

Respected relative



Robert Louis Stevenson was a poet (see 'Keepsake Mill' on page 24) and author of the famous novels *Treasure Island* and *Kidnapped* (which feature in **Key Stage 2 Comprehension Books 2 and 4**). He wrote the letter below in April 1866, when he was aged 15½.

2 SULLYARDE TERRACE,
TORQUAY,

THURSDAY

RESPECTED PATERNAL RELATIVE,

5 I write to make a request of the most moderate nature. Every year I have cost you an enormous – nay, elephantine – sum of money for medication and physician's fees, and the most expensive time of the twelve months was March.

But this year the biting oriental blasts, the howling tempests, and the general ailments of the human race have been successfully braved by yours truly.

10 Does not this deserve remuneration?

I appeal to your charity, I appeal to your generosity, I appeal to your justice, I appeal to your accounts, I appeal, in fine, to your purse.

15 My sense of generosity forbids the receipt of more – my sense of justice forbids the receipt of less than half-a-crown. Greetings from, Sir, your most affectionate and needy son,

R. STEVENSON

Glossary

ailments illnesses, diseases

in fine to put it briefly, to sum up

oriental blasts very strong winds from the east

tempests violent storms

1 In a more formal letter, what **two** items at the top of the letter would you expect to see written out in full, rather than in shortened form?

2 marks

2 Who is Robert writing to?

1 mark

3 'Physician' (line 7) is another word for _____.

1 mark

4 How soon after Robert's most expensive month did he write this letter?

1 mark

5 Which **two** adjectives meaning 'very large' describe the amount of money spent on maintaining Robert's health in previous years?

2 marks

6 Which word means 'fairly modest' or 'reasonable'?

1 mark

7 What sort of weather has Robert experienced in Torquay?

1 mark

8 The word 'remuneration' means reward by means of (ring **one**):

kindness a holiday a rest money understanding.

1 mark

9 What does Robert hope to achieve by leaving his appeal to the 'purse' of his 'respected paternal relative' until the end of the letter?

1 mark

10 What does Robert say to explain that he does not want to be greedy but, equally, he wants fair treatment?

1 mark