



## HOLES

Louis Sachar, 1998

### Contexte et objectifs

- Niveau : A2/B1
- Classe : 4<sup>ème</sup> / 3<sup>ème</sup>
- Objectifs :
  - grammaticaux
    - temps du récit : présent simple (V-∅ / V-S), prétérit simple (V-ED) + AGO, passé révolu (USED TO + V)
    - hypothèses simples : IF + present simple (V-∅ / V-S), WILL + V
    - doubles comparatifs, quantifieurs + noms / adjectifs
    - THE + nom singulier utilisé comme générique
    - superlatif
    - WANT + TO + V
    - préposition + gérondif (utilisé comme groupe nominal)
    - WILL + V
  - lexicaux
    - mots de liaison de cause, conséquence, contraste
    - phrasal verbs
    - sens de la particule UP
    - noms dérivés en -ER
    - noms composés en NOM + NOM
    - adjectifs composés en ADJ + NOM + -ED
  - procédés littéraires
    - conventions d'exposition du cadre et des personnages
    - effet d'une dérogation à ces conventions
    - ironie dramatique

### Anticipation du type et de la structure du texte

#### Repérage des nombres et de la structure de la page

**Look at the page layout and the printed numbers. What can you deduce?**

We can see a very big number 1 and then number 2 like chapters in a book. They are very short.

#### Repérage du paratexte (situation dans la page, polices de caractère utilisées, nombres et majuscules)

**Pick out, in the paratext, the different typefaces, the numbers, and the capital letters. What can you guess about the type of document it is?**

At the bottom we can see the word Holes in italics with a capital letter so it's the title of a book. Afterwards there's the number 1998 — that's a year. We don't know the exact date, so it's not from a newspaper or a magazine. We can see the preposition by in front of the name Louis Sachar, so it is the name of the man who wrote the book. We can guess this text is the first chapters of a story called Holes.

## Chapitre 1 : cadre de l'action

**Apport méthodologique professeur** An admitted convention is that it should be clear from the very beginning where the story takes place. So let's concentrate on the beginning of the text.

### Repérage des mots répétés

**For each paragraph, find the repeated word(s).**

The words with capital letters are:

- §1 : Green Lake
- §2 : town
- §3 : shade
- §4: trees

**Apport professeur** shade = ombre (traduction du mot)

### Émission d'hypothèses quant au type de cadre décrit

**What mental picture do you get from these words?**

We imagine a beautiful place full of trees. It's green and lovely. It's like a picture postcard of a holiday.

### Repérage des indices infirmant l'hypothèse première dans le co-texte gauche (en amont) des mots repérés

**Are you sure? Let's consider the first sentence. Look at the word right before *lake*, which was repeated in §1.**

no => there is no more water / lake.

### Confirm with verb tenses in the first paragraph.

We can see the verb BE in the present in front of no lake so we know that the lake isn't there now. Then there is the verb BE in the past so we know there was a lake before.

**Apport professeur** There *used to be* a lake but now it doesn't exist anymore. It has gone / disappeared.

**Confirm with the words coming right before *town* in the following paragraph (§2).**

There used to be a town (l. 3) => the town is not there anymore.

**Confirm your idea in §3: pick out words coming right before *shade*.**

l. 6: not much

**Confirm your idea in §4: pick out a word coming right before *trees*.**

There are only two trees. (l. 8)

### Émission d'hypothèses sur la raison de cet état du cadre

**Both the lake and the town disappeared: how can that be?**

Maybe it's climate change. Maybe it's very hot. The water disappeared so the people went away.

### Confirmation de l'hypothèse avec des mots transparents

**Confirm that hypothesis with transparent words that you know from those same paragraphs.**

We can see the transparent words temperature and degrees and the number ninety-five in front of degrees. It's very hot.

**Apport professeur** Fahrenheit (ninety-five, l. 5) vs. Celsius (35°C) temperatures.

### Confirmation de l'hypothèse avec un mot répété

**Again, confirm by picking out a word repeated throughout the beginning paragraphs of the text.**

We can see dry repeated twice (l. 2, l. 6). We can see a word like it: dried (l. 3)

**Apport professeur** So there used to be a lake, but it isn't there anymore. There also used to be a town, but it isn't there anymore either. The town **dried up**. The lake **dried up** as well.

Travail lexical sur le sens de la particule up dans les phrasal verbs.

Meaning	Phrasal verbs with particle UP
achèvement	drink up, fill up, eat up, use up, <b>dry up</b>
invention / création	dress up, make up, dream up
amélioration	cheer up, freshen up, clear up
mouvement vers le haut	look up, get up, stand up
accroissement / augmentation	grow up, turn up, bump up

### So what sort of place do you picture now?

It's very hot. It's like a desert. There's no water and civilisation. People can't live there because it's too hot.

### Contrast the name of the place and the conditions there.

The name 'Green Lake' sounds nice but in fact the place is horrible. It is very hot and dry so people don't like living there.

**Apport professeur** Yes, despite its name, it is a hostile, sterile and uncomfortable place.

### Trace écrite

The scene takes place at a camp in Green Lake in Texas in a very dry, sterile and hostile place. The place is called Green Lake because there **used to be** a lake there whereas now the climate is too hot and dry. There **used to be** a town there too and people **used to live** there while now there's nothing left, except for the camp. People **don't** live there **anymore**. The place got **hotter and hotter** and **drier and drier**. There was **less and less water** and so **fewer and fewer people** lived there. Camp Green Lake **used not to be** so hostile. Now the name doesn't suit the place at all! Despite its name, Green Lake is not green because there are **only two trees**. There is **little vegetation** / **greenery**, as a result there's **hardly any shade**. There **isn't** a lake **anymore** since it **dried up a hundred years ago**. It is **extremely hot** there and it is difficult to survive because of the lack of water.

**PRL** : opposition passé-présent : emploi de **AGO**, de **USED TO + V**, de **NOT + ANYMORE**  
**doubles comparatifs, quantifieurs + noms / adjectifs**  
mots de liaison de **contraste, cause, conséquence**

## Chapitre 1 : personnages du cadre et interactions

### Repérage des mots répétés plus de deux fois

**Now consider the rest of chapter 1. Pick out other words repeated often (i.e., more than twice).**

We can see rattlesnake(s) and scorpion(s) repeated in the same lines (ll. 11, 13, 16, 19), which means they probably go together. The word scorpion is transparent.

**Apport professeur** rattlesnake can be decomposed (rattle + snake) and is therefore some sort of snake.

Travail lexical sur les **noms composés** en **NOM + NOM**, écrits en un seul mot, accentués sur le premier nom.

NOM <sub>1</sub> + NOM <sub>2</sub>	Nom composé
rattle + snake	a 'rattlesnake
girl + friend	a 'girlfriend
bath + room	a 'bathroom
hand + bag	a 'handbag
tooth + brush	a 'toothbrush
head + ache	a 'headache

Rattlesnakes and scorpions are both dangerous and frightening animals.

The word camper(s) is repeated too (ll. 9, 12, 19).

**Apport professeur** camper can be decomposed (camp + -er). camp is transparent, and -ER is a suffix which indicates a person.

Travail lexical sur les **noms dérivés** en **VERBE / NOM + -ER**.

Racine (VERBE)	+ -ER / -OR (personne qui fait cette action)
camp	camper
teach	teacher
read	reader
paint	painter
sail	sailor
narrate	narrator
direct	director
Racine (NOM)	+ -ER (personne qui habite / travaille à cet endroit)
prison	prisoner
jail	jailer
island	islander
New York	New Yorker
village	villager

So a camper is a person who does camping or who lives on Camp Green Lake.

### Émission d'hypothèses sur les interactions entre les personnages repérés

**Imagine the interactions between the animals and people mentioned.**

Rattlesnakes and scorpions are dangerous animals so maybe they attack the campers.

**Apport professeur** Yes, they might *bite* them!

### Travail autour de chaque occurrence de *camper* (seuls habitants humains)

You have identified the campers as human characters in the story: it is therefore important to know what happens to them. So, let's concentrate on the words in the vicinity of each occurrence of the word *camper(s)* (ll. 9, 12, and 19).

#### Travail sur la première occurrence (l. 9)

Repérage du mot répété dans le co-texte, et inférence du sens avec la préposition de lieu

Let's concentrate on the first occurrence of the word (l. 9). Which word appears both before and after it? Infer the meaning of the word: associate it with the preposition of place and other words nearby and make a guess.

The word is hammock. The hammock is between the two trees in the shade so we can guess that a hammock is a 'hamac'.

#### Émission d'hypothèses quant au caractère exceptionnel de cet objet

Consider what we found out about Camp Green Lake: why do you think the hammock is special?

It is the only nice thing at Camp Green Lake. It's in the shade so it's comfortable. In a baking hot place such as Green Lake, the hammock symbolizes rest, comfort and shelter from the sun.

#### Repérage des mots avec une majuscule (noms de personnes) dans le co-texte

So *hammock* is found in the text near *campers*. Pick out references to other people (with the help of words starting with capitals) in the vicinity of *hammock* (ll. 7 and 9).

We can see a name beginning with a capital letter: the Warden

**Apport professeur** A *Warden* is the director of an institution.

#### Émission d'hypothèses quant à l'appartenance de l'objet et confirmation par le texte

**Apport professeur** There are two people around the same object... Do you think the hammock *belongs to* the campers or to the Warden?

Find confirmation in the text, next to the words *campers* or *Warden*.

The text says it 'belongs to the Warden' so it's the Warden's. The text mentions the campers to say they are forbidden to use the hammock. They are not allowed to lie in the shade. Only the Warden can so he/she must be selfish.

#### Travail sur la deuxième occurrence (l. 12, fin de phrase)

Let's have a look at the second occurrence of the word *campers* (l. 12), which is located at the end of a sentence, which means we are going to look backwards to examine the contents of the sentence in which it appears.

#### Repérage des mots du co-texte gauche (en amont) répétés dans le reste du chapitre

Pick out words preceding this occurrence of 'campers' which are repeated in the rest of the text.

dig comes after holes in l. 11, dug is like dig which is in front of a hole in lines 21-22.

#### Émission d'hypothèses quant à la raison de cette activité

Imagine why the campers dig holes at Green Lake, then, and what the Warden's role is.

The campers have to dig holes so they aren't just doing camping. They aren't on holiday. They have to work hard in the sun and there are dangerous animals where they work. Maybe they are workers. It is like a prison camp or a forced labour camp. They are like prisoners, and the Warden is like their jailer.

#### Émission d'hypothèses quant au sort des *campers* s'ils se soustraient à leur obligation

Can you imagine what will happen if the campers don't dig the holes.

If the campers don't dig holes, the Warden will punish them. If they don't do what she says, they will receive a punishment. They will be punished by the Warden, if they disobey.

**Apport professeur** Explication de l'emploi du **modal WILL** : we use the **modal WILL** to make a prediction or to express a future certainty. We use the phrase with **IF + simple present** to express the condition for the prediction to come true.

### Travail sur la troisième occurrence (l. 19)

Let's now focus on the third occurrence of the word 'camper' (l. 19).

### Repérage des mots déjà rencontrés puis des mots nouveaux dans la phrase

In that same sentence, pick out the words that we have already seen before, then pick out the words which are *new* to us, and deduce what new information they convey.

We've seen the animals' names (scorpion and rattlesnake) before, as well as the words bitten by (bitten is like the word 'bite'.) The new words are Sometimes and try. Sometimes a camper wants to be bitten! He wants a scorpion or a rattlesnake to bite him.

### Émission d'hypothèses à partir de cette nouvelle information

#### Can you imagine why?

Perhaps campers want to be bitten because then they are ill and they can stop work. It's a good excuse. The campers don't want to dig holes in the sun. It is really horrible on the camp. The campers are tired, hot and very unhappy. Maybe they are desperate!

**Apport professeur** Yes, it is better to be bitten by a rattlesnake or a scorpion than to dig in the hot sun. The campers are prepared/ready to do almost anything **instead of / rather than** digging. They will do even very dangerous things to avoid digging holes in the heat. They'd rather be bitten than dig holes in the sun.

### Repérage du nom d'un autre animal répété dans le chapitre après *bitten by*

We discovered campers want to be bitten... Pick out another animal repeatedly found after *bitten by*.

It's a yellow-spotted lizard (lines 22 and 25).

**Apport professeur** yellow-spotted can be decomposed (yellow + spot + -ed). The lizard's got yellow spots (explication de 'spots').

Travail sur les **adjectifs composés** en **ADJ. + NOM + -ED**

Signification	Adjectif composé
a lizard with yellow spots	a yellow-spotted lizard
a girl with brown eyes	a brown-eyed girl
a boy with blond hair	a blond-haired boy
a foal with long legs	a long-legged [ɪd] foal
a teacher in a bad temper	a bad-tempered teacher
a lizard with yellow spots	a yellow-spotted lizard

### Repérage des occurrences de WILL (caractère certain de la prédiction) et comparaison de l'issue de la morsure par ces différents animaux grâce aux mots du co-texte droit (en aval)

You remember how the word WILL indicates a certain prediction as to what will happen in the future. Spot the repetition of WILL and compare the outcome of being bitten by scorpions, snakes, and yellow-spotted lizards.

will: l. 20 (x 2) + l. 23

If a camper gets bitten by a scorpion or a small rattlesnake, they will stop work and spend a day or two in their tent to recover.

If a camper gets bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard, they will die for sure.

All those animals are frightening, but the lizards are more dangerous because they kill you.

**Apport professeur** Emploi du **superlatif**. Yes, the rattlesnake is more dangerous than the scorpion but **the most dangerous** creature of all is the yellow-spotted lizard. It is **the worst** creature because it's **the most toxic** and **the deadliest**.

## Let's sum up all we have learnt about all of the inhabitants of Camp Green Lake, human or not.

### Trace écrite

The Warden is in charge of Camp Green Lake. The campers aren't on holiday. They have to dig holes and their work is very difficult because of the heat and the dangerous animals where they work. The Warden won't let the campers lie in the hammock in the shade. He / She seems to be very cruel and selfish and the camp is like a prison. **If** the campers **don't dig** holes, they **will be** in serious trouble and the Warden **will make** sure they suffer for it. **If** they **don't obey** the rules, the Warden **will punish** them. **If** the campers **disobey** the Warden, they **will be punished**.

The animals on Camp Green Lake are rattlesnakes, scorpions and yellow-spotted lizards. **The rattlesnake** is more dangerous / worse than **the scorpion** but **the most dangerous** creature of all is **the yellow-spotted lizard**. It is **the worst** creature because it's **the most toxic** and **the deadliest**.

The campers are prepared / ready to do almost anything instead of / rather than digging because they are so desperate and exhausted. They are so desperate that they will do even very dangerous things to avoid digging holes in the heat, like trying to be bitten by a scorpion or a small rattlesnake. **If** they **are bitten** by a snake, they **will be** able to stay inside and rest but **if** they **are bitten** by a yellow-spotted lizard, they **will die**.

PRL : **hypothèse simple** : **IF + présent simple, WILL + V** (// français, WILL équivalent du futur)  
**THE + nom singulier** utilisé comme **générique**  
**superlatif** : **THE + adjectif + -EST / THE + MOST + adjectif**

## Chapitre 2 : personnage principal (délai d'identification)

**Repérage des mots commençant par une majuscule (noms propres) pour identifier le personnage**  
**Let's now focus on Chapter 2. Spot the capitals that indicate names, and find the new character.**

Stanley Yelnats: Stanley is a boy's name. It's repeated twice at the end of the text. Yelnats is his surname. It's the same name backwards. It's funny!

**Apport professeur** A word which reads the same forwards as well as backwards is called a **palindrome**.

**Émission d'hypothèses quant à la dérogation à la convention (délai d'identification du personnage, qui n'apparaît qu'au chapitre 2)**

**Apport professeur** Usually, the main character is introduced at the beginning of a text.

**Compare this with the text we are studying.**

We only meet him in Chapter 2 but we can guess Stanley is the hero of the story because he is the only person whose name we know and his name is remarkable because it is a palindrome. It was probably important for the author to depict the horrible place where Stanley's story is going to unfold first.

**Repérage du mot répété et du mot qui précède chacune de ces occurrences**

**Pick out the repeated word in the chapter, and spot the word right before which qualifies it.**

boy(s) is repeated lines 29, 30 and 31. There's bad boy (ll. 29, 30) and then good boy (l. 31).

**Émission d'hypothèses quant à la situation du personnage et les habitants du camp**

**What does this tell you about Stanley, and more generally about the people ending up at Camp Green Lake?**

Stanley was probably a bad boy, that's why he ended up at Camp Green Lake. It is a punishment: the text reads 'Camp Green Lake is a camp for bad boys. If you take a bad boy and make him dig a hole every day in the hot sun, it will turn him into a good boy.' If boys are bad, they will be sent to Camp Green Lake to make them good. The boys must dig holes as a punishment. They don't choose to go there. So we were right! The campers are like prisoners. Camp Green Lake is a labour camp and a detention centre for delinquent boys.



### Repérage de la phrase qui suit immédiatement cette idée

**Pick out the sentence which immediately follows this idea in the text.**

That was what some people thought (l. 32)

### Émission d'hypothèses quant à l'opinion du narrateur

**Yes, the narrator say *some people thought* that. Deduce what the narrator himself thinks, and remind me of who imposes these punishments at the camp and the image we have of this person.**

*He doesn't say he agrees. Maybe the narrator doesn't think it's a good idea to make boys dig holes in the hot sun. Perhaps he thinks the Warden is wrong to punish the boys like that.*

**What about you? Do you agree that physical punishment or suffering can change bad people into good people / can change people's behaviour?**

## Chapitre 2 : motivation du récit

### Repérage de la ponctuation remarquable

**Pick out remarkable punctuation marks.**

*We can see a question in line 28: Why would anyone go to Camp Green Lake?*

*And speech marks in lines 33-34: "You may go to jail, or you may go to Camp Green Lake."*

### Repérage du premier mot de la phrase (le sujet) et déduction de l'identité de l'énonciateur

**In each of these sentences, pick out the first word (i.e. the subject) to find out who is saying the sentences.**

*l. 28: The reader is asking the question. The reader doesn't understand why people choose to go to the camp when it is so horrible.*

*l. 33-34: The judge gave Stanley a choice: jail or Camp Green Lake.*

**Apport professeur** jail = prison.

*We were right, Stanley Yelnats probably did something horrible to have to choose between jail or a labour camp!*

### Émission d'hypothèses quant à la pertinence du choix du personnage principal

**So, say what can you deduce about Stanley Yelnats and the choice he made to go to Camp Green Lake.**

*We can guess Stanley, who is only a boy, chose to go to the camp because he didn't know it was so horrible. Maybe he was like us: he thought it was like a holiday camp because of its nice name. Now we, the readers, know more than Stanley. We know that Stanley is going to go to a dangerous, horrible camp but he doesn't.*

**Apport professeur** This literary device is called *dramatic irony*.

### Émission d'hypothèses quant à la motivation du reste du roman

**Can you guess what the story *Holes* will be about? What did you learn in this part of the text? What do you want to learn next?**

*We can guess it will be about Stanley's adventures at Camp Green Lake. We only find out Stanley's name and we only understand what the camp really is at the end of the extract in Chapter Two. We want to know what will happen next. We know the camp is horrible but Stanley doesn't. We want to know what Stanley did wrong. We want to know if he will dig holes, if he will disobey the Warden, if he will be bitten by a yellow-spotted lizard...*



## Trace écrite recapitulative

### Trace écrite

The whole of the first chapter is a description of the place or the setting of the story. We are struck by Sachar's use of repetition which serves to underline the implacable / relentless hostility of the place. The more we find out about Camp Green Lake, the worse it seems but the more we **want to know!**

It is only at the end of Chapter Two, just **after learning** that Camp Green Lake is really a detention centre for delinquent boys, that we find out what the hero's name is: Stanley Yelnats. His name strikes us because it is a palindrome. The author makes us **want to read on** because we look forward to finding out what **will happen** to Stanley in that awful place. We are interested **in learning** more about Stanley's adventures. We **want to know** what Stanley has done wrong and why the boys have to dig the holes of the title. We **want to know** how Stanley **will cope** with the disappointment **of being** at Camp Green Lake and if he **will manage** to stand up to the Warden. We **want to be able** to fill in the holes in the story!

**PRL : préposition + gérondif (// groupe nominal)**  
**WANT + TO + V**  
**WILL + V**  
**phrasal verbs**