

## Brief synopsis of the book 'Fundbüro' by Siegfried Lenz

This book was first published in 2003. It is set in the 1990s and focuses on the life of 24-year-old Henry Neff, who has no career ambitions or aims in life, other than to live and let live. He finds his ideal work place in the lost-and-found office of his local train station, where he is constantly amazed by what people lose. Henry strikes up a friendship with Fedor Lagutin, a visiting academic at the local university. He seems perfectly happy until job cuts at the station and incidents of violence and xenophobia force Henry to re-assess his outlook on life.

	Description of activity and suggested uses	Skills covered
<b>Activity 1</b>	<p>This activity focuses on one of the main characters of the book – Fedor Lagutin, who becomes a close friend to Henry and Barbara. In that capacity, he influences both their lives and attitudes. Indirectly, he helps to steer Henry away from his somewhat passive attitude to life and towards taking actions on behalf of himself and others.</p> <p>On the first screen there are four boxes containing the names of people/groups on whom the character Fedor Lagutin has an influence. For each there is a set of three alternative sentences detailing the effect he had. Students read and click on the correct alternative. There is a check button so students can assess their answers. Afterwards students have an opportunity to go into greater depth. If they click the name boxes, a screen appears on which students can write in more detail about Lagutin's effect in their own words.</p>	<p>Students develop their reading and analytical skills, as they decide, which option is the best fit. Naturally, they also develop their knowledge of vocabulary relevant to discussing this book.</p>

<b>Activity 2</b>	<p>This activity focuses on the group of motorcyclists that terrorises Henry's neighbourhood. They seem to be the only menace and worry in Henry's otherwise quiet and contented life. Through their actions, Henry eventually re-assesses his passive outlook on life and they make him take action.</p> <p>This activity lends itself to pair or group work, especially when using the printable resource. Students need to consider the different effects that this group has on other characters in the book.</p> <p>A help sheet is available that suggests possible answers for each section.</p> <p>This activity could also lead to a follow-up writing task, such as a practice essay on the role of the gang in the book.</p> <p>A similar activity could be compiled for other characters or events in the book.</p>	<p>Students use their analytical skills, as they assess the role of the gang and their effects in the book. They have to use and expand their topic-specific vocabulary in order to write down their ideas, which in turn develops their writing skills and application of grammar.</p> <p>If this activity is being developed into a discussion, students also develop their speaking skills.</p>
<b>Activity 3</b>	<p>This activity focuses again on the character Fedor Lagutin. This time, students consider his importance in the novel by imagining the plot without him. A help box is available that suggests ideas to students, as to who he is and what he does and to provide them with vocabulary to complete this task.</p> <p>Students can work on this task individually, although it would probably be beneficial to have a pair or group discussion about the character, before students complete the writing task.</p> <p>As far as grammar is concerned, this is a good activity to practise conditional sentences.</p> <p>This activity could also be extended into a practice essay. And it could easily be adapted to other characters in the book.</p>	<p>Students develop their vocabulary and reading skills, especially when using the help box.</p> <p>For the completion of the task, they need to develop their writing skills by applying lexis and grammar, in order to express increasingly sophisticated ideas.</p>