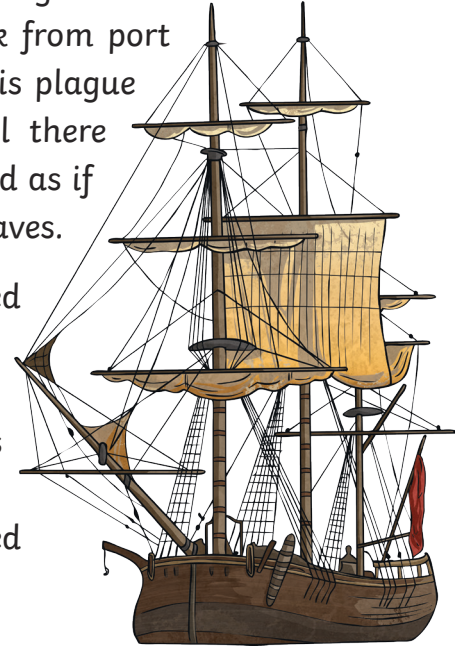# Improving Your Reading with Vocabulary Victor:
The Phantom Vessel

In an age long ago, a mighty ship loaded with pleasure-seekers was sailing from North China to Shanghai. High winds and stormy weather had delayed her and she was still one week from port when a great plague broke out onboard. This plague attacked passengers and sailors alike until there were so few left to sail the vessel that it seemed as if she would soon be left to the mercy of winds and waves.

Of all travellers aboard, only one boy named Ying-Lo had escaped the plague's wrath. He found himself alone at sea, shivering with cold and soaked to the skin by the giant waves which towered high above the deck. He watched as the ship's ruptured sails flapped about wildly like great broken wings and prayed that he may be taken from the dreadful ship before the plague decided his fate.

1. *a mighty ship loaded with **pleasure-seekers***
   What does **pleasure-seekers** mean in this phrase? Tick **one**.

   ○ people searching for a hidden bounty
   ○ people looking to have a good time
   ○ people who were pleased with their lives
   ○ people who travel frequently

2. *He watched as the ship's **ruptured** sails flapped about*
   Which of these words is closest in meaning to the word **ruptured**? Circle **one** answer.

   | immense | broken | ferocious | colossal |

3. Find and copy a word or phrase from the second paragraph which shows that the waves were tall.

   _____

4. Discuss what the word *phantom* in the title of the extract implies about the ship.

     _____

     _____

     _____

Answers

1. 'a mighty ship loaded with **pleasure-seekers**'
   What does **pleasure-seekers** mean in this phrase? Tick **one**.

   ○ people searching for a hidden bounty
   ⊘ people looking to have a good time
   ○ people who were pleased with their lives
   ○ people who travel frequently

2. 'He watched as the ship's **ruptured** sails flapped about'
   Which of these words is closest in meaning to the word **ruptured**? Circle **one** answer.

   | immense | (broken) | ferocious | colossal |

3. Find and copy a word or phrase from the second paragraph which shows that the waves were tall.

   towered high

4. Discuss what the word 'phantom' in the title of the extract implies about the ship.
   Pupils' own responses, such as: The word phantom means ghost so it implies that the ship is like a ghost ship because it doesn't have a captain anymore.