# THE CHALLENGE

## CHAPTER 1 AN EXCITING DAY

Helen Smith walked to school on the first day of the new school year and couldn't decide how she felt. She was excited about seeing her two best friends after the summer holiday, but she didn't want to think about an entire year of homework and tests.

Most of her friends didn't **go on holiday** for more than two weeks in the summer. The rest of the time they went to the **Leisure Centre** in their small town to play tennis and swim, or they went to the cinema at the shopping centre. But Lisa Seymour and Bobby Leader, her best friends, left town for the entire summer holiday. Bobby's father was American, so Bobby always went to his grandparents' house in California. Lisa's mother worked in a **travel agency**. The summer was her busiest time, so she always sent Lisa to stay with her aunt and uncle on their remote farm in Scotland.

Helen was impatient to see her friends again. "I'm not excited about starting the school year," she thought, "but going to the swimming pool every day for six weeks is boring. Now I'll be with my friends again."

Lisa was waiting for her at the school entrance. "Hi!" they both shouted happily.

"You look fantastic!" Helen exclaimed.

"You too. You're so brown!" said Lisa, smiling, and they put their arms together to compare **suntans**.

"Don't you know that it's dangerous to be in the sun for a long time?" said a voice behind them. It was Bobby, wearing a Los Angeles Lakers T-shirt.

"You're only wearing that T-shirt so that everybody knows you were on holiday in America," Helen said. "That isn't **cool**."





Lisa laughed and Bobby's face became red. "OK, so I'm not cool, but I'll tell you this," he said. "Nobody in America wants a suntan any more." The girls looked at each other and smiled.

"Are we going to hear 'in America this,' and 'in America that' all year?" Helen asked. "Because I can tell you now, I'm not interested."

"So you don't want to hear about my **driving licence**?" Bobby said.

"Your what?" Helen asked.

"Don't be **ridiculous**," said Lisa, but Bobby showed them a plastic card with his photograph in one corner.

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"Maybe it's from Disneyland!" Helen said. The two girls looked at the card carefully. Across the top, it said, 'US Driving Licence'. It also had Bobby's full name, Robert David Leader,