

# Parallel

## Aims

- To introduce characters and ideas from the book.
- To introduce students to key vocabulary.
- To stimulate students to read the book.

1 Tell students that they are going to read a story called *Parallel*. Ask them to read the Blurb (on handout opposite). Write three options on the board: 'love story', 'thriller' and 'adventure'. Ask them what kind of book they think it is.

Establish that it's a thriller ('gun', 'killer' are words which indicate that it's a thriller).

2 a Ask students if they know of other situations when they could use the word 'parallel'.

Which of these words does *not* mean the same as parallel? (If you have a copy of the book, the front cover will help here.)

same equivalent similar different like matching

**Answer:** different

b Write these two columns on the board:

1	2
underground station	church

Which of these things would you find in 1, which in 2?

candle train priest platform lift

**Answers:** 1 – train, platform, lift; 2 – candle, priest

3 Ask students to look at the Contents (see handout). Can they fill in the gaps?

**Answers:**

Prologue An *underground* station in London

Chapter 1 The first phone *call*

Chapter 2 A visitor

Chapter 3 Photographs

Chapter 4 *The* job

Chapter 5 *Parallel worlds*

Chapter 6 Different decisions

Chapter 7 Going to another *world*

Chapter 8 Another London

Chapter 9 The woman's house

Chapter 10 The *second* phone call

Chapter 11 Meeting in a *church*

Chapter 12 You decide

Chapter 13 A *candle* in the dark

4 Ask students what they know about Max, the main character, from reading the Blurb. (He's a killer.) Now ask them to read extracts 1–5 and say whether the following statements are true or false.

a Mr Fairhead offers Max money.

b Max hits Fairhead.

c The other Max Holland is a teacher.

d Fairhead tells Max that there is another London.

e The church was completely dark.

f Max wants to be like the priest.

**Answers:**

a T

b T

c F (he's a priest)

d T

e F (there are some candles)

f T

5 Go back to the 'new world' from the Blurb and elicit ideas about it. Ask students to read the Contents again. What kind of new world do they think it is? Establish that it's a *parallel* world, e.g. 'another London'.

Ask them if they believe that there's a parallel world.

Ask them to read Extract 6, which is a description of a parallel world. Do they believe that this parallel world could exist?

6 Ask students what they think happens to Max in this parallel world.

7 If you have the books, hand them out and start reading.

# Parallel

## Blurb

'Max sat on his bed. There was a gun on the bed beside him. The gun was still warm. Max's face was very white and he didn't feel well. He never felt well after he killed someone.'

Max kills people for money. But one day he goes to a new world and his life changes.

## Contents

Prologue	An ..... station in London
Chapter 1	The first phone .....
Chapter 2	A visitor
Chapter 3	Photographs
Chapter 4	..... job
Chapter 5	Parallel .....
Chapter 6	Different decisions
Chapter 7	Going to another .....
Chapter 8	Another London
Chapter 9	The woman's house
Chapter 10	The ..... phone call
Chapter 11	Meeting in a .....
Chapter 12	You decide
Chapter 13	A ..... in the dark

## Extract 1

'My name's Gerald Fairhead. Can we talk?'

'What about?'

'I've got a job for you, Max.'

'I'm not looking for work, Mr Fairhead.'

'I can give you a lot of money.'

'I don't need money, Mr Fairhead. Good night.'

Max started to close the door.

The man put his hand on the door. 'I've got something else for you,' the man said, 'some photographs. Some very interesting photographs for you.'

'Photographs of what?'

The man moved his hand towards his pocket. Max hit him. He hit him once. He hit him hard. Just below the chin. The man fell to the floor.

## Extract 2

Fairhead looked at the photographs in Max's hand.

'You found them,' he said.

'What are these, Mr Fairhead? Why did you come here? Why did you bring these photographs?'

'Don't you know the face, Max? It's *you*. It's *your* face.'

'What are you talking about?'

'It's the other Max Holland. Max Holland the priest.'

## Extract 3

'What do you mean? He doesn't live in this world?' Max asked.

'I told you this isn't going to be easy, Max. You see, you live in London, and this man lives in London, but they're not the same Londons. They're parallel Londons. There are many parallel Londons, and many parallel Madrids, and Tokyos and Istanbuls . . . there are many parallel worlds.'

'Parallel worlds? What are you talking about, Mr Fairhead?'

## Extract 4

The church was cold. There were two or three candles, but it was still dark. Max looked around. There was no one there. He stood at the back and waited. Then a door at the front of the church opened and the priest walked in. The priest turned to the front and then sat down. Max walked quietly to the front of the church. The priest heard nothing. Max sat down behind the priest. They sat without speaking for a minute or two. The priest didn't move.

'Don't turn around. Don't move.'

The priest started to turn, but then stopped. 'Can I help you?' he asked.

Max knew the voice. It was his voice.

## Extract 5

'Wait!' the priest said and stood up. He started to walk up to Max.

'Stop!' Max said. The priest stopped.

'Why did you come here tonight?' asked the priest.

'I wanted to know why you and I are different,' Max replied.

'Why we're different? I don't understand,' the priest said.

'No? I think I want to be like you. I just want to be like you. I'm not happy being me. But it's too late.'

'It's never too late to change,' the priest said.

## Extract 6

'I don't understand, Mr Fairhead. Different worlds? Why? Why are there parallel worlds?'

'Every day, Max, we make decisions. Lots of decisions. Little decisions, big decisions. To get up in the morning or to stay in bed; to walk to work or to take the bus; to phone someone or not to phone someone. Our decisions make a difference to our lives. They make a difference to other people's lives, and they make a difference to the world we live in. I'll give you an example. A woman is out walking. She hears some music. She walks towards the music and sees some people singing. The woman stops and asks a man about the music. They talk, they laugh. They meet again. They fall in love. You see? All the little decisions she made – to go for a walk, to stop and ask this man about the music. All these decisions made a big difference to her world. There are other worlds where the woman goes for a walk, but doesn't stop and doesn't talk to a man.'