

## THREE MEN IN A BOAT by Jerome K. Jerome

*From Chapter Fifteen*

Punting is not as easy as it looks. It takes long practice before you can handle a punt, without getting the water all up your sleeve.

One young man I knew had a very sad accident the first time we went punting. It started well for him. Soon he was walking up and down the punt, working his pole in a fine style.

Up he marched to the head of the punt, where he planted his pole. Then he ran along right to the other end.

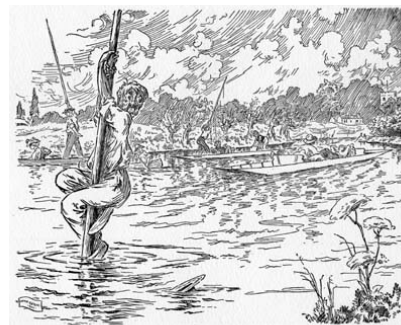
Unfortunately, his confidence undid him. While looking around to enjoy the **scenery**, he took one step too many. He walked off the punt altogether.

The pole was stuck in the mud. He was left clinging to it while the punt drifted away.

A rude boy on the bank immediately called out to his chum. "Look over there! A real monkey on stick!"

We had not brought a spare paddle so I could not go to his assistance. I could only sit and look at him. I shall never forget his expression as the pole slowly **sank** with him down into the water. Then he **scrambled** out, sad and wet.

I confess I was laughing about it for some time. Then I realised that I had very little to laugh about. Now I was alone in a punt without a pole. The boat was **drifting** helplessly downstream, possibly towards a **weir**.



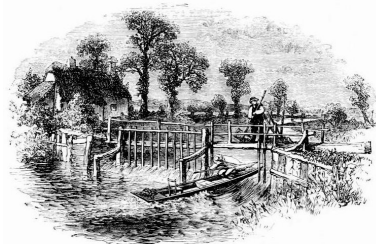
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I drifted on for about a quarter of a mile. Then I saw a fishing punt, moored in midstream. In it sat two old fishermen. They saw me coming towards them and called out.

"What are you doing? You're going to crash into us."

"I can't steer it," I cried. "I don't have a pole"

Luckily, they caught me and lent me a pole. The weir was just fifty yard below.



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*From Chapter Fifteen of 'Three Men in a Boat' by Jerome K. Jerome (1889).*

Adapted by [Kieran McGovern](#). Listen to a reading [here](#)



## Glossary

**punt** - a special boat for shallow rivers.

**pole** - you steer a punt with a special **pole** or paddle

**scenery** - what you can see around you.

**scrambled** - move quickly/with urgency

**stuck** - unable to move

**weir** – change in the height of the river level.

## Vocabulary

*Complete the passage with the words below.*

A punt is a special ----- you can use on a river. You use a long ---- to steer a punt - but this takes some ---. If a pole ---- in the -----, it could pull you into the -----r.

**Pole \*water \* sticks \* boat \* practice \* mud**

## Quick Check: True or false?

1. Punting is easy.
2. You need practice to control a punt well.
3. The 'young man' found punting difficult from the start.
4. The 'young man' did not have the confidence to handle the punt.
5. He tripped over his punt.

## Comprehension (B2)

6. What happened to the pole?
7. What did the narrator not have to help the young man?
8. Why did the narrator stop laughing?
9. Why was the punt drifting?
10. Who helped the narrator get control of the punt.

## Writing

1. Write a short 'tip sheet' about punting. Give a minimum of three tips (50-100 words)
2. Describe what you can see in this image. You could mention
  - The couple on the other bank
  - What the man is wearing
  - The scenery
  - What has happened to the pole.
  - What is happening to the man/his hat.

