

Oliver Twist

Scene One – The Workhouse



**(Narrator stands in front of the closed stage curtain.
A spotlight shines on them.)**

Narrator: Oliver Twist finds himself being cared for by an old lady, three miles from where he once lived. He spends his days with 20 or 30 other children. They lie on the floor with their stomachs rumbling. On his ninth birthday, Oliver is pale, thin, short and in need of a wash. However, Oliver is not unhappy.

Unexpectedly, Mr Bumble visits the workhouse. As Oliver is now nine years old, Mr Bumble explains to Mrs Mann that he is too old to stay in her care. He says that Oliver must return to the workhouse and he takes him to begin yet another new life.

**(Curtains open as Narrator exits to stage right.
Five workhouse orphans, including Oliver, walk across the stage towards stage left. They are holding empty bowls. At stage left, the boys join the back of the queue in front of two women and The Master. These people wear aprons and scoop sloppy food into each boy's bowl.)**

Boy 1: **(holding his stomach)** I'm so hungry. If I don't have an extra spoonful of food today, I'm scared that I might eat the boy who sleeps next to me!

Boy 2: **(quietly)** One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.

Boy 3 and Boy 4: **(together)** Not me!

**(All characters move forward one place in the queue.
The children before move to sit around the table with their full bowl.)**

Boy 2: What about you, Oliver?

Boy 1: Yes, Oliver, will you ask The Master for more food?

Oliver: **(scared)** Well, I don't know. I guess we are hungry. Just another spoonful wouldn't hurt, would it?

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(All orphans move through the queue, get their food and take their seats at the table. Boy 1 sits next to Oliver. The Master and the two women stay stood at stage left. They are watching the orphans as they eat.)

Boy 2: (winks at Oliver) Now's your chance, Oliver. Ask him.

Boy 1: Go on, Oliver. Ask. (taps Oliver with his elbow)

(Oliver stands up and walks towards The Master. He carries his bowl and spoon in front of him. He has a fearful expression on his face.)

Oliver: Please, sir, I want some more.

(The Master tries to hit Oliver over the head with the serving spoon but Oliver ducks just in time. The Master grabs Oliver by the arm.)

The Master: (loudly shouting to offstage right) MR BUMBLE!

(Mr Bumble and Mr Limbkins enter quickly from stage right.)

The Master: Mr Limbkins, I'm sorry, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!

(Orphans around the tables gasp. They look at each other with shocked faces.)

Mr Limbkins: For more?! (turns to Mr Bumble) Mr Bumble, answer me clearly. Am I right to say that Oliver asked for more after he had already eaten the food he was allowed?

Mr Bumble: He did, sir.

Mr Limbkins: That boy will be hung! I know that boy will be hung!

(Lights fade. Curtains close.)

Questions

1. Which is the first character we meet during scene one? Tick one.

- Boy 1
- Oliver
- Narrator
- Mr Limbkins

2. Who rushes onto the stage when The Master calls? Tick **two**.

- Oliver
- Mr Bumble
- the two women
- Mr Limbkins

3. Number the events 1-4 to show the order they happen in the stage directions.

- Oliver walks towards The Master.
- Five workhouse orphans walk across the stage.
- All orphans move through the queue.
- Orphans around the tables gasp.

4. Draw **four** lines to match each character to what they say in the play script.

Boy 2	He did, sir.
Oliver	What?!
The Master	What about you, Oliver?
Mr Bumble	Please, sir, I want some more.

5. **They lie on the floor with their stomachs rumbling.**

What does this sentence imply about the children?

6. **One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.**

According to the stage directions, how should Boy 2 say this line?

7. Explain why Oliver was no longer able to live with Mrs Mann.

Answers

1. Which is the first character we meet during scene one? Tick one.

- Boy 1
- Oliver
- Narrator**
- Mr Limbkins

2. Who rushes onto the stage when The Master calls? Tick **two**.

- Oliver
- Mr Bumble**
- the two women
- Mr Limbkins**

3. Number the events 1-4 to show the order they happen in the stage directions.

- 3** Oliver walks towards The Master.
- 1** Five workhouse orphans walk across the stage.
- 2** All orphans move through the queue.
- 4** Orphans around the tables gasp.

4. Draw **four** lines to match each character to what they say in the play script.

Boy 2	He did, sir.
Oliver	What?!
The Master	What about you, Oliver?
Mr Bumble	Please, sir, I want some more.

5. **They lie on the floor with their stomachs rumbling.**

What does this sentence imply about the children?

Pupils' own responses, such as: It implies that they are hungry.

6. **One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.**

According to the stage directions, how should Boy 2 say this line?

Boy 2 should say this line quietly.

7. Explain why Oliver was no longer able to live with Mrs Mann.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Oliver was no longer able to live with Mrs Mann because he was nine years old and that is too old to stay in her care.

Oliver Twist

Scene One – The Workhouse



(Narrator stands in front of the closed stage curtain, lit by a spotlight.)

Narrator:

Through no fault of his own, Oliver Twist finds himself being cared for by an elderly woman three miles from where he once lived. He spends his days with 20 or 30 other children, who are lying on the floor with their stomachs rumbling. On his ninth birthday, Oliver is pale, thin, short and in need of a wash. Nevertheless, Oliver is in good spirits.

Unexpectedly, Mr Bumble – the man who had given Oliver his name – visits the workhouse. As Oliver has now turned nine years old, Mr Bumble explains to Mrs Mann that he is too old to stay in her care. He says that Oliver must return to the workhouse and takes him to begin yet another new life.

(Curtains open as Narrator exits to stage right. Five workhouse orphans, including Oliver, walk across the stage towards stage left.

They are holding empty bowls in front of them. At stage left, the boys join the back of the queue that has formed in front of two women and The Master. These people wear aprons and ladle gruel into each boy's bowl.)

Boy 1:

(holding his stomach) I'm so hungry. If I don't have an extra spoonful of gruel today, I'm scared that I might end up eating the boy who sleeps next to me!

Boy 2:

(quietly) One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.

**Boy 3 and
Boy 4:**

(together) Not me!

(All characters move forward one place in the queue. The children before move to sit around the table with their full bowl.)

Boy 2:

What about you, Oliver?

Boy 1:

Yes, Oliver, will you ask The Master for more food?

Oliver:

(hesitant) Well, I don't know. I guess we are hungry. Just another spoonful wouldn't hurt, would it?

Oliver Twist Scene One – The Workhouse

(All orphans move through the queue, receive their gruel and take their seats at the table. Boy 1 sits next to Oliver. The Master and the two women remain stood at stage left. They are watching the orphans as they eat.)

Boy 2: (winks at Oliver) Now's your chance, Oliver. Ask him.

Boy 1: Go on, Oliver. Ask. (nudges Oliver with his elbow)

(Oliver stands up and walks towards The Master. He carries his bowl and spoon in front of him. He has an unsure expression on his face.)

Oliver: (quietly) Please, sir, I want some more.

The Master: (open-mouthed, with a faint voice) What?!

Oliver: Please, sir, I want some more.

(The Master tries to hit Oliver over the head with the serving spoon but Oliver ducks just in time. The Master grabs Oliver by the arm.)

The Master: (loudly calling to offstage right) MR BUMBLE!

(Mr Bumble and Mr Limbkins enter quickly from stage right.)

The Master: Mr Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!

(Orphans around the table gasp and look at one another with shocked faces.)

Mr Limbkins: For more?! (turns to Mr Bumble) Mr Bumble, answer me clearly. Do I understand that Oliver asked for more after he had already eaten the supper he was allowed?

Mr Bumble: He did, sir.

Mr Limbkins: That boy will be hung! I know that boy will be hung!

(Lights fade. Curtains close.)

Questions

1. Why do the orphans gasp? Tick one.

- because The Master shouted loudly
- because Oliver Twist has asked for more
- because Mr Limbkins is scary
- because they are out of breath

2. Whom did Oliver live with before Mr Bumble took him to the workhouse? Tick one.

- his parents
- Mr Limbkins
- Mr Bumble
- Mrs Mann

3. Number the events 1-4 to show the order they happen in the stage directions.

- The Master loudly calls to offstage right.
- Boy 3 and Boy 4 speak at the same time.
- Boy 2 winks at Oliver.
- Mr Limbkins turns to Mr Bumble.

4. Draw **four** lines to match each character to one piece of their dialogue from the play script.

Boy 1	Nevertheless, Oliver is in good spirits.
Oliver	Oliver Twist has asked for more!
The Master	I'm so hungry.
Narrator	Well, I don't know.

5. Find and copy a phrase said by the Narrator which implies that the children living with the elderly woman are hungry.

6. **Well, I don't know. I guess we are hungry. Just another spoonful wouldn't hurt, would it?**

According to the stage directions, how should Oliver act when saying this line?

7. Why do you think that the narrator stands in front of the closed curtain at the start of the script?

8. Explain how Oliver feels about asking The Master for more supper. Give **two** points and give evidence from the text to support both.

Answers

1. Why do the orphans gasp? Tick one.

- because The Master shouted loudly
- because Oliver Twist has asked for more**
- because Mr Limbkins is scary
- because they are out of breath

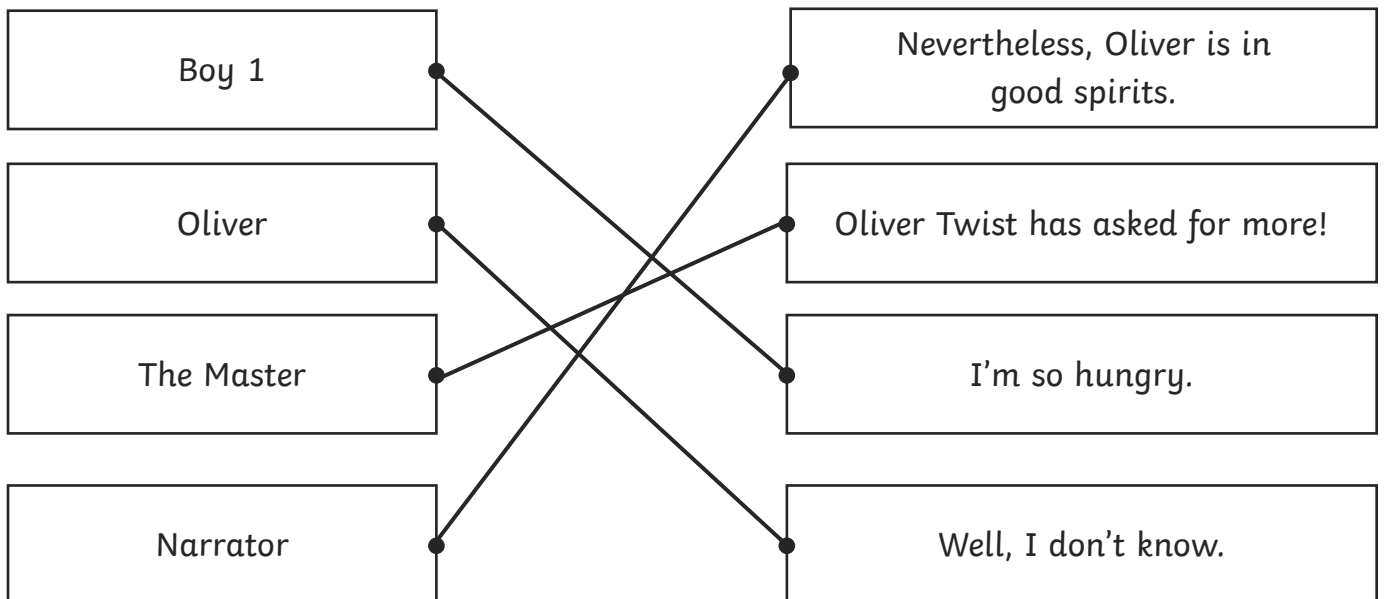
2. Whom did Oliver live with before Mr Bumble took him to the workhouse? Tick one.

- his parents
- Mr Limbkins
- Mr Bumble
- Mrs Mann**

3. Number the events 1-4 to show the order they happen in the stage directions.

- 3** The Master loudly calls to offstage right.
- 1** Boy 3 and Boy 4 speak at the same time.
- 2** Boy 2 winks at Oliver.
- 4** Mr Limbkins turns to Mr Bumble.

4. Draw **four** lines to match each character to one piece of their dialogue from the play script.



5. Find and copy a phrase said by the Narrator which implies that the children living with the elderly woman are hungry.
with their stomachs rumbling

6. **Well, I don't know. I guess we are hungry. Just another spoonful wouldn't hurt, would it?**

According to the stage directions, how should Oliver act when saying this line?

According to the stage directions, Oliver should act scared when saying this line.

7. Why do you think that the narrator stands in front of the closed curtain at the start of the script?

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the narrator stands in front of the closed curtain at the start of the script because he is explaining Oliver's history and the set behind the curtain is Oliver's present. They don't want the audience to be confused and they don't want to give away what happens to Oliver before they've explained it.

8. Explain how Oliver feels about asking The Master for more supper. Give **two** points and give evidence from the text to support both.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Oliver feels unsure about asking The Master for more supper because he says, 'Well, I don't know'. I also think that he feels scared to do it because he speaks quietly to him at first like he doesn't quite want him to hear.

Oliver Twist

Scene One – The Workhouse



(Narrator stands in front of the closed stage curtain, illuminated by a spotlight.)

Narrator:

Through no fault of his own, Oliver Twist finds himself under the care of an elderly female three miles from where he once lived. He spends his days alongside 20 or 30 other children, who lay sprawled across the floor with rumbling stomachs. On his ninth birthday, Oliver is pale, thin, small in stature and in need of a wash. Yet, despite his circumstances, Oliver is in good spirits.

Unexpectedly, Mr Bumble – the beadle of the parish who had given Oliver his name – visits the workhouse. As Oliver has now turned nine years old, Mr Bumble explains to Mrs Mann that he is too old to stay in her care and must return to the workhouse. Mr Bumble takes Oliver to begin yet another new life.

(Curtains open as Narrator exits to stage right. Five workhouse orphans, including Oliver, walk across the stage towards stage left, holding empty bowls in front of them.

At stage left, the boys join the back of the queue that has formed in front of two women and The Master, who wear aprons and ladle gruel into each boy's bowl.)

Boy 1:

(clutching his stomach) I'm so hungry. If I don't have an extra ladle of gruel today, I'm scared that I might end up eating the boy who sleeps next to me!

Boy 2:

(hushed tones) One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.

**Boy 3 and
Boy 4:**

(together) Not me!

(All characters move forward one place in the queue as those before them are served and move to sit around the table.)

Boy 2:

What about you, Oliver?

Boy 1:

Yes, Oliver, will you ask The Master for more supper?

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Oliver: **(hesitant)** Well, I don't know. I guess we are hungry. Just another spoonful wouldn't hurt, would it?

(All orphans move through the queue, receive their gruel and take their seats at the table. Boy 1 sits next to Oliver. The Master and the two women remain stood at stage left, observing the orphans as they eat.)

Boy 2: **(winks at Oliver)** Now's your chance, Oliver. Ask him.

Boy 1: Go on, Oliver. Ask. **(nudges Oliver with his elbow)**

(Oliver stands up and walks towards The Master. He carries his bowl and spoon in front of him and has an unsure expression on his face.)

Oliver: **(meekly)** Please, sir, I want some more.

The Master: **(open-mouthed, with a faint voice)** What?!

Oliver: Please, sir, I want some more.

(The Master tries to hit Oliver over the head with the ladle but Oliver ducks just in time. The Master grabs Oliver by the arm.)

The Master: **(loudly calling to offstage right)** MR BUMBLE!

(Mr Bumble and Mr Limbkins enter quickly from stage right.)

The Master: Mr Limbkins, I beg your pardon, sir! Oliver Twist has asked for more!

(Orphans around the table gasp and look at one another with shocked faces.)

Mr Limbkins: For more?! **(turns to Mr Bumble)** Compose yourself, Mr Bumble, and answer me distinctly. Do I understand that he asked for more after he had eaten the supper allotted by the dietary?

Mr Bumble: He did, sir.

Mr Limbkins: That boy will be hung! I know that boy will be hung!

(Lights fade. Curtains close.)

Questions

1. Which word from the Narrator’s first sentence of dialogue means the same as ‘old’?

Tick one.

- fault
- care
- elderly
- miles

2. **(hushed tones) One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.**

How should Boy 2 deliver this line? Tick one.

- confidently
- quietly
- arrogantly
- repeatedly

3. Find and copy one word from the first stage direction which means the same as ‘lit up’.

4. **... who lay sprawled across the floor with rumbling stomachs.**

What word could the author have used instead of ‘sprawled’ in this phrase?

5. **Compose yourself, Mr Bumble, and answer me distinctly.**

Rewrite this line in your own words so that it keeps the same meaning.

6. Explain **two** ways in which the author makes it clear that Boy 1 is very hungry.

7. **(loudly calling to offstage right) MR BUMBLE!**

When delivering this line, why does The Master need to call offstage?

8. Summarise why it was a good choice to end the scene after Mr Limbkins's last line of dialogue.

Answers

1. Which word from the Narrator's first sentence of dialogue means the same as 'old'?
Tick one.
 - fault
 - care
 - elderly**
 - miles
2. **(hushed tones) One of us should say something. We should ask for more food.**
How should Boy 2 deliver this line? Tick one.
 - confidently
 - quietly**
 - arrogantly
 - repeatedly
3. Find and copy one word from the first stage direction which means the same as 'lit up'.
illuminated
4. **... who lay sprawled across the floor with rumbling stomachs.**
What word could the author have used instead of 'sprawled' in this phrase?
Pupils' own responses, such as: The author could have used the word 'spread' instead of 'sprawled'.
5. **Compose yourself, Mr Bumble, and answer me distinctly.**
Rewrite this line in your own words so that it keeps the same meaning.
Pupils' own responses, such as: Calm down, Mr Bumble, and give me a clear answer.
6. Explain **two** ways in which the author makes it clear that Boy 1 is very hungry.
Pupils' own responses, such as: The author makes it clear that Boy 1 is very hungry because he gives him the stage direction of holding his stomach, which is something you might do if you're hungry. Boy 1 also has the following line of dialogue, 'I'm so hungry'.

7. **(loudly calling to offstage right) MR BUMBLE!**

When delivering this line, why does The Master need to call offstage?

Pupils' own responses, such as: The Master needs to call offstage when delivering this line because Mr Bumble is not yet on stage in the scene.

8. Summarise why it was a good choice to end the scene after Mr Limbkins's last line of dialogue.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that it was a good choice to end the scene here because it leaves the viewers or readers of the play with a cliffhanger about what is going to happen to Oliver next. It will make them want to read or see more.