual shark attacks. Present it together in a mini presentation.



Activity 1b

Rewrite the information below from *The Shark's Trust* into a paragraph from page 184. Use each of the words below.

- Lurking underwater
 - Devour
 - Humans
- Accidents
 - Taste
 - Seals
 - Blubber
 - Delicious



Reflection Tasks

Reflection Task 1: At the end of the book

'It might be easier to write it down,' suggested Lonnie, who understood more than he'd given her credit for. Writing felt like a good idea, even though at first he didn't know how to begin.

Always consider how someone else must be feeling. Remember the phrase 'always be kind'.

Work together and think about Jess and how she reacted when she saw Jay's scar.

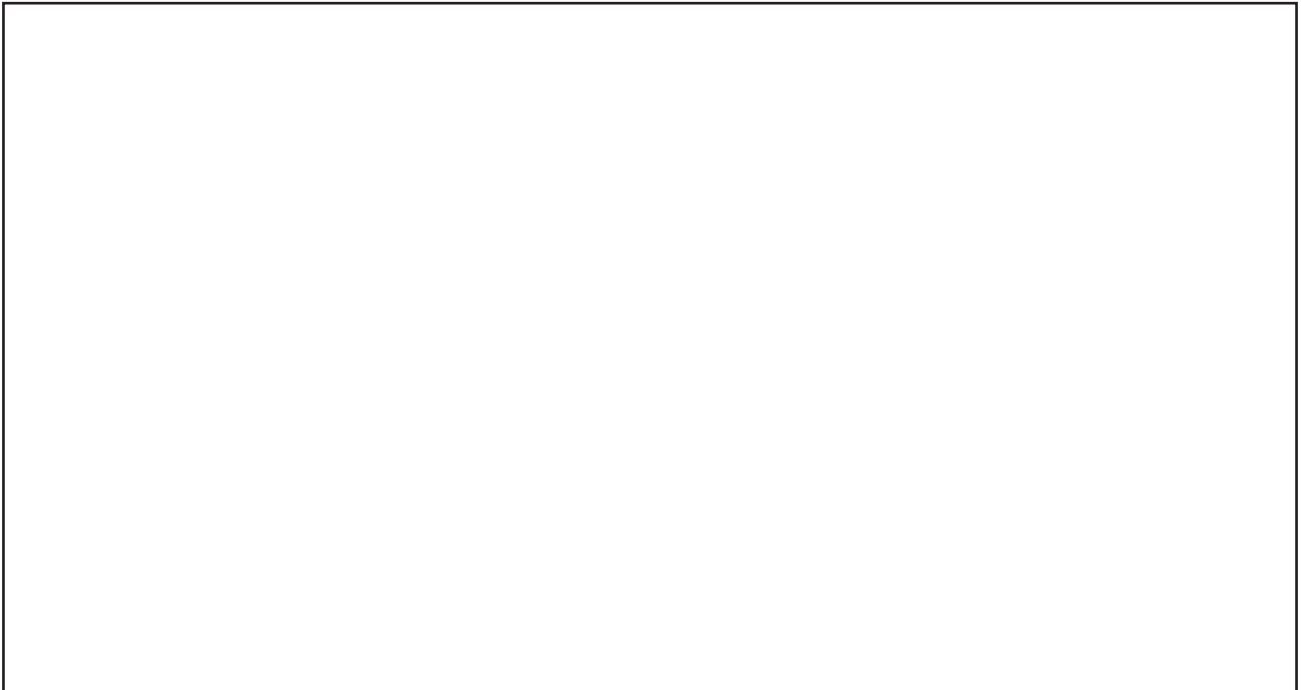
Put yourself in Jay's shoes. What advice can you give someone on being kind, not asking too many personal questions and respecting someone's privacy after reading this book?

Now think about what Jess would do differently if she had the chance.

Reflection Task 2

Write a diary entry from Jay's perspective. Consider how he is feeling, thinking about the points below:

- Leaving France and his friends
- Leaving behind everything familiar to him
 - Sustaining severe injuries
 - Recovery
 - The scar
- Realising his mother was to blame
 - A new sibling
- His father lying to him
 - A new life ahead



Reflection Task 3: The Hashtag

Can you make a hashtag wall in your classroom to reflect on all the key language and topics covered in the book? Choose your own hashtag words reflecting on what you have understood and remembered. Discuss all of the hashtags on the wall and share ideas, thoughts and reflections on this book.

