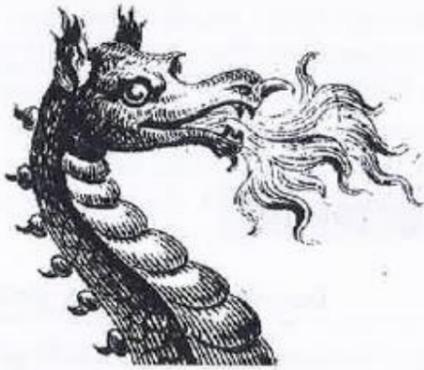


The Reluctant Dragon

The Reluctant Dragon is a short story written by Kenneth Grahame, author of *The Wind in the Willows*. The story is set in the South Downs, a hilly national park in England. In this extract, the main character, a young boy, hears that a dragon is living nearby and decides to visit him.



Next day, after he'd had his tea, the Boy strolled up the chalky track that led to the summit of the Downs; and there, sure enough, he found the dragon, stretched lazily on the grass in front of his cave. A cool breeze played over the surface of the grass and the silver shoulder of a large moon was showing above distant tree tops. No wonder the dragon seemed in a peaceful and contented mood. As the Boy approached he could hear the beast purring happily. 'Well, we live and

learn!' he said to himself. 'None of my books ever told me that dragons purred!'

'Hello, dragon,' said the Boy, quietly, when he had got up to him.

The Boy bit off a stalk of grass and chewed it. 'Going to make a long stay here?' he asked, politely.

'I haven't quite made my mind up,' replied the dragon. 'It seems a nice enough place, but I've only been here a short time, and it's important to think things through properly before settling down. It's rather a serious thing, settling down. Besides — I'm going to tell you something! You'd never guess it if you tried! — the truth is, I'm such a lazy dragon!'

'You surprise me,' said the Boy, politely.

'It's the sad truth,' the dragon went on, settling down between his paws and clearly delighted to have found a listener at last, 'and I think that's really how I came to be here. You see, all the other fellows were so active and earnest and all that sort of thing — always running around, and fighting, and raiding the desert sands, and pacing the edge of the sea, and chasing knights all over the place, and gobbling damsels, and generally causing trouble — whereas I liked to get my meals regularly and then prop my back against a bit of rock and snooze a bit.'

An adapted extract from *The Reluctant Dragon* by Kenneth Grahame.

Reading comprehension questions

- 1 Read lines 1-7. What time of day is it when the Boy goes to find the dragon?
.....
1 mark
 - 2 The word "chewed" on line 12 is (circle one):
a. a verb b. an adverb c. an adjective d. a noun
1 mark
 - 3 How does the dragon feel about meeting the Boy? How can you tell?
.....
2 marks
 - 4 Write down one word that you think has a similar meaning to "contented" (line 8).
.....
1 mark
 - 5 How does the dragon behave differently to other dragons?
.....
2 marks
 - 6 The word "and" is repeated a lot in lines 22 and 23. Why do you think the author chose to do this?
.....
1 mark
 - 7 Do you think you would be scared if you met this dragon? Explain your answer.
.....
2 marks
- Total