

Unit
16

Bus Route

When the bus is full
it creeps uphill
like an old man climbing
the stairs to bed.

Down the other side
it rumbles into town
barging through the traffic,
an angry bully.

Out in the country
the bus is empty
rattling through the quiet lanes
humming softly.

But it can never stay;
it has to push and shove,
bruise and scrape its skin
in the rough and tumble town.

Surging crowds of people
swarm and clamber on it,
fill it to the top
at the bottom of the hill.

David Harmer



Do you remember?

Copy these sentences. Choose the correct word to fill each gap.

1. The bus starts at the _____ of the hill. (top, bottom)
2. First it is going into the _____ (town, country)
3. In town the bus has to barge through the _____ (people, traffic)

4. When it goes into the country, the bus is _____ (full, empty)
5. The bus goes into the country to bring more _____ into town. (goods, people)

More to think about

1. Write a sentence to answer each question.
 - a) Does the bus route start in the town or in the country?
 - b) What lies between the country and the town?
 - c) Does the poem suggest whether it is a new or an old bus? Explain your answer.
2. How does the poet describe each of these things? Write a sentence for each one.
 - a) How the bus, full of passengers, goes up the hill.
 - b) What the bus reminds us of as it forces its way through the traffic.
 - c) How the bus seems happier to be out in the country again.
 - d) What happens to the bus as it squeezes through tight spaces.
 - e) How the passengers get onto the bus.

Now try these

1. Write ...
 - a) something the conductor might have said when people were pushing and shoving to get onto the bus.
 - b) something your mum, loaded with shopping, might have said when it started to rain as she was waiting for the bus, which was late.
 - c) something you might have said when, one day, the bus was stuck in a snowdrift as you were on your way to school.
2. Sometimes machines can seem almost as though they are human, like Thomas the Tank Engine. Write sentences to answer these questions.
 - a) Do you think the poet thought this bus was like a person? Why?
 - b) Do you have a machine, like a favourite toy or a bike, that seems to you to have a personality? Write about it.