

Michael Lacey Freeman
Egghead

Hello! My name's Michael, and this is my secret diary. It isn't really a secret, because I want you to read it. This is my story, but it's also everybody's story. Look at the picture on the front of this book. That's me! I'm going to school, and I'm not very happy about it. The other children aren't very kind to me. But I've got a very special friend who always helps me. Do you want to know more? Well, open the book and read it. I hope you enjoy it.

In this reader you will find:

- Focus on Michael Lacey Freeman
- Focus on bullying
- Focus on School in Britain
- Focus on places in London
- A glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension and grammar activities including A2 Key style exercises and 21st century skills activities
- Final test

Tags

Friendship | Adventure

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Michael Lacey Freeman

Egghead

Stage 2 A2

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Teen Readers

Original

Michael Lacey Freeman

Egghead

*A true story
of bullying
and friendship*



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Book brief

- 1** This is the true story of the writer as a boy when he was bullied at school.
- 2** Michael likes school and is a clever boy, but he doesn't like going to school because of the bullies.
- 3** He has a 'special friend', Andrew, who helps him in his most difficult moments.
- 4** Then Michael makes friends with David, and an old man, Tom, and things start to change for the better.
- 5** These new friends help Michael to believe in himself and, most of all, to like himself.

Michael Lacey Freeman

Egghead

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For Review Only

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Main Characters



Michael

Andrew

This is Michael with his 'special friend', Andrew, who he talks to in his head.

Michael, the author of this book, is bullied at school, but Andrew helps him in his most difficult moments.



Mum

Michael's mum is happy when she sees Michael happy.



Tom

An old man who Michael becomes friends with. He helps Michael to realise that what the bullies say isn't important because they don't really know him.



David

David is bullied like Michael at school. The two become friends.



Mrs Hewitt

Michael's new English teacher. She understands Michael better than his other teachers.



Kevin

Clive

Two bullies who call Michael horrible names and won't let him play with them and the other boys.

Before you read

Grammar

1 Read about the story and choose the correct word (s).

Egghead is a story about a boy called Michael who ~~leaves~~ / lives near London. He's good (1) at / ~~of~~ school, but he doesn't like (2) go / ~~going~~ there. The other children bully him. They call him, 'Egghead'. But Michael (3) has / ~~have~~ a special friend (4) who / ~~which~~ helps him when he goes (5) at / ~~to~~ school. This boy's name's Andrew. Andrew isn't like other boys. (6) Nobody can / ~~to see~~ / can see Andrew. In fact, Andrew isn't a real boy. He's inside Michael's head.

Vocabulary

2 Match these words used in the story with their definitions.

1 ☐ school assembly

2 ☐ break time

3 ☒ classroom

4 ☐ headteacher

5 ☐ playground

6 ☐ canteen

a where the students do their lessons.

b where the students play.

c where all the students at the school meet.

d where students have lunch.

e when students have a rest in between lessons.

f the most important person in the school.

- 3 Rearrange the letters to see what Michael studies at school.

CHERFN FRENCH

- 1 SHLGNEI _____
- 2 TRA _____
- 3 TOSIHYR _____
- 4 OGGRAPHYE _____
- 5 CENCEIS _____

Pair Work

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Skills

- 4 Put the words in the correct order to make sentences about bullying. Then talk to your partner about what you can do if you see someone bullied in these ways.

me names call they. – *they call me names.*

- 1 with me never they to play want.
- 2 hit they me and hurts it.
- 3 don't to me speak they.
- 4 post they comments horrible online.
- 5 send emails that my hurt they feelings.



Reading A2 Key

- 5 Complete the first part of the story with the missing words.

Hello. My name is Michael, but everyone calls me 'Egghead'
(1) _____ school. It's true, my head (2) _____ bigger than anyone
else's and my body is quite small. Everyone agrees that it's (3) _____
right name for me. That's why I don't like going (4) _____ school.
The other children call me this name (5) _____ the time. They're
horrible to me, and make (6) _____ feel bad.

Chapter 1

The Monster Horse

► 2 January 1973

Hello. My name's Michael, but everyone calls me 'Egghead' at school. It's true, my head is bigger than anyone else's and my body is quite small. Everyone agrees that it's the right name for me. The other children call me this name all the time.

At school they call Michael 'Egghead' because he has a big head. They're horrible to him, but Michael has an invisible friend, Andrew, who helps him.

That's why I don't like going to school. The children in my class are horrible to me, and make me feel bad. They never call me Michael. They always call me, 'Egghead.'

But I'm lucky. I've got a friend who I talk to all the time. He's not real. I can't touch¹ him or see him. Nobody can see him. He's invisible². He's inside my head, you see. His name's Andrew, and he helps me. Nobody else knows about Andrew. He's my secret³ friend. He's the only one who doesn't call me Egghead. He hasn't even got a head because he lives inside mine.

Andrew is my best friend. He always tries to help me. When I have a problem, I ask Andrew what I can do. He tried to help me at school the other day.

'Our class is going to read a poem for the school

¹ **touch** feel with your hands

² **invisible** something that nobody can see

³ **secret** something you don't tell other people



Egghead

4+5

assembly next week,' said our English teacher, Miss White. 'The headteacher will be there. One of you can read it to everybody in the school. It's called, 'The Monster Horse,' and it's by Ian Serraillier. Who would like to read it?'

'Do it! Do it!' said Andrew. 'You can do it. I know you can.'

My hand went up. 'Miss, Miss, I'll do it,' I said. I liked reading.

Then I could hear people in the class laughing.

'No, Egghead can't do it. I'll do it,' said Stephen Foster.

'Well,' said Miss White. 'You can't both read it. I know, why don't you both read it now? Then the class will decide which one is the best.' Bad idea, Miss White.

I had to speak first. 'Read it as if you're a horse,' said Andrew. So, that's what I did. I read all the poem like a horse.

'Theeeee Moonsteeer Hooooorse byyyy Ian Serraillieerrr.'

Now I could hear more people in the class laughing. Miss White told them to be quiet. But when people start

Andrew tells Michael to read the poem as if he were a horse. Everybody in the class laughs at him.

Horse

Michael Lacey Freeman

laughing, it's difficult to stop them. In fact¹, if you tell them to stop, they laugh even more.

When I finished, Stephen Foster read the poem. It was boring. He read it in a normal voice. He didn't try to sound like a horse at all.

'Thank you, Michael, thank you Stephen,' said Miss White. 'Now let's decide. Who do you want to read the poem? Hands up who wants Michael to read it.' My hand went up. I looked around the class. Nobody else put up their hand.

The teacher looked a little bit confused². At first, she didn't know what to say. 'OK er...' she said, 'What about Stephen?'

Everybody except me put their hand up.

'Hooray' shouted the class.

'Down with Egghead!' shouted a boy.

'Quiet,' said Miss White again. 'That's decided then. Stephen will read the poem at the school assembly.' Miss White could see my face. I was trying not to, but I was about to cry. I remembered what my dad said, and what Peter said in my favourite book, *The Railway Children*, "Big boys don't cry."

'I think that Michael, you did so well, why don't you

¹ **in fact** actually

² **confused** you feel this when you don't know what to say or do

Everyone in the class chooses the other boy to read the poem at assembly, even though Michael read it better. Michael tries not to cry.



Everyone except Michael puts their hand up because they want the other boy, not Michael, to read the poem to all the school.



Michael Lacey Freeman

read the title¹ of the poem at the assembly,' said Miss White.

In the end, the teacher says Michael can read the title of the poem. He's happy about this and Andrew tells him he's very good when he reads it at assembly.

The class started laughing again, but I didn't feel unhappy this time. Andrew was right. Now I was able to read, at least the first bit of the poem. The title. That really is the most important bit. Without the title you have no idea what the poem is going to be about.

So, thanks to Andrew I read the title at the school assembly, in front of the whole school. Even the headteacher was there, smiling.

'Theeeee Mooonsteeer Hooooorse,' byyyy Ian Serraaileeeerrrrr. That little bit. And then Stephen read the rest. Andrew thought I was very, very good.

Michael likes his art teacher. He didn't know how to draw before Mr Wilson taught him a simple way to draw a picture.

Mr Wilson teaches us art. He's very old. He's got white hair, and he wears a big winter jumper, even when it's really hot. I like him very much. He teaches us to draw. Drawing seemed so difficult before I met Mr Wilson. He taught me to draw this picture. All you have to do is draw the number 3, and then add a line to the top part of the number. Then you add some more lines, some going up and some going down. After this you just have to add a few more things, like a boat, and the sun, and that's it. Can you see what it's?

Can you see a boy on the cliff²? That's me. I'm

¹ **title** the name of a poem or a story

² **cliff** Look where I'm standing on page 15

➤ This is Michael's picture. He likes his art teacher because he teaches them how to draw in a simple way.



Michael Lacey Freeman

Michael loves reading even more than drawing because when he reads he forgets about being an egghead. He also plays football by himself at home with a balloon for the ball.

reading my favourite book, *The Railway Children*. One thing I like even more than drawing is reading. I spend a lot of time in my bedroom, reading books like *Treasure Island*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*. When I read these books, I forget that I'm an egghead. I live inside the story.

I love my books. They always tell you the same story. But you can add things to it. You can imagine¹ that you're there as well, looking for secrets, or discovering² an island. Andrew is always there with me as well.

I also play football by myself. I'm both teams. My bedroom door is one goal, and the kitchen door is the other goal. All the different teams play, except England, of course. How can I be both teams if England play? England will always win.

Freeman has the ball, he passes to Andrew, Andrew shoots, *Gooooaa!!!!!!*

I use a balloon when I play, so I don't break anything and I only play when my Mum and Dad are out.

I never tell Mum and Dad about school. I want to tell them, but I don't want them to know that all the other children call me Egghead. Then maybe they'll call me Egghead as well. So, it's a secret, just between me and Andrew.

¹ **imagine** if you imagine something, you see it in your head

² **discover** find



Egghead



Now it's Sunday evening. The weekend is nearly at an end. I've got to go back to school again tomorrow. 'Another five days of school,' I say to Andrew. 'What am I going to do?'

'Don't worry,' says Andrew. 'I'll be there with you. Everything will be OK.'

'Thank you Andrew,' I say. I try not to worry, but it isn't easy.

Every Sunday evening, Mum makes me a hot chocolate drink and she lets me watch, *Planet of the Apes* on TV. It's always a special moment. But, even though¹ I really enjoy it, I can't stop thinking about school. Tomorrow I'll have to go back to that place. I can't wait to be old like Mum and Dad. Then I can stay at home, read my books, play football, and watch the TV as much as I want. ■

Michael's mum and dad don't know that they call him Egghead at school. On Sunday, Michael is worried about going back to school. In his head, Andrew tells him not to worry, but it isn't easy.

Think

Do you think Michael should tell his parents about how unhappy he is at school? Why / Why not?

¹ even though even if



Reading Comprehension

1 Look at these sentences about Michael. Tick (✓) the ones that you think are true.

- ☒ Michael is called 'Egghead' at school.
- 1 ☐ He doesn't like going to school.
- 2 ☐ He didn't want to read the poem.
- 3 ☐ He read the poem at the school assembly.
- 4 ☐ He likes drawing.
- 5 ☐ His favourite book is *Treasure Island*.
- 6 ☐ He plays football with Andrew.
- 7 ☐ His mum and dad don't know about Andrew.

2 Match the questions with the answers.

- 1 ☒ Why does Michael feel lucky?
 - 2 ☐ Why doesn't Michael like school?
 - 3 ☐ Why doesn't Michael like the way Stephen reads the poem?
 - 4 ☐ How does Michael read the poem?
 - 5 ☐ What does Michael think is the most important part of the poem?
 - 6 ☐ What does Michael do on Sunday evenings?
-
- a He thinks it's boring.
 - b He drinks a hot chocolate.
 - c Because he has a special friend.
 - d Because the other children bully him.
 - e He reads it like a horse.
 - f The title.

Speaking and Writing

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Skills

- 3 In Chapter 1, Michael says he loves reading.
Answer these questions about you and then write your answers.

- 1 Where do you usually read?
- 2 What kind of books do you like reading? Why?
- 3 How important do you think it is to read books?
- 4 Do you prefer reading paper books or ebooks?
- 5 What's the best book you've ever read?
- 6 How often do you go to the library?
- 7 Where do you usually look for information online?



Before-reading Activity

Listening A2 Key

- ▶ 3 4 Listen to the start of Chapter 2 and choose the correct answer (A, B or C) for each question.

On Monday morning it was

A sunny.

~~B~~ foggy.

C windy.

- 1 Who does Michael say hello to?

A His teacher

B His dad

C An old man

- 2 Where does Michael sometimes go with his dad?

A To the woods

B To the mountains.

C An old man

- 3 What kind of shop does Mrs Jarvis have?

A A shoe shop

B A sweet shop

C A supermarket

- 4 How did Michael feel when he saw that the school was still there?

A Really excited

B Very surprised

C He wanted to cry

- 5 One of the boys asks Michael if he was in the ____ at the weekend.

A zoo

B cinema

C park