The story opens at the moment the movie Casablanca closes. Rick Blaine, an American café owner, has just seen the woman he loves, Ilsa Lund, walk away from him, for the second time. He has given her and her Czech husband, Victor Lazlo, the false papers they need to get out of Casablanca. They are flying back to Europe to fight in the Resistance movement. Rick has just shot a Gestapo officer who tried to stop them.

Rick and his friend Louis Renault, French Chief of Police, leave Morocco together. Sam, the pianist from Rick’s bar, drives them to the airport and they all fly to London. They meet up with Victor and Ilsa and join their plan to murder Reinhard Heydrich, Hitler’s top man in Prague. Ilsa leaves for Prague first. She pretends to be a pro-Nazi Russian and joins Heydrich’s staff. She is a very beautiful and Heydrich falls for her. The others arrive in Prague at her signal. They plan to blow up Heydrich as he drives over the Charles Bridge into Prague. The problem is, when Heydrich arrives at the bridge, Ilsa is in the car beside him.

Meanwhile, we also learn about Rick’s life before he came to Casablanca. He grew up during the Prohibition years, when selling alcohol was illegal in America. Powerful gangsters ruled New York at this time, bringing alcohol in from outside the country and supplying it to clubs. The young Rick is given a job by one of these gangsters, Solly Horowitz. Solly likes Rick and makes him manager of the Tootsie-Wootsie, a gambling and drinking club. But trouble breaks out between rival gangsters. Rick’s boss is killed. Rick has to get away fast. He and Sam, his pianist from the Tootsie-Wootsie, escape to Europe.

As Time Goes By is the story of the events that take place before and after the 2 days and 3 nights of the movie Casablanca. The author, Michael Walsh, uses pieces of information from the movie and from the original 1940 play on which the movie was based, to reconstruct the story of Rick’s life in America before he came to Morocco and to continue the story of Rick, Ilsa, and Victor.

Casablanca is a classic American movie and one of the most popular of all time. It was made in black and white in only 59 days in 1942, starring Humphrey Bogart as Rick and Ingrid Bergman as Ilsa. Parts of the script were typed overnight and delivered to the film set ready for shooting the next morning. The actors didn’t know what the ending would be until the very last moment. The movie was first shown in November 1942, two weeks after the Allied forces (America, Britain, France) landed in Casablanca. It won 3 Oscars in 1944 including Best Director for Michael Curtiz and Best Picture.

The movie continues to be popular today. The mix of top actors, an exciting plot, a dramatic and unpredictable ending, witty dialogue, romance and a memorable song makes Casablanca a classic.

The book is set in two time periods: America during Prohibition and Europe during the Second World War. The chapters alternate between the two separate parts of the story throughout the book.

Prohibition in America lasted from 1920 to 1933, about the period that Rick was a young man. It was illegal during this time to make, sell, or transport alcohol. However, the law did not stop people drinking. In New York before Prohibition, there were 15,000 legal bars. By the end of Prohibition there were 30,000 illegal bars. And the law encouraged gangsters, providing them with a perfect business for making illegal money. The author sets Rick in the heart of gangster life in New York. Rick runs a nightclub, the Tootsie-Wootsie, to supply alcohol. Rick works for Solly Horowitz, who is based on a real life gangster boss called Dutch Schultz. Dutch was known as the “beer baron of the Bronx” and was assassinated in New York in 1935, about the time that Rick disappears from New York and goes to Europe.

The gangsters live outside the law, maintaining their power with murder and violence and peace treaties between themselves.

The wartime story begins on the day the Japanese bombed American ships at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii—December 7, 1941— an action that brought America into the war. France is occupied by the Nazis apart from one area — Vichy — where pro-Nazi French government, led by Marshal Petain. The Vichy government also controls areas of north Africa, including Casablanca, and it is the Vichy government that Louis Renault works for as Chief of Police at the beginning of the story. Czechoslovakia is occupied by the Nazis. Victor Lazlo is a member of the Czech Resistance, Czech nationals who work secretly against the German occupiers. They organize their campaign against the Nazis from London. So Victor and Ilsa fly on from Portugal to London to join their colleagues there. The action revolves around the assassination of Hitler’s top man in Czechoslovakia, Reinhard Heydrich. This was the main achievement of the Czech Resistance during the war, and it had terrible consequences for the Czech people, especially the Jews. The author changes some of the details of the assassination, but it is largely true.

There are references to other wars that Rick has fought in— he fought against Franco in the Spanish Civil War (1936-9) and against Mussolini in his invasion of Ethiopia, both fascist dictators.

The story contrasts two men: Rick and Victor, rivals for Ilsa’s love. She loves them both. She is married to Victor, but the reader knows that she would be happier with Rick. Rick is a man alone, a man with a bad past, who drinks and smokes heavily, who doesn’t seem to care about anything. But at the beginning of the story, he has made a great sacrifice, showing that he does care. He provides false papers for Victor and Ilsa to escape together, and gives up Ilsa to Victor. Secretly he has a great passion both for Ilsa and for what he believes is right. He is prepared to give up his life in the fight against the Nazis, but he would not be prepared to let Ilsa die. Victor, by contrast, is a deeply serious man whose whole life is devoted to his country. He will always put the cause of Czech resistance before himself and his wife. His beliefs come first and he will watch his wife die if necessary.

It also contrasts two women: Lois and Ilsa— both are strong women but very different. Lois is the gangster’s daughter who loves the high life. She marries a wealthy lawyer for social status and wealth, rejecting Rick because he is a nobody. She realizes her mistake too late. She bravely confronts her 
As Time Goes By

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Penguin Readers Factsheets

level 4

Teacher's notes

The following teacher-led activities cover the same sections of text as the exercises at the back of the Reader—they also supplement these exercises. Further supplementary exercises, covering shorter sections of the book, can be found on the photocopiable Student’s Activities pages of this Factsheet. These are primarily for use with class readers, but can also be used by students working alone (with the exception of pair/groupwork questions).

Activities before reading the book

1. Students work in pairs. They choose one of the pictures in the book. They describe what is happening in their picture and predict what has just happened or is about to happen.

2. Discussion. Many people think Casablanca is a classic movie. What makes a classic movie? Ask for ideas and write them on the board—for example, exciting story, smart dialog, humor, good-looking actors, good photography. Get students to suggest an example movie for each idea. Ask the class to choose the most important and the least important feature.

Activities after reading a section

Chapters 1–3

Students work in pairs. Give each pair one of these characters: Ilsa, Lois, Louis, Rick, Sam, Sally, Tick-Tock, Victor. Students find or choose three adjectives to describe their character and three adjectives to describe their character’s appearance. Get pairs to tell the class their words and ask the class to comment.

Chapters 4–6

Students work in small groups. Give each group one of these places from the story: Number 42, Clareville Street, the Tootsie-Wootsie Club, Bradcastie Castle, Rector’s, the Charles Bridge. Groups look through the chapters and find out where the places are and why they are important in the story. They report back to the class.

Chapters 7–9

Divide the class into three groups. Each group divides into pairs. Give each group one of the three chapters in this section. Students try to summarize their chapter in one or two sentences. Students read their sentences aloud to the class.

Chapters 10–13

If your class like acting, they could choose and act out one of the fight scenes on pages 48–49 or page 51 or the bridge bombing on pages 61–65. Get students to cut down the dialog and the events to a minimum, and to make the main action as clear as possible.

If they don’t like acting, get them to choose one of the same scenes and write it as a short screenplay with instructions for the action and brief dialog. They can then read it aloud.

Activities after reading the book

1. Debate. Who is the better man—Rick or Victor? Ask students to vote. Make a note of the result. Divide the class in two. One half gets Rick, the other half gets Victor. Students prepare arguments in favor of their man. Have the debate and then get students to vote again. Compare the results with the first vote.

2. Discussion. How brave are you? Victor, Rick, Louis, and Ilsa all act very bravely in Prague. Ask students to talk about how brave they would be in the same situation—with the world at war.

Glossary

It will be useful for your students to know the following new words. They are practiced in the “Before Your Read” sections of exercises at the back of the book. (Definitions are based on those in the Longman Active Study Dictionary)

Chapters 1–3

arrest (v) when a police officer catches someone and takes them away because they have done, or may have done, something illegal

gamble (v) to try to win money on card games, horse races, etc.

gangster (n) a member of a group of violent criminals

gang (n) to talk and hold something firmly

major (adj) an officer of middle rank in the army

moment (n) a very short period of time

prefer (v) to like one thing/person more than another

resistance (n) secret army fighting against an enemy in control of its country

senator (n) member of a senate—the smaller of the two parts of government in the US

suspicious (adj) a feeling that you do not trust someone or something

visa (n) an official mark put on a passport to allow someone to enter or leave a country

whiskey (n) a strong, alcoholic drink made from grain

Chapters 4–6

champagne (n) expensive white wine with bubbles

execute (v) to kill someone especially as a punishment by law

honor (n) great respect

polish (n) to make something clean/shiny by rubbing it with a cloth

suspicious (adj) a feeling that you do not trust someone or something

Chapters 7–9

affair (n) a secret, sexual relationship between two people, when at least one of them is married to someone else

evil (adj) very cruel and causing harm

horrible (adj) something that is unpleasant

monster (n) someone who is extremely cruel and evil

parachute (n) protection when you jump from an airplane

rise (v) to go up, to get higher

treaty (n) a formal, written agreement between two or more countries

violin (n) a small, wooden, musical instrument with 4 strings

Chapters 10–13

corruption (n) dishonest or immoral behavior by politicians or people who work for the government

drug (adj) extremely large

traitor (n) someone who is not loyal to their country, friends, etc.

tunnel (n) a long hole that has been dug under the ground or through a mountain, for example for cars or trains to go through

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As Time Goes By

(b) Ilsa sees Rick's place from the air.
(c) She leaves a message for Rick at the Hotel Aviz.
(d) They are taken to a house in a quiet street.
(e) They arrive in Lisbon.
(f) They arrive in London.

2 Complete these notes about Ilsa.

| Name: ____________________________ |
| Nationality: ______________________ |
| University: _______________________ |
| Subject studied: __________________ |
| Married: __________________________ |

CHAPTERS 4–6
Chapter 4
1 Answer these questions.
   (a) What three things does Sam hate about London?
   (b) Who is "Der Henker"?
   (c) When Rick and Sam get back to their room from the British Library, what has happened?
   (d) Why is Louis suspicious of Victor?
   (e) Why aren't the British planning to kill Hitler?
   (f) Major Miles talks about Heydrich's weaknesses. What are they?
   (g) What does Rick think the Germans will do if the Resistance kill Heydrich?
   (h) Ilsa is going to Prague to be a secretary for Heydrich. How do you think Rick feels?

2 Look at the picture on page 20. Who are the three men around the table?

Chapter 5
1 Are these sentences right or wrong?
   (a) Solly thinks Rick would be a bad husband for his daughter.
   (b) Robert Meredith has a good education but he comes from a poor family.
   (c) O'Hanlon warns Rick to be brave and always take bullets for his boss.
   (d) Lois wants to marry Rick but she can't.
   (e) O'Hanlon sends two men to shoot Solly in Rick's office.

2 Work with a partner. Look at the description of Rick's work on page 28. One of you is Rick. The other is a young gangster. Rick gives the young man advice on how to run a club like the Tootsie-Wootsie.

Chapter 6
1 Who ...?
   (a) doesn't care about his own life?
   (b) needs to do something brave?
   (c) hates people who are late?
Student’s activities

(d) will wait at the end of the bridge with guns?
(e) will step out in front of Heydrich’s car on the bridge?
(f) is going to tell them when to begin the operation to kill Heydrich?
(g) isn’t going with Rick to Prague?

2 How do you think Ilsa gets messages out of Prague to London? Talk to a partner.

CHAPTERS 7–9

Chapter 7

1 What or who do the underlined words mean in these sentences?
(a) “I hate her,” thought Frau Hentgen.
(b) “We are so happy you are working with us against the Communists in your country.”
(c) “I don’t understand what the second one means,” said the girl who worked in the house.
(d) He was tall and handsome in his uniform and he reminded her of someone.
(e) “Soon I’ll take this route every morning.”
(f) “We must spread salt on the earth so that they never rise again.”

2 If Heydrich finds out that Fraulein Toumanova is working for the Czech Resistance, what do you think he will do to her?

Chapter 8

Answer these questions.
(a) O’Haraion says that the two dead men came to talk business with Solly. Is that true?
(b) Solly says that Rick will have everything when Solly dies ... except for one thing. What is that one thing?
(c) Why does Tick-Tock smile when he hears that Lois is marrying Meredith?
(d) Meredith says to Solly, “It’s a pleasure doing business with you.” What does this tell you about his feelings for Lois?
(e) Three years later, why doesn’t Lois love Meredith?
(f) O’Haraion tells Rick that one of Solly’s men is working for Salucci. Who is he talking about?

Chapter 9

Make sentences.
(a) Rick is in Czechoslovakia
(b) Victor hates Heydrich
(c) The Czech Resistance wants to stop the operation
(d) Rick is angry
(e) Victor can’t go to Prague
(f) Rick lies to Ilsa
(i) because he killed his father.
(ii) because people will recognize him.
(iii) because he thinks the plan is wrong.
(iv) because Heydrich wants to make love to Ilsa.
(v) because he loves Ilsa.
(vi) because they are afraid of how many Czechs will die.

CHAPTERS 10–13

Chapter 10

1 Put these events in the order they happen.
(a) Lois tells Meredith what she really thinks of him.
(b) Meredith shoots Lois.
(c) Meredith warns Rick that Tick-Tock may not be loyal to Solly.
(d) Rick drives to Salucci’s house in Harlem.
(e) Rick drives to Solly’s house but Solly isn’t there.
(f) Rick shoots Meredith.
(g) Rick shoots Tick-Tock, half a second too late.
(h) Rick takes Solly’s money and puts it in a suitcase.
(i) Sam drives Rick to Boston and they buy tickets for France.
(j) She calls him “nothing.”
(k) Tick-Tock shoots Solly.

2 O’Haraion gave Rick false documents about Meredith and Salucci. Why do you think he did this? Talk to a partner.

Chapter 11

1 Who says this? Who to?
(a) “Walls have ears in this city.”
(b) “Did you go to bed with him?”
(c) “There is nothing to fear.”
(d) “Someone in your office is a traitor.”
(e) “I’m trying to save your life.”

2 The operation will take place tomorrow. Who do you think will still be alive at the end of the day? Rick, Louis, Heydrich, Victor, Ilsa, Jan, Josef? Talk to a partner. Write down your ideas. Compare them with the rest of the class.

3 Rick tells Ilsa to tell Victor about the plan to kill him on the Charles Bridge. Then he will go by a different route. What does she actually tell him?

Chapter 12

1 Find the times of these events in the chapter and write them in.
(a) Ilsa wakes up.
(b) The time that Heydrich usually leaves.
(c) Rick takes his position on the bridge and sees Victor with Louis.

2 Answer these questions.
(a) Why does Rick run toward the car shouting, “No!”?
(b) When Heydrich realizes what is happening, who does he first point his gun at?
(c) Who shoots Heydrich’s driver and guard?
(d) Who dies in the explosion?

Chapter 13

Talk to a partner about these questions.
(a) What do you think of the ending? Would you prefer a different ending?
(b) Which story did you prefer—New York in the 1930s or Prague in the 1940s? Say why.

Activities after reading the book

1 What kind of life will Rick and Ilsa have together in Casablanca? Write down some ideas.

2 Imagine that Rick is killed and not Victor. What would Ilsa’s life with Victor be like?

3 Describe an evening at the Tootsie-Wootsie club.