

BOY BY ROALD DAHL
CHAPTER 'MR COOMBES' (pg 38)

1. What does Roald Dahl remember about Mr Coombes' appearance?

'It is possible that Mr Coombes was a perfectly normal human being but in my memory he was a giant, a tweed-suited giant who always wore a black gown over his tweeds and a waistcoat under his jacket.' (pg 40)

2. When Mr Coombes and Mrs Pratchett come out of the shop what words and phrases does Dahl use to illustrate how frightening Mr Coombes was and how ugly Mrs Pratchett was?

'... like the angel of death, strode Mr Coombes, huge and bulky in his tweed suit and black gown ...' (pg 42)

'He grasped her by one of her skinny arms ...' (pg 42)

'I could see Mrs Pratchett's skinny goat's legs ...' (pg 43)

'I could see Mrs Pratchett's piggy little eyes staring hard ...' (pg 43)

3. Write down Mrs Pratchett's description of snob boys who come into her shop. Copy it down exactly as it is written in the book.

"Nasty cheeky lot, these little 'uns!" I heard Mrs Pratchett muttering. "They come into my shop and they thinks they can do what they damn well likes! ... They nick things when I ain't lookin', she went on. "They put their grubby 'ands all over everything and they've no manners. I don't mind girls. I never 'ave no trouble with girls, but boys is 'orrible and 'orrible! I don't 'ave to tell you that, 'Eadmaster, do I?" (pg 38)

4. Write down Mrs Pratchett's recollection of the moment she touched the dead mouse.

"Right in the jar of Oat-toppers it was! A stinkin' dead mouse which I will never forget as long as I live! ... Talk about shocks ... When my fingers caught 'old of that nasty soggy stinkin' dead mouse ..." (pg 44)

5. How does Dahl show the reader that Mrs Pratchett had an accent and missed sounds off the beginning and end of words?

Apostrophes

6. Imagine the police are investigating the great mouse plot and have arrived at Mrs Pratchett's sweet shop to interview her. Write out Mrs Pratchett's version of events (from when the boys came into the shop) as if she was talking to the police. Use apostrophes, as Dahl has done, to illustrate how she talks.