

READING & TRAINING

H.G. Wells

# The Time Machine



audio CD



H.G. Wells

# The Time Machine

Adaptation and activities by Derek Sellen  
Illustrated by Paolo D'altan



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Content editor: Maria Grazia Donati  
Editor: Francesca Pinagli  
Design: Sara Fabbri, Erika Barabino  
Page layout: Annalisa Possenti  
Picture research: Alice Graziotin

Art director: Nadia Maestri

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[info@blackcat-cideb.com](mailto:info@blackcat-cideb.com)  
[blackcat-cideb.com](http://blackcat-cideb.com)

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**PRELIMINARY** This icon indicates Preliminary-style activities

**T: GRADE 6** This icon indicates Trinity-style activities



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## H.G. Wells

Herbert George Wells was born in 1866 in Bromley, just outside London, in the south-east of England. His family were not rich. His father was a small shopkeeper and his mother had been a servant. When Wells broke his leg as a child, he began to read while he was recovering. He found that he loved books.

His father's business could not support the family. So in 1880, Wells had to start work in a shop as an apprentice.<sup>1</sup> He worked for thirteen hours each day and slept in one big bedroom with other apprentices. His mother returned to work as a servant in a large house. When Wells visited her, he was able to read in the library there and to develop his experience of literature.

He managed to escape from the hard life of a shop apprentice and, little by little, he gained educational qualifications while working as a teacher. Life was never easy for him and he later wrote that he was often hungry. However, he eventually gained a university degree. In fact, his first published work was not a novel, but a school book about biology.

His real ambition was to be a writer of fiction and of social studies. Many of his early novels were 'scientific romances'. These included *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds* and *The First Men in the Moon*. They are still popular today. The first of these was published in 1895. It was *The Time Machine*.

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1. **apprentice** : someone who is learning how to work in a job.

H.G. Wells wrote many other types of book. His best-known novels include *Kipps*, which is about a young man who suddenly becomes rich. The book shows Wells's interest in class differences in Britain. The musical and film *Half a Sixpence* were based on *Kipps*. He also wrote non-fiction books about western society and about his ideas of how the world would develop in the future.

In the 1930s, he predicted the Second World War and the terrible effects of bombing from the air. He thought that the only solution to the political chaos and conflict in the world was a world government. He also wanted to establish a 'World Encyclopaedia' which would grow and change over time. It should be open to every person in the world. But Wells died in 1946, long before his dream became reality through the Internet and Wikipedia.

Wells wrote more than 110 books, including 50 novels. He continues to be regarded as a controversial<sup>2</sup> and influential thinker as well as the author of long-lasting stories about the possibilities of science and about the lives of the various unforgettable characters that he invents.

### Comprehension check

**1** Now answer these questions. Include some information to support your answers.

- 1 When and why did H.G. Wells first become interested in reading?
- 2 Did Wells's education finish after he started work as an apprentice?
- 3 What advantage did his mother's job have for him?
- 4 Was *The Time Machine* his first published book?
- 5 Did Wells want to write fantasy novels about imaginary worlds?
- 6 Did some of his predictions about the future come true?

---

2. **controversial** : having opinions which divide people or make people angry.



# *The characters*



From left to right:  
Narrator, Time Traveller, Weena, an Eloi, a Morlock

## Before you read

Use a dictionary if necessary to help you complete these activities. You will meet these words as you read Chapter 1.

### Geometry

- 1 Complete the notes with the words in the box.

cube geometry line plane rectangle triangle  
three-dimensional two-dimensional two-dimensional

Today, we studied (1) ..... :  
A (2) ..... is one-dimensional. A (3) .....  
has three sides. It is (4) ..... . A (5) .....  
has four sides. It is also (6) ..... . A solid with six  
square faces is a (7) ..... . It is (8) ..... .  
A (9) ..... is a flat surface.

### Jobs

- 2 Read about four people with certain jobs. Fill the gaps by choosing four words from the box.

director editor journalist mayor psychologist teacher

- The ..... is planning to create a new park in the town.
- Amy is a ..... . She writes about the news.
- Bill is the ..... of the newspaper, so he makes the final decisions.
- Jane is a ..... . She wrote a book called *The Mind*.





## CHAPTER 1

# The fourth dimension

**T**he Time Traveller was talking to us about Space and Time. His grey eyes shone and his face was lively. I have called him the 'Time Traveller' even though at this moment we didn't know about his invention. He had invited us to his house. After dinner, we sat comfortably beside a warm fire and relaxed.

'You must listen carefully,' he said. 'I am going to disagree with some ideas which you all believe. For example, the geometry which you studied at school is wrong!'

There were six of us in his audience: a friend called Filby, a psychologist, a local mayor, a young man, a doctor and myself. We had no idea that we would hear a story which few of us would believe. We would see strange, impossible things.

'I shall give you reasons for everything that I say. You know that a line in mathematics does not exist in reality. It has zero



track 02

# The fourth dimension



thickness. A plane also has no existence. They are just abstract ideas.'

'Yes,' agreed the psychologist.

'And a cube does not exist in reality,' continued the Time Traveller.

'Nonsense,' said Filby. 'Of course a cube exists. It's a solid.'

'No, a three-dimensional geometrical cube is just an idea. If a cube existed in reality, it would have four dimensions — length, width, height and duration.<sup>1</sup> In other words, it must exist in Space and Time. There are really four dimensions: three of Space and one of Time. We often forget this.'

The Time Traveller continued to explain that people often have the wrong idea about 'the Fourth Dimension'.

'The "Fourth Dimension" is not Space, but Time.'

The poor mayor repeated the strange words 'fourth dimension' quietly to himself, without understanding.

'There may be many pictures of the same man at different moments in Time,' said the Time Traveller. 'Here he is at eight years old, at fifteen, another at seventeen, another at twenty-three, and so on. The man is three-dimensional but he also exists in Time. His being is four-dimensional.'

'But if Time is a fourth dimension of Space,' asked the doctor, 'why can't we move about in Time in the same way as we move in Space?'

'We can only move forwards and backwards in Space. We need a machine to move up and down, a hot-air balloon<sup>2</sup> for example.'

'But we cannot move at all in Time,' argued the doctor.

---

1. **duration** : the quality of existing in Time.

2. **hot-air balloon** :





## CHAPTER 1

‘Yes, we can. We move along the Time-Dimension at the same speed from the cradle<sup>3</sup> to the grave.’

‘But we cannot travel backwards in Time,’ said the psychologist.

‘We can travel back in our imaginations. We cannot stay there for long. But we can use a machine, the balloon, to travel up and down in Space. So perhaps we can invent a machine that helps us to travel in Time!’

The Time Traveller continued confidently. ‘For a long time I’ve thought about inventing a machine like this, which I can drive in any direction in Space *and* Time. And now I have proof!’

‘We could go back to the time of famous events so that we can see if history is correct,’ suggested the psychologist.

‘We might talk to the Ancient Greeks and hear Homer and Plato,’ said the young man. ‘Or even go into the future.’

‘We might discover a perfect future society,’ I said, ‘a society where everyone is equal. The future must be better.’

‘It’s a mad idea,’ said the psychologist.

‘Do you really have proof?’ I asked with excitement.

The Time Traveller smiled. He went out of the room and down the long corridor towards his laboratory. The psychologist looked at us. ‘I wonder what he will show us.’

When the Time Traveller returned, he held in his hand a shining metallic framework, the size of a small clock. It was beautifully made. There was ivory<sup>4</sup> and a crystalline material in it. He placed the tiny machine on one of the small tables in the room. There was a bright lamp on the table and several candles in the room. We could all see clearly. It wasn’t a trick. That’s impossible.

---

3. **cradle** : a baby’s small bed. ‘From the cradle to the grave’ means from birth to death.

4. **ivory** : material from an elephant’s tusk/tooth.

# The fourth dimension



‘Well?’ said the psychologist.

‘This is only a model,’ said the Time Traveller. ‘It is my plan for travelling through Time. You can see that it seems unreal. It twinkles.’<sup>5</sup> Here is one little white lever and here is another.’ We all looked closely at the mysterious object.

‘It took two years to make. This lever sends the machine into the future. And this other lever sends it into the past. The traveller sits here on this seat. I am going to press the lever in a moment and the machine will disappear.’

There was a pause.

He moved his finger towards the lever. ‘No, wait,’ he said, and took the psychologist’s hand in his. The psychologist pressed the lever with his finger.

There was a light wind in the room. One of the candles blew out. The little machine turned round and became faint. It seemed like a ghost of itself. Then it disappeared completely.

We looked at each other silently. ‘Are you serious?’ asked the doctor. ‘Do you think that the machine is in the future?’

‘Yes, I do. Also, I am building a big Time Machine in my laboratory. It is nearly finished. I am planning to go on a journey into the future myself.’

We sat and looked at the empty table. We were amazed.

‘Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?’ The Time Traveller led us down the corridor to his laboratory. There, we saw a much larger machine, similar to the little object we had seen but big enough for a man to sit inside. It was made of nickel, ivory and crystalline rock. It was almost complete, but twisted crystalline bars lay on the floor next to it with some complicated drawings.

---

5. **twinkle** : shine with an irregular light.



## CHAPTER 1

‘Are you serious?’ asked the doctor.

‘I am going to explore Time. Yes, I am serious.’

A little later, we all left. Was it a trick? Can human beings really travel into the past or the future?

The next Thursday I returned to the Time Traveller’s house. Some other guests were already there, including the doctor. How had he made the small model of the machine disappear?

We waited in the same room. The psychologist was there. In addition, there was the editor of a newspaper, a journalist and a quiet shy man.

‘It’s half-past seven,’ the doctor said, ‘We ought to have dinner.’

I asked where the Time Traveller was.

‘Nobody knows.’

Then the door from the corridor opened slowly and silently.

The Time Traveller appeared.

‘Good heavens! What’s the matter with you?’ asked the doctor.

Everyone turned towards the door. The Time Traveller was in a terrible condition. His coat was dirty. His hair was very untidy and it seemed to be greyer than before. His face was pale. There was a cut on his chin. He looked extremely tired. For a moment, he stood in the doorway. Then he came into the room. He was limping.<sup>6</sup>

He said nothing but asked to drink something. We all waited for him to speak.



---

6. **limp** : walk with difficulty, e.g. because of an injury.





## The text and *beyond*

### Comprehension check

1 For each sentence answer (T) True or (F) False.

	T	F
1 The Time Traveller is called Filby.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 The Time Traveller believes that there are four dimensions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 The Traveller has invented a hot-air balloon that can travel in Time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 The Traveller shows his guests the small Time Machine.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 At the time that they leave the Traveller's house, all the men believe in 'time travel'.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 When the person who is telling the story returns to the Time Traveller's home, the Traveller is not there.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 The same people are at the house on each occasion.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 When the Traveller appeared, he seemed to be tired and dirty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

... we didn't know about his invention. He **had invited** us to his house.

Look at these events and when they happened.

- 1 He invited us to his house.
- 2 The Time Traveller explained his ideas.

We use the past perfect simple form of the verb (**had** + past participle) to show that one action happened earlier than another action in the past.

*The Time Traveller explained his ideas. He **had invited** us to his house.*

### Grammar: writing about the past

2 Look at the sentences (1-5). Which event happened first? Which event happened second? Rewrite the sentences with one verb in the past simple and one verb in the past perfect simple.

- 0 He (show) us a small machine which he (make) earlier.  
*He **showed** us a small machine which he **had made** earlier.*

- 1 He (*talk*) about the geometry that we (*learn*) at school.
- 2 I (*begin*) to believe in time travel after I (*see*) the machine.
- 3 I (*go*) back to his house. The others (*arrive*) before me.
- 4 After we (*start*) dinner, the Traveller (*return*).
- 5 He (*come*) into the room. Perhaps he (*travel*) into the future and back.

### Interpretation

- 3 What is the Time Traveller like? Which statements below do you agree with? Why?

- highly intelligent
- serious and confident
- knows how to develop his invention quickly
- more interested in the past than in the future
- wants to trick other people
- enjoys explaining his ideas
- brave
- adventurous

- 4 Here are some opinions about Chapter 1. Do you agree or disagree? Give each opinion a score:

5 = strongly agree    4 = agree    3 = perhaps agree  
2 = disagree    1 = strongly disagree

Compare and discuss your ideas with another student's.

- 1 This story starts very slowly. I want more excitement.
- 2 I find the ideas about Time and Space very interesting.
- 3 It is easy for the reader to imagine the people and the events.
- 4 There are too many unimportant characters.
- 5 This beginning makes me want to read more.
- 6 I like the style of writing.
- 7 It is very different from a modern story about time travel.
- 8 The story is improbable.

☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐  
☐

## Comprehension

- 5 **PRELIMINARY** Look at the text in each box. What does it say? Mark the correct letter: a, b or c.

### FUTURA TRAVEL

#### *Visit the future!*

- Travel by super-fast coaches
- Stay in luxury hi-tech hotels
- Go to amazing locations

You'll imagine you're in the 22<sup>nd</sup> century!

- 1 This advert is for:
- a ☐ time travel into the future.
- b ☐ high-quality holidays in the present.
- c ☐ an exhibition about the future.

### MISSING

Professor Amis has disappeared.

Last seen two weeks ago on Monday 27<sup>th</sup> June at the University Laboratory where he carries out research into the possibilities of time travel.

- 2 Professor Amis:
- a ☐ is a scientific researcher.
- b ☐ is a time traveller.
- c ☐ has been missing since last Monday.

### LOST IN GALAXY X31

A film about a 100-year journey through space to an unknown star system.

See the monsters of another world and the bodies of lost astronauts floating in Space.

Not suitable for children under 10.

- 3
- a ☐ This is probably a horror film.
- b ☐ No children should see this film.
- c ☐ It is a film about time travel.

### Is Time Travel Possible?

Doctor Clarke, the writer of *Journeys through Time* and other books about the science of time travel, will give a talk on Friday in the library.

Buy tickets online for this event.

Open to the public as well as students.

- 4
- a ☐ Doctor Clarke writes stories about time travel.
- b ☐ You can buy his book online.
- c ☐ Anyone can attend this event.

## Before you read

### Predicting the story

① What problems may you find if you travel through Time to meet the people of the future?

- language
- advanced science
- super intelligence
- new ways of communicating
- different ideas about life
- illness

Discuss these and further possible problems with other students.

### Materials

② Match the descriptions (1-5) with the materials (a-e).

- 1 ☐ This material is often used for statues in the street.
- 2 ☐ This comes from elephants. Nowadays, it is not legal to obtain it.
- 3 ☐ This is a bright reddish-brown metal. It sometimes becomes green in colour.
- 4 ☐ This expensive material is used for statues, tables, churches, etc. One of the most famous and best types comes from Carrara, Italy.
- 5 ☐ This is a fine material which is used for cups and plates.

- |          |             |
|----------|-------------|
| a ivory  | d porcelain |
| b marble | e bronze    |
| c copper |             |

### Vocabulary

③ Here are some words you will meet in Chapter 2. Look up any unknown words or ask other students.

- |          |         |
|----------|---------|
| 1 bushes | 4 tunic |
| 2 lawn   | 5 hail  |
| 3 Sphinx |         |