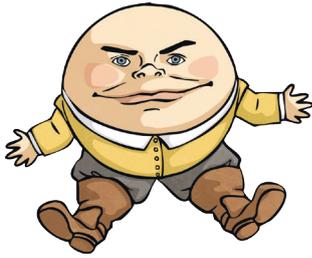


Villainous Verses

Humpty Dumpty - The Truth



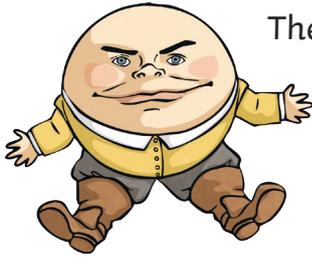
We all know how the story goes;
that funny old egg
with his wiggly toes;
the way he sat on a very high wall
then came right down
with a great big fall.
You know he fell and smashed his shell;
they fixed him up
with super-strength gel,
but did you know that's not where it ends?
That Humpty's a cheat
and betrayed his friends?
To understand the real egg story,
get yourself ready
cos it gets a bit gory.
For Humpty wasn't an egg at all:
he was a big ol' metal cannonball!
It starts way back in history;
the exact date
remains a mystery.

Let's set the scene in the Civil War -
the Roundheads wanted
a king no more!
They cornered a load of the enemy men,
who scarpered and hid in
a fortified den!
The Cavaliers wanted to keep their king
and were confident
Humpty could do his thing.
The biggest cannon, the biggest ball;
Humpty sat
on the castle wall.
"I will blast them to kingdom come!"
Humpty cried as
they beat their drum.



Villainous Verses

Humpty Dumpty - The Truth



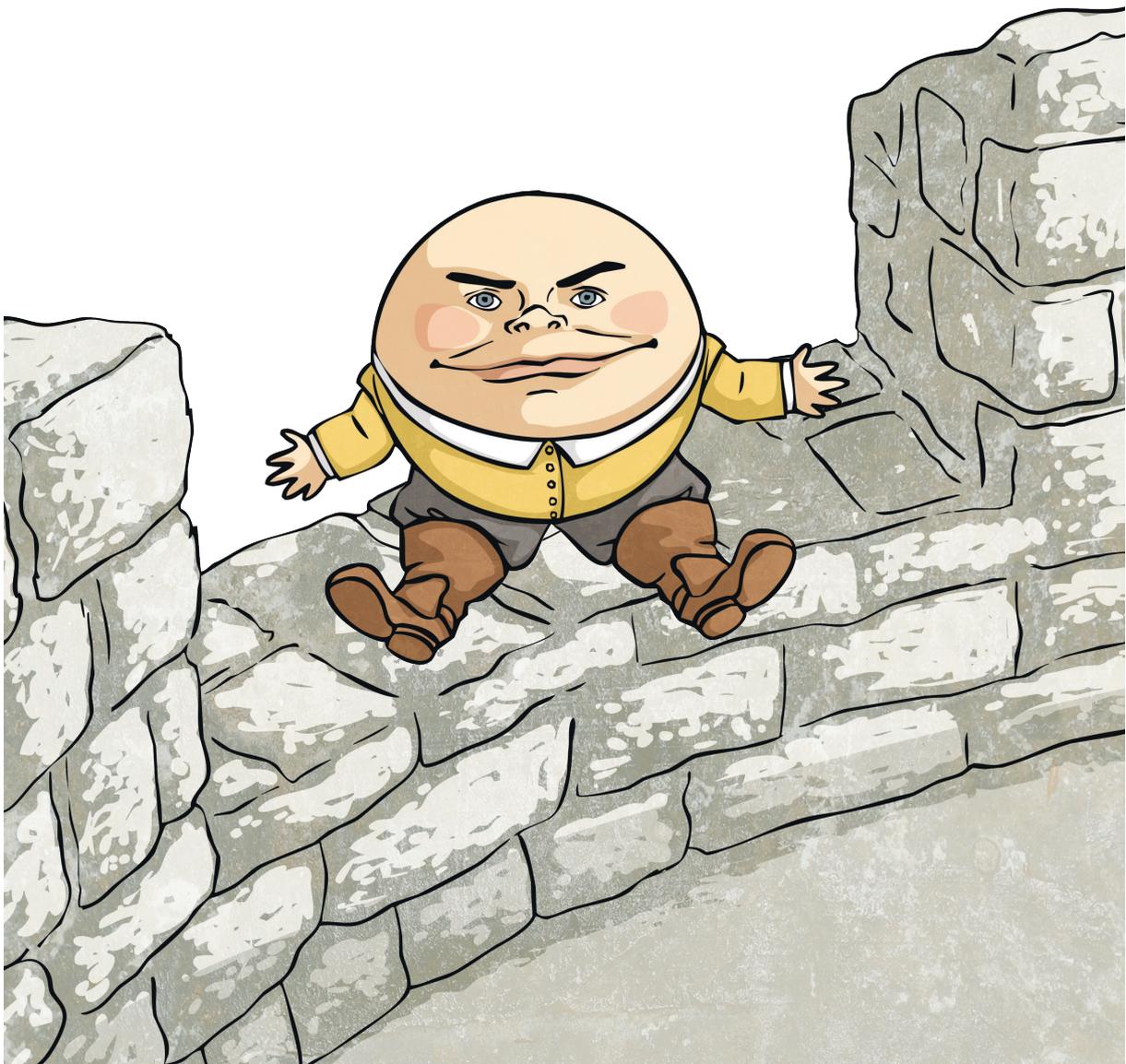
The Cavaliers shouted, the Cavaliers cheered,
surely, they were the
ones to be feared.
But Humpty wasn't keen on the king -
he didn't like
his crown or bling.
Humpty was a Roundhead at heart -
he loved the way they
dressed up smart.
Fighting them was a bad idea
so he waited till
they crept up near.
"Shoot 'em! Blast 'em!" his comrades screamed;
"In a moment,"
the cannonball beamed.
Humpty had no thought of fighting -
in fact, betraying them
was quite exciting.
"Quick! Fire Now!" his friends were crying,
"Yes, in a moment,"
he carried on lying.
But Humpty wasn't a clever ball:
he just sat there smiling
on the wall.
From a simple Roundhead's point of view,
smashing him was quite the coup!
They shot their guns and bombs at Humpty
(it was around now he
felt a numpty).
The wall around him began to crumble;
Humpty took a
fatal tumble.
Down he fell and cracked his head;
all around him
his friends were dead.



Villainous Verses

Humpty Dumpty - The Truth

He had lied, he had betrayed;
in lots of pieces
now he laid.
All the king's horses, all the king's men
couldn't put Humpty
together again.
That's the truth! That selfish ball!
A rotten egg
falling off the wall.



Questions

1. In the poem, what is Humpty? Tick one.

- egg
 soldier
 cannonball
 king

2. When is the poem set?

3. Find and copy the lines that show you what Humpty liked about the Roundheads.

4. 'who scarpered and hid in a fortified den!' What does this tell you about the Cavaliers?

5. Why do you think the Cavaliers were confident in Humpty? Use the text and give at least two reasons in your answers.

6. Match the numbers to these events in the poem, so that they are in time order. Number 1 is the first event that happened.

Humpty fell off the castle wall.	1
The Roundheads cornered the Cavaliers.	2
The king's men and horses tried to fix Humpty.	3
Humpty felt a numpty.	4

7. What does Humpty do that isn't very clever? Explain **why** it isn't very clever.

8. According to this poem, how is Humpty fixed in the **original** poem?



Answers

1. In the poem, what is Humpty? Tick one.

- egg
- soldier
- cannonball**
- king

2. When is the poem set?

The poem is set during the Civil War.

3. Find and copy the lines that show you what Humpty liked about the Roundheads.

'he loved the way they dressed up smart.'

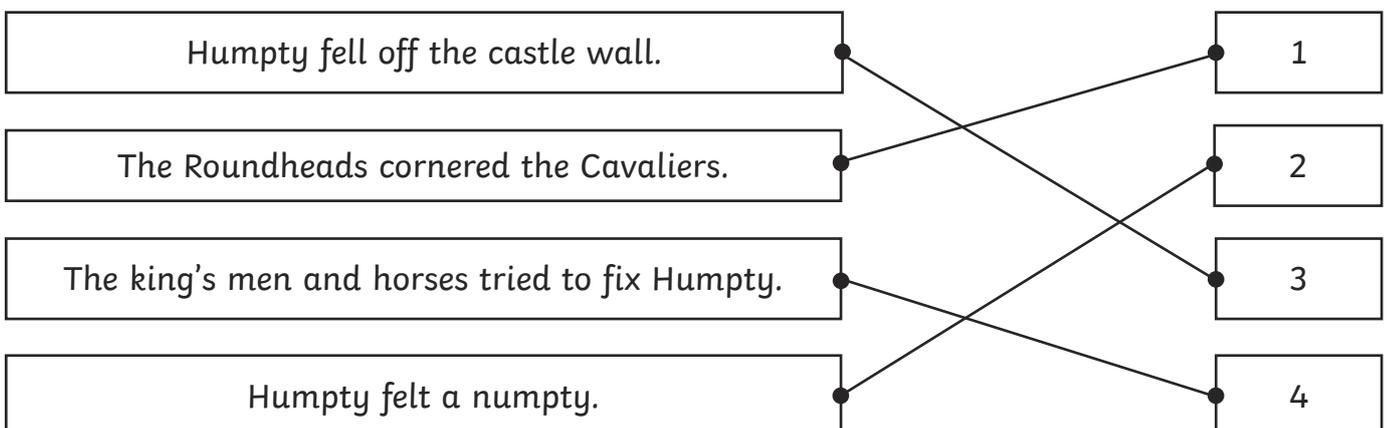
4. 'who scarpered and hid in a fortified den!' What does this tell you about the Cavaliers?

It tells you they were frightened of the enemy (the Roundheads) and felt safer running away and hiding in a castle.

5. Why do you think the Cavaliers were confident in Humpty? Use the text and give at least two reasons in your answers.

Accept any two from: It says that Humpty was 'a big ol' metal cannonball', which suggests he was a powerful weapon; It also says, 'The biggest cannon; the biggest ball', again suggesting Humpty was powerful; They were protected by the castle; Humpty says, "I will blast them to kingdom come!" showing confidence that will have given confidence to the Cavaliers/his friends, which is why they cheered and thought they should be feared.

6. Match the numbers to these events in the poem, so that they are in time order. Number 1 is the first event that happened.



7. What does Humpty do that isn't very clever? Explain **why** it isn't very clever. **Humpty doesn't tell the Roundheads he wants to be on their side. It isn't very clever because without knowing this, the Roundheads fire their guns and bombs at him and make Humpty fall off the castle wall.**
8. According to this poem, how is Humpty fixed in the **original** poem? **Humpty is fixed with super-strength gel.**

Questions

1. According to the first verse, what did Humpty do to his friends?

2. What are the names of the two armies fighting each other?

3. 'Fighting them was a bad idea'. Who is the poem talking about here, and why is fighting them a bad idea? Give two reasons for your answer.

4. Match the numbers to these events in the poem, so that they are in time order. Number 1 is the first event that happened.

The Cavaliers cheered.	1
Humpty fell off the castle wall.	2
The Roundheads cornered the Cavaliers.	3
His friends were dead.	4
The king's men and horses tried to fix Humpty.	5
Humpty felt a numpty.	6

5. What made Humpty feel excited? Why do you think it made him feel this way?

6. Why did Humpty fall off the castle wall?

7. Which words best describe Humpty in the poem? Tick **four**.

- self-centered
- treacherous
- funny
- uncaring
- brave
- disloyal
- mysterious

8. Why did Humpty feel a 'numpty'?

9. Predict what might have happened if Humpty hadn't betrayed his friends.



Answers

1. According to the first verse, what did Humpty do to his friends?

Humpty betrayed them (accept 'cheated').

2. What are the names of the two armies fighting each other?

The two armies are the Cavaliers and the Roundheads.

3. 'Fighting them was a bad idea'. Who is the poem talking about here, and why is fighting them a bad idea? Give two reasons for your answer.

The poem is talking about fighting the Roundheads. From Humpty's point of view it is a bad idea to fight the Roundheads because he liked them. He liked the way they 'dressed up smart'. Plus, Humpty 'wasn't keen on the king' and the Roundheads didn't want the king either.

4. Match the numbers to these events in the poem, so that they are in time order. Number 1 is the first event that happened.

The Cavaliers cheered.	1
Humpty fell off the castle wall.	2
The Roundheads cornered the Cavaliers.	3
His friends were dead.	4
The king's men and horses tried to fix Humpty.	5
Humpty felt a numpty.	6

5. What made Humpty feel excited? Why do you think it made him feel this way?

Betraying his friends made Humpty feel excited. It made him feel this way because deep down he is twisted, mean and selfish (or similar negative descriptions, including 'evil') and he likes the idea of his friends losing the battle or getting hurt.

6. Why did Humpty fall off the castle wall?

Humpty fell off the castle wall as it crumbled after the Roundheads had fired their guns and bombs, which weakened it.

7. Which words best describe Humpty in the poem? Tick **four**.

- self-centered**
- treacherous**
- funny
- uncaring**
- brave
- disloyal**
- mysterious

8. Why did Humpty feel a 'numpty'?

Feeling a 'numpty' means feeling a bit silly, and when the roundheads began firing at him Humpty started to realise he had made a mistake. He had forgotten to tell the Roundheads he was on their side but it was too late.

9. Predict what might have happened if Humpty hadn't betrayed his friends.

Accept any answer that explains that Humpty would have shot himself at the Roundheads and that:

- **He wouldn't have fallen off the wall.**
- **His friends would still be alive.**
- **The Cavaliers would probably have won the battle.**

Also accept feasible predictions that take into account the story/prove understanding of what has been read. E.g. Humpty would still have cracked open as he would have been shot through the cannon.

Questions

1. According to the poem, what is Humpty?

- egg
- soldier
- cannonball
- king
- wall
- castle

2. Why do you think the poem starts with: 'We all know how the story goes'?

3. Why does Humpty shout "I will blast them to kingdom come!"?

4. Why did the Cavaliers think they were the ones to be feared?

5. "'Quick! Fire now!" his friends were crying'. Describe what you think Humpty's friends were thinking and feeling at this point in the poem.

6. 'from a simple Roundhead's point of view smashing him was quite the **coup!**'
What do you think the word 'coup' means?

7. Link the characters to how they may be feeling in the poem.

Humpty at the beginning of the poem	regretful and embarrassed
Cavaliers (Humpty's friends) at the end of the poem	deceitful but excited
king's horses and king's men	triumphant
Roundheads at the end of the poem	unknown but probably annoyed
Humpty when he was lying	betrayed
the king	helpless
Humpty at the end of the poem	confident and big-headed

8. Sum up the final fifteen lines in no more than three sentences.

9. In the end, Humpty is described as a 'rotten egg'. Why is that an apt description?

10. What does the poem show us about Humpty's character? Use evidence from the text in your answer.

Answers

1. According to the poem, what is Humpty?

- egg
- soldier
- cannonball**
- king
- wall
- castle

2. Why do you think the poem starts with: 'We all know how the story goes'?

Children's own responses, such as: The poem starts this way because it assumes the reader knows the original 'Humpty Dumpty' nursery rhyme. It is the poet's way of introducing the reader to this newer version.

3. Why does Humpty shout "I will blast them to kingdom come!"?

Children's own responses, such as: He wants to reassure his friends that he will protect them. He is also having fun with them here, because he has no intention of fighting. Humpty gets enjoyment from betraying and lying to his friends. Giving them false confidence in this way shows how cruel Humpty is.

4. Why did the Cavaliers think they were the ones to be feared?

The Cavaliers thought they were the ones to be feared because they had 'The biggest cannon; the biggest ball', and Humpty said he would "blast them (the enemy) to kingdom come!"

5. "'Quick! Fire now!" his friends were crying'. Describe what you think Humpty's friends were thinking and feeling at this point in the poem.

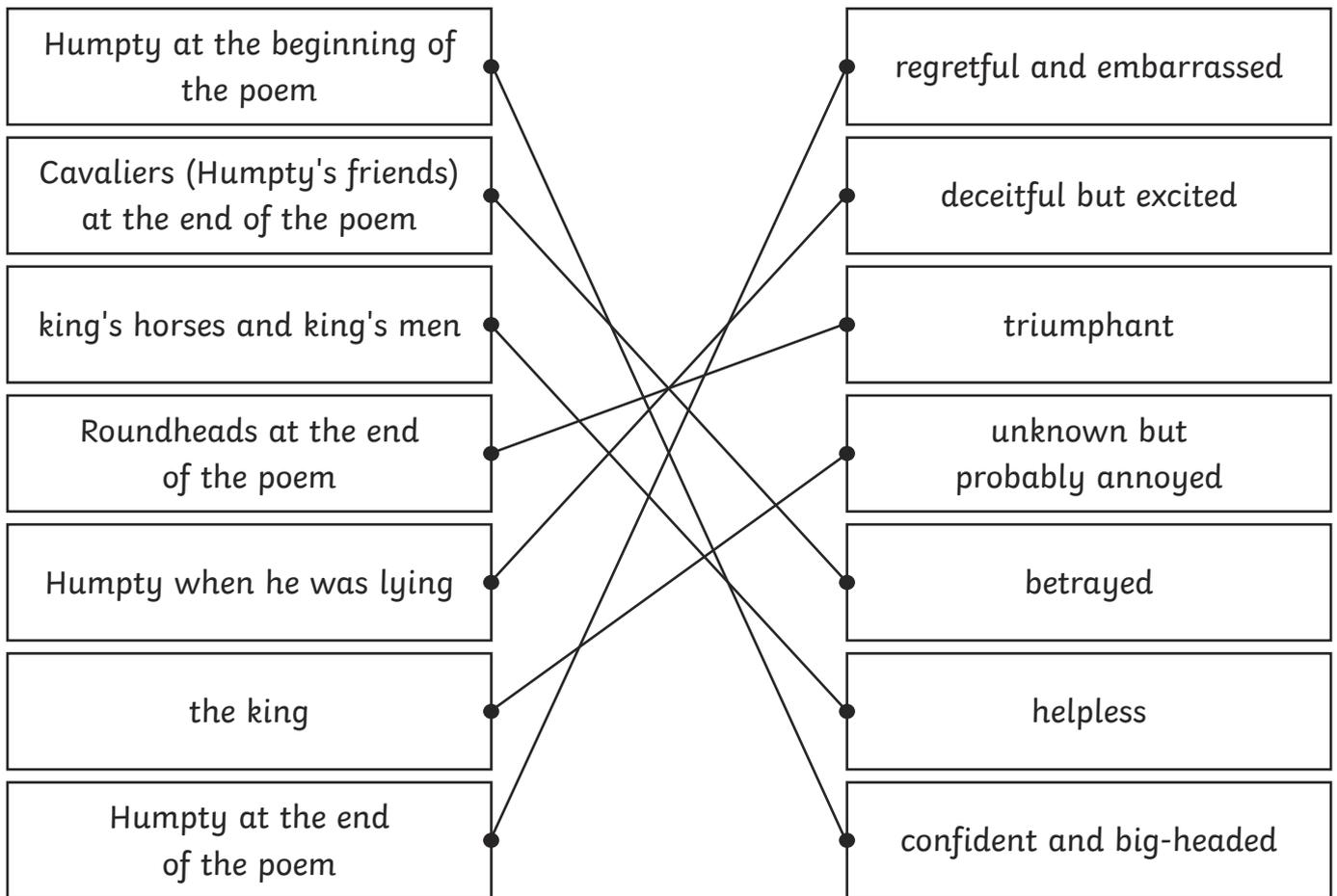
Children's own responses, such as: They were getting worried (or similar emotions) because Humpty was taking so long to fire. They were scared (or similar feelings) they might lose the battle and die. Some of them may have begun to feel betrayed.

6. 'from a simple Roundhead's point of view
smashing him was quite the **coup!**'

What do you think the word 'coup' means?

An unexpected triumph or victory.

7. Link the characters to how they may be feeling in the poem.



8. Sum up the final fifteen lines in no more than three sentences.

Humpty falls off the crumbling wall, cracks his head and lies in pieces with his friends dead all around him. The king's men and horses try to put him together again but they can't.

9. In the end, Humpty is described as a 'rotten egg'. Why is that an apt description?

In the original nursery rhyme, Humpty Dumpty is an egg that falls and cracks open. A 'bad egg' is a bad person who does awful things and is rotten inside, so calling him a 'rotten egg' can have more than one meaning. Humpty is also shaped a bit like an egg.

10. What does the poem show us about Humpty's character? Use evidence from the text in your answer.

Children's own responses, such as: He is quite a mean and selfish character (or similar characteristics), because he thought of himself and betrayed his friends; He is untrustworthy and lies a lot, because he lied to his friends about shooting at the enemy while pretending to be on their side. He isn't very clever (and doesn't think things through very well), because he hadn't taken into consideration that the Roundheads would still think he was their enemy.