

The Road to Cañamares

Teacher's Guide • INTERMEDIATE B1+/B2 • Marshall Appoh

At a glance

Genre: contemporary mystery with realistic dialogue and a reflective ending.

Setting: Aranjuez and Cañamares, Spain.

Reading: eight chapters (story pp. 1–41); learner material and answer key follow (pp. 42–54).

Recommended use: adult and older-teen EFL groups, particularly EOI B1+/B2 classes.

Story overview (contains spoilers)

When Juan Carlos's old Ford Focus is stolen, he loses more than a car: it belonged to his late friend Mateo. A year later the Focus reappears near his home with only 503 additional kilometres on the odometer. A hidden key and note lead Juan Carlos and Elena to a hut near Cañamares, where they discover papers revealing Mateo's wish to protect land and water for the village. Mateo's nephew David admits using the stolen car while searching for something valuable. Not every detail of the theft is resolved, but Juan Carlos comes to understand the responsibility Mateo entrusted to him.

Why teach this reader?

- An immediately engaging mystery: the theft, the 503 kilometres and Key 12 give learners concrete clues to track.
- Natural dialogue between Juan Carlos and Elena supports work on tone, implication and character relationships.
- The ending invites discussion of friendship, inheritance, environmental stewardship and the limits of certainty.

Level guidance

B1+: suitable with staged reading, brief pre-teaching and supported inference tasks. B2: suitable for more independent reading, interpretation of subtext and extended discussion. The label describes intended classroom suitability; it is not a formal CEFR certification.

Teacher note: The book already includes comprehension questions, vocabulary practice, speaking and writing tasks, plus answers. This guide helps you sequence and extend that existing material rather than repeat it.

Teaching route

A flexible four-session sequence; adjust to class pace and independent-reading time.

Session 1 | A car worth more than money

Read: Chapters 1–2 (story pp. 1–9). Focus: setting, relationships, emotional significance and prediction.

- Before reading: ask whether an ordinary object can carry memories that make it irreplaceable.
- After reading: compare Juan Carlos's and Elena's reactions to the theft. What does each understand?
- Prediction checkpoint: why might the recovered car's location and mileage matter?

Session 2 | Following the clues

Read: Chapters 3–4 (pp. 11–21). Focus: sequencing, evidence versus speculation, suspense.

- Create a shared clue log: 503 kilometres, red-brown earth, the spare key, Key 12, the note, the blue car and the overturned photograph.
- For each clue, distinguish what the text confirms from what Juan Carlos merely suspects.

Session 3 | Motives and revelations

Read: Chapters 5–7 (pp. 22–36). Focus: motive, reliability, inference and moral judgement.

- Ask learners to update their view of David at three points: his visit, the hut discovery and his confession.
- Discuss why Mateo's land documents matter more to Juan Carlos than the possibility of financial gain.

Session 4 | An ending without every answer

Read: Chapter 8 (pp. 37–41). Focus: theme, symbolism, evaluation and response.

- Return to the clue log. Mark each question as resolved, partly resolved or open.
- Explore why the final focus moves from solving the theft to protecting the land and water.
- Select one of the book's writing tasks as a follow-up, rather than assigning all three.

Time-saving approach

Learners can read chapters at home. Use classroom time for pair comparison, evidence-based discussion and short speaking tasks. The existing learner material (pp. 42–54) can supply independent practice and checks.

Language and reading skills

Teach language through the story's events rather than as isolated lists.

Reading for inference

Ask students to support interpretations with a precise event, action or line of dialogue. Useful prompts: What do we know? What are we assuming? What makes you think that? The blue car and David's behaviour offer good opportunities to revise an initial hypothesis.

Narrative structure and suspense

- Notice short sentences and isolated details around the theft and the recovered car.
- Trace how the writer delays information: the pouch, the numbered key, the empty metal box and the concealed envelope.
- Compare the tense journey back to Cañamares with the calmer final drive.

Functional language for discussion

Speculating: He might have... / It could suggest... / There is no evidence that...

Qualifying: At first I thought..., but later... / We cannot be certain because...

Evaluating: Although David..., I think... / Mateo's decision was justified because...

Vocabulary: use what the book already provides

The learner section contains a vocabulary list and exercises on expressions including turn up, get rid of, carry out, inherit and testament (pp. 44–48). Invite students to explain a word's meaning in the specific story scene before checking the definitions and answer key.

Differentiation

For B1+ groups: supply a short character map (Juan Carlos, Elena, Mateo, David, Inspector Gómez); allow pairs to compare evidence before whole-class discussion; provide sentence starters for speculation.

For B2 groups: require counterarguments, examine ambiguous motives and ask learners to justify why some questions remain unanswered.

Suggested assessment evidence

Look for accurate sequencing, separation of fact from inference, clear justification using story details, and coherent oral or written opinions. These are classroom observation criteria, not an official examination rubric.

Discussion and extension

Choose selectively: these prompts complement, rather than duplicate, the book's own activities.

Close-reading prompts

- Juan Carlos and Elena: How does humour help their relationship when the mystery becomes unsettling?
- David: Which admission changes your judgement most: using the stolen Focus, searching the hut, or following the couple? Explain.
- Mateo: Why is choosing a trustworthy person central to his plan? What risk does he take by leaving only a note?
- Ending: Does the story need to explain all 503 kilometres to feel complete? Why or why not?

Optional classroom extensions

Evidence hearing (10–15 minutes): In small groups, assign roles: Juan Carlos, David, Elena and an interviewer. Each speaker must separate direct knowledge from assumption. End with a brief class verdict: which facts are established, and which remain uncertain?

Community decision (10–15 minutes): Groups imagine a proposal to develop the land above the Escabas springs. They identify potential benefits, risks and Mateo's wishes, then defend a recommendation. Make clear that the text does not specify a real development proposal.

Symbol map (5–10 minutes): Match the Focus, Key 12, the road and the water with possible meanings. Encourage more than one defensible interpretation, supported by the story.

Using the built-in activities efficiently

Comprehension: learner material A, pp. 42–43.

Vocabulary and language: sections B–E, pp. 44–48.

Speaking: discussion and retelling, pp. 49–50.

Writing: three alternative 150–200-word tasks, p. 51.

Answers: pp. 52–54.

Teacher reference sheet

A one-page checklist for preparing a class or sharing the book with colleagues.

Before the lesson

- Decide which chapters learners will read at home and which passages need closer classroom attention.
- Choose no more than two or three tasks from the existing learner section for each session.
- For B1+ learners, pre-teach only the vocabulary needed to follow the immediate plot.

During the lesson

- Use predictions, then invite learners to revise them as evidence changes.
- Ask students to justify interpretations with events from the text.
- Allow uncertainty: the narrative intentionally leaves aspects of the car's journey unexplained.

After reading

- Invite a short spoken or written response to Mateo's decision about the land.
- Offer a choice of the existing writing tasks; use peer review for clarity and supporting reasons.
- Collect feedback on pacing, challenge and engagement to inform future class use.

Essential reference points

Chapters: 1 The Empty Space; 2 Every Summer; 3 503; 4 The Road Again; 5 David; 6 Key 12; 7 What David Did; 8 The Road to Cañamares.

Core characters: Juan Carlos (owner of the Focus); Elena (his wife); Mateo (his late friend); David (Mateo's nephew); Inspector Gómez (police officer).

Core themes: memory and friendship; trust and responsibility; greed and inheritance; protection of place and water; uncertainty and acceptance.

About this guide

Prepared as a supplementary teacher resource for The Road to Cañamares by Marshall Appoh, Everyday English Readers. It refers to the supplied 56-page manuscript edition, with story pagination 1–41 and learner materials 42–54. It does not replace the book's existing activities or answer key.

Beyond the story

Become a literary critic • Optional post-reading activity

Invite learners to give personal, evidence-based responses. These questions have no single correct answer: the aim is to express and justify an interpretation.

1. What did you like most about The Road to Cañamares?

Think about the characters, setting, mystery, dialogue or ending. Give reasons and refer to a moment in the story.

2. What did you not like about The Road to Cañamares?

Was anything unconvincing, confusing, disappointing or less interesting? Explain your opinion respectfully.

3. What would you have done differently if you were the author?

Would you change a character, add a scene, develop the mystery differently or write another ending? Explain why.

Teacher guidance

B1+ support:

Allow pairs to discuss ideas first. Offer starters: “I liked... because...”, “I was surprised when...”, “If I were the author, I would...”

B2 extension:

Ask students to refer to specific scenes, respond to a classmate’s criticism and consider how a proposed change might affect the themes.

Suggested format:

Use as a 10–15-minute discussion or a short individual review. Students may choose one question for a longer written response.