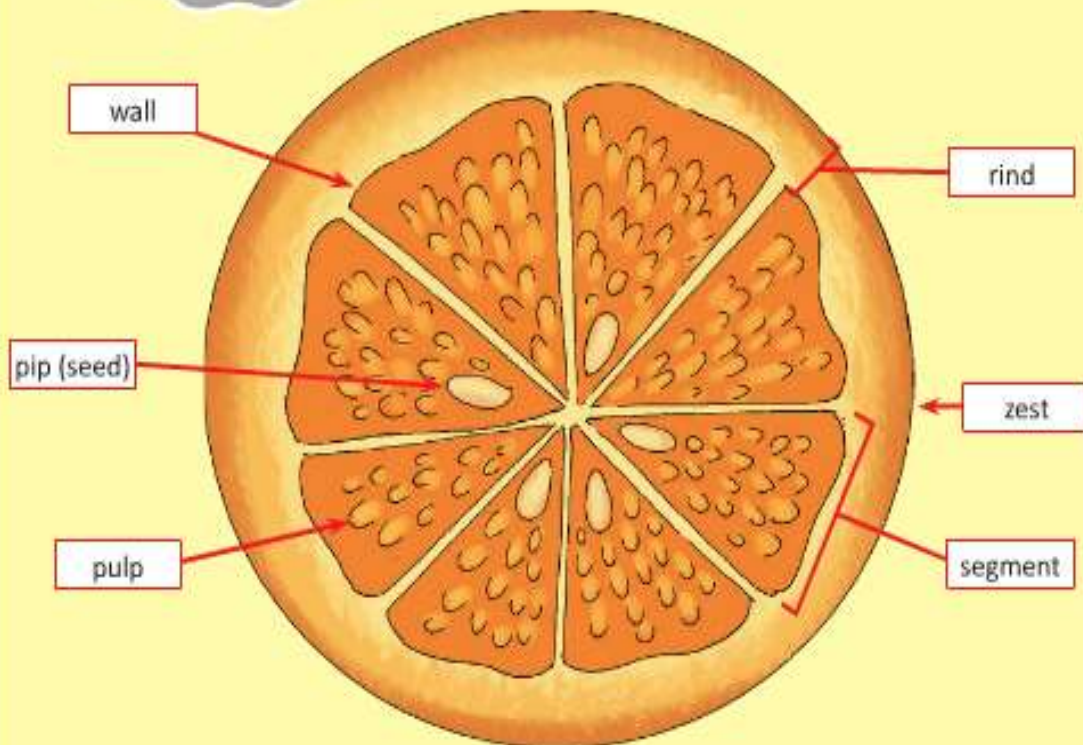


Seventeen Oranges



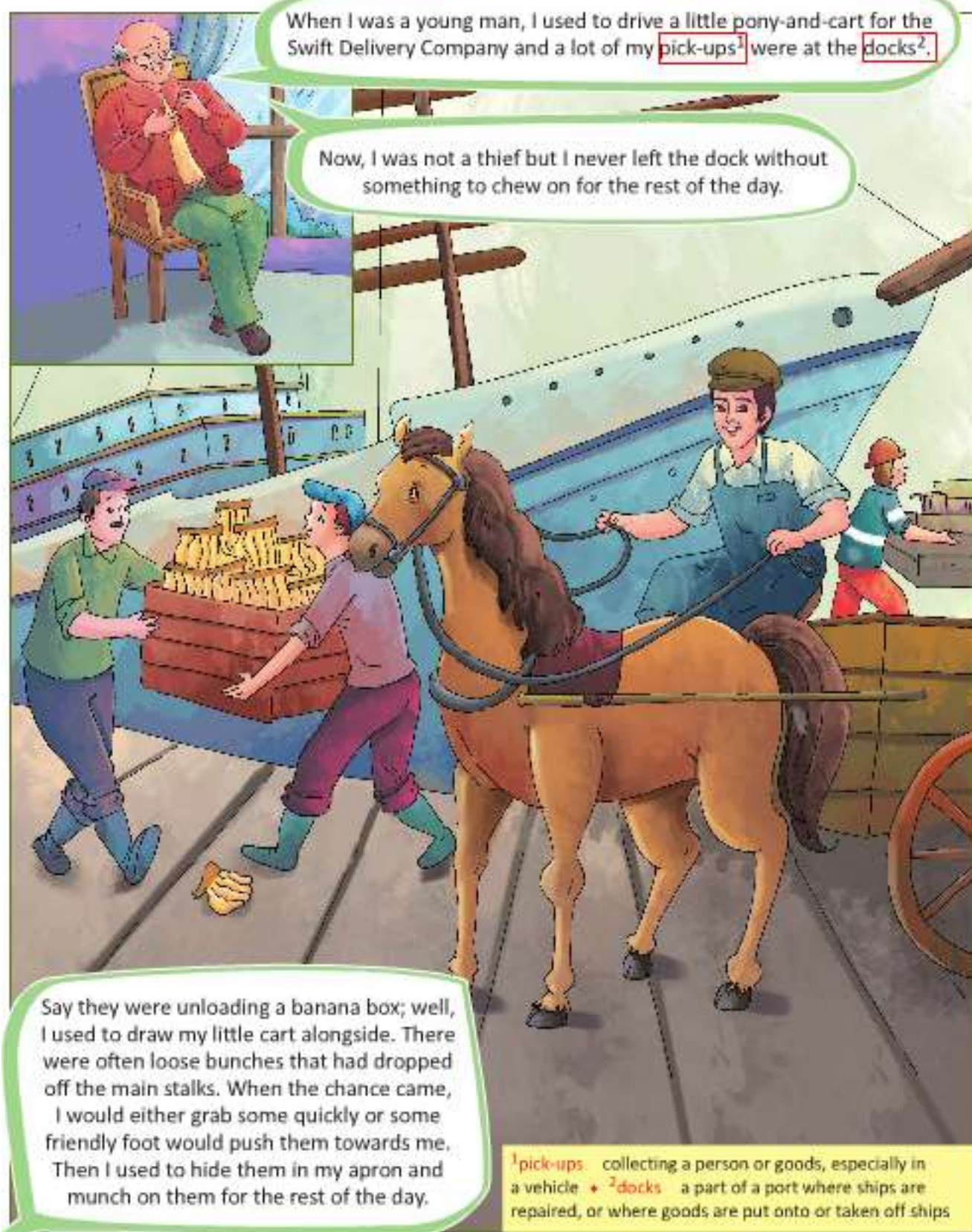
Here is a picture of an orange cut in the middle. The names of the different parts of an orange are given. Do you know these terms? Have you seen all these parts in a real orange?

Do a bit of Math. If there are ten segments in one orange and three seeds in a segment, how many segments and seeds do you think seventeen oranges would have? Discuss with your partner.



Each segment is covered by pith. The white tissue that covers each segment is called pith.

Can you eat seventeen oranges all together? How long would that take you? Here is the story of a young boy who loved oranges until one day he had one too many.



When I was a young man, I used to drive a little pony-and-cart for the Swift Delivery Company and a lot of my ¹pick-ups were at the ²docks.

Now, I was not a thief but I never left the dock without something to chew on for the rest of the day.

Say they were unloading a banana box; well, I used to draw my little cart alongside. There were often loose bunches that had dropped off the main stalks. When the chance came, I would either grab some quickly or some friendly foot would push them towards me. Then I used to hide them in my apron and munch on them for the rest of the day.

¹pick-ups: collecting a person or goods, especially in a vehicle + ²docks: a part of a port where ships are repaired, or where goods are put onto or taken off ships



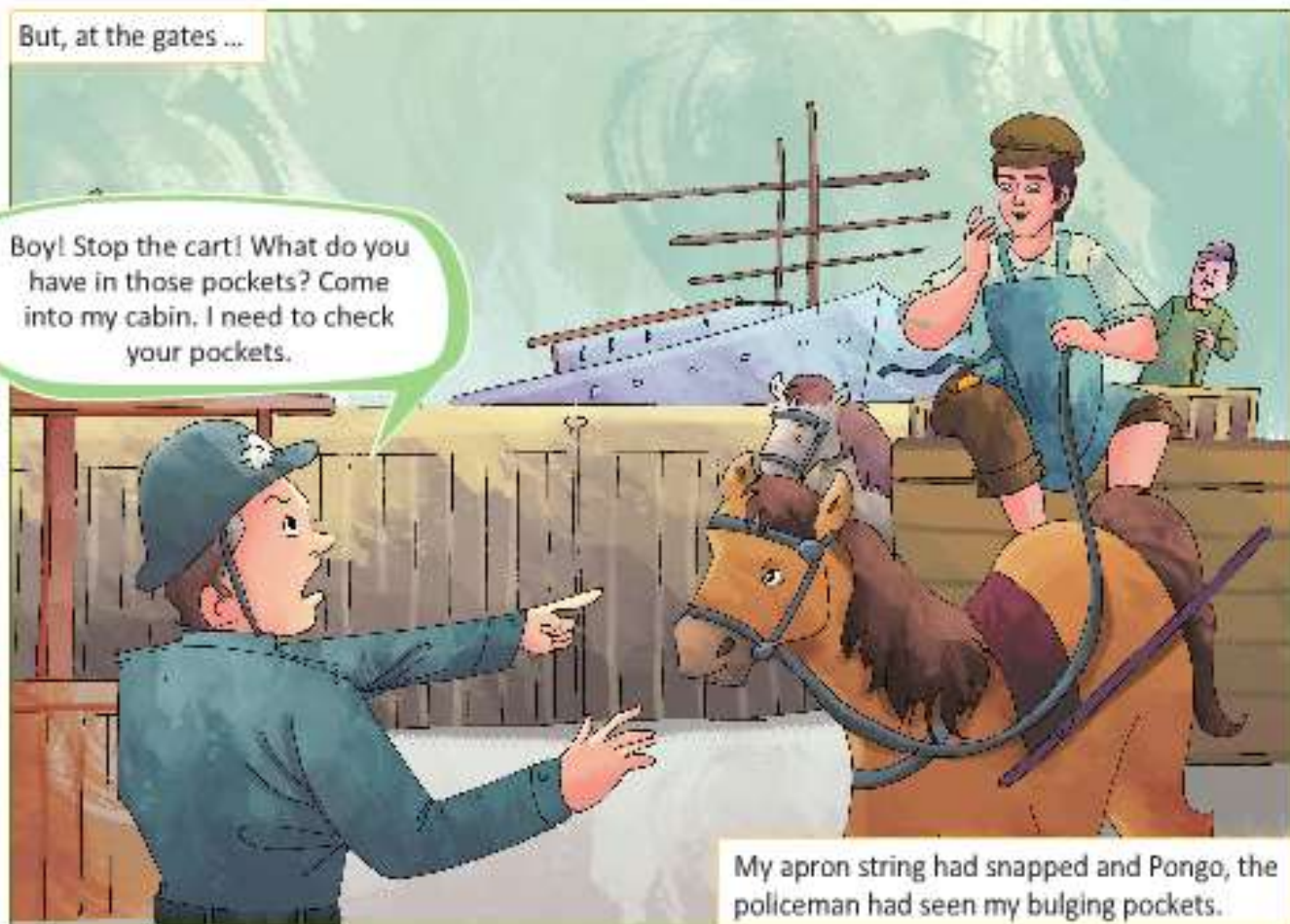
My apron was a special one. I had made it myself. It was very big and it could hide anything that I carried in the pockets of my trousers.

Back then, I was very fond of oranges. I could suck one after another for a whole day. So one day, when I came across some juicy oranges, I filled my pockets.



But, at the gates ...

Boy! Stop the cart! What do you have in those pockets? Come into my cabin. I need to check your pockets.



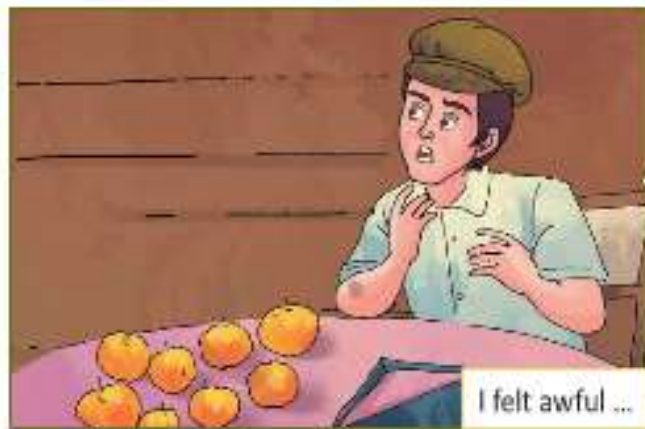
My apron string had snapped and Pongo, the policeman had seen my bulging pockets.

I was frightened but I forced myself to keep my mouth shut. I had read many detective novels. I knew that anything I said would be held against me.

Fifteen ... sixteen ... SEVENTEEN oranges! Did you steal these? I know you have stolen these. What do you have to say for yourself?



Very well then, I'll go off and bring a colleague as a witness against you.



I felt awful ...

What shall I do now? I'll lose the job.

I'll go to prison!

What will Mother say?

Pongo will be here soon. There is no escape.

What shall I do?
What shall I do?





Suddenly a voice in my head said ...



I snatched an orange and peeled it.



I took out my pen knife, slashed the oranges into
chunks and gulped them as fast as I could.



Chomp!
Chomp!



I still had three left when I heard them come.



I caught him with
17 oranges in his
pocket!



Where are they?



I can smell them!



What did he do to them? Seventeen
oranges! Big ones at that!

Sniff!
Sniff!



I kept my lips shut tight. He had to let me go because there was no evidence against me.

But it was days and days before I could stand still or think clearly. Those seventeen oranges—peels, pips and all—kept working away in my inside something shocking.



(adapted)



Bill Naughton

Sequence of the story Seventeen Oranges

