


...a small web cam thingy in schools that connects every class together and you'll be able to get holographic images through it ...no need to learn many foreign languages, because English will be the lingua franca in the whole world

3b. Write your predictions about the future of global communication.

Lesson 9. Slam

1.  Listen and read the introduction to the extract from a novel. Have you ever heard the name of the author? Have you read his books or seen films made after his books?

Nick Hornby (born 17 April 1957) is an English novelist and essayist. He is best known for the novels *High Fidelity*, *About a Boy*, and for the football memoir *Fever Pitch*. His work frequently touches upon music and sports. *High Fidelity* – his first novel – was published in 1995. The novel, about a record collector and his relationships, was adapted into a 2000 film starring John Cusack and a Broadway musical in 2006. His second novel, *About a Boy*, published in 1998, is about two “boys” – Marcus, a teenager from a single-parent family, and Will Freeman, an immature and selfish man in his mid-thirties who becomes better through his growing relationship with Marcus. Hugh Grant and Nicholas Hoult starred in the 2002 film version. *Slam* is a novel published in 2007. The book is written from the perspective of a teenager, Sam, who gets into trouble.



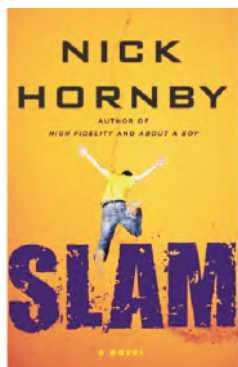
2.  Listen and read the extract. Can you guess what kind of trouble Sam gets into?

Good **stuff** had been happening for about six months.

- For example: Mum got rid of Steve, her rubbish boyfriend.
- For example: Mrs Gillett, my Art and Design teacher, took me to one side after a lesson and asked whether I'd thought of doing art at college.

- For example: I'd learned two new skating tricks, suddenly, after weeks of making an idiot of myself in public. (From now on skating = skateboarding.) All that, and I'd met Alicia too.

Looking at what I just wrote, you could have guessed a lot about me. You could have guessed that my mum and dad don't



live together, for a start. You could have guessed that I skate, and you could have guessed that my best subject at school was Art and Design. And you don't need to be Sherlock Holmes to work out that Alicia was a girl who meant something to me. If you were able to guess it all from that first little paragraph, I'd start to worry that I wasn't an incredibly **complicated** and interesting person, ha ha.

I don't know. **As far as people like Alicia's parents are concerned**, you're a bad person if you don't read and study, and as far as people like my dad are concerned, you're a bad person if you do. It's all mad, isn't it? It's not reading and whatever that makes you good or bad. It's whether you get addicted to drugs and go out mugging. I don't know why they all get themselves into such a **stew**.

Well, here's the thing. I know it sounds stupid, and I'm not this sort of person usually, honest. I mean, I don't believe in ghosts or reincarnation or any **weird stuff** at all. But this, it was just something that started happening, and... Anyway. I'll just say it, and you can think what you want.

I talk to Tony Hawk, and Tony Hawk talks back.

Some of you won't have heard of Tony Hawk. Well, I have to say that not knowing Tony Hawk is like not knowing Robbie Williams, or maybe even Tony Blair. It's worse than that, if you think about it. Because there are loads of politicians, and loads of singers, hundreds of TV programmes. George Bush is probably even more famous than Tony Blair and Britney Spears or Kylie are as famous as Robbie Williams. But there's only one skater, really, and his name's Tony Hawk. Well, there's not only one. But he's definitely the Big One. He's the *J.K. Rowling* of skaters, *the Big Mac*, *the iPod*, *the Xbox*. The

only excuse I'll accept for not knowing TH is that you're not interested in skating.

When I got into skating, my mum bought me a Tony Hawk poster off the Internet. It's the coolest present I've ever had, and it wasn't even the most expensive. And it went straight up onto my bedroom wall, and I just got into the habit of telling it things. At first, I only told Tony about skating – I'd talk about the problems I was having, or the tricks I'd learned. I knew they would mean much more to a picture of Tony Hawk than they would to a real-life Mum. I'm not **dissing** my mum, but she hasn't got a clue, really. So when I told her about things like that, she'd try to look all enthusiastic, but there was nothing really going on in her eyes. She was all, Oh, that's great. But if I'd asked her what this or that trick was, she wouldn't have been able to tell me. So what was the point? Tony knew. Maybe that was why my mum bought me the poster, so that I'd have somebody else to talk to.

After a while, I started talking to Tony Hawk about school, Mum, Alicia, whatever, and I found that he had something to say about those things too.

Does this sound mad to you? It probably does, but I don't care, really. Who doesn't talk to someone in their heads? Who doesn't talk to God, or a pet, or someone they love who has died, or maybe just to themselves? TH... he wasn't me. But he was who I wanted to be, so that makes him the best **version** of myself, and that can't be a bad thing, to have the best version of yourself standing there on a bedroom wall and watching you. It makes you feel as though you mustn't let yourself down.

3. Match the names in *italics* with their definitions:

- British author best known as the creator of the *Harry Potter* fantasy series;
- a portable media player designed and marketed by Apple and launched on October 23, 2001;
- a sixth-generation video game console manufactured by Microsoft;
- a hamburger sold by the international fast-food chain McDonald's (it is one of the company's signature products).

4. Why do you think Sam compares his idol Tony Hawk with J.K. Rowling, the Big Mac, the iPod and Xbox?

5. Find the words in bold which mean

- an act of attacking someone and stealing their money;
- being rude or disrespectful to someone, especially to someone older or in a higher position than you;
- things;
- a difficult situation which makes them feel anxious or upset;
- in their opinion;
- difficult to deal with or understand;
- a particular form of something which is slightly different from other forms of the same thing;
- very strange and unusual, unexpected or not natural.

6. Match the phrasal verbs with their synonyms. Use the context for help (ex. 2).

let down get into go on go out think of

Help box

continue, consider, leave home in order to do something, start to like something and become interested in it, disappoint someone or not to do what you promised

7a. Work in pairs. Answer the questions below. Compare your ideas with the whole class.

1. What things are important for Sam? 2. Does he have enough communication? 3. Does he communicate with his peers? 4. Why does he avoid talking to his Mum? 5. Why does he start talking to TH? 6. Who is more reliable for Sam: his Mum or TH? 7. What / who does TH replace in his life? 8. What do you think affected Sam so deeply? 9. Does he have any addictions? 10. Do you think Sam is a mature person? 11. How old do you think Sam is?