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Hello!



It's official – summer 2 is here! The final half-term of the year typically brings with it raised spirits (and a little bit of chaos). SATs are over, the weather is improving, and the days of wet play and winter blues are (hopefully) distant memories.

However, alongside the joy of sports days and end-of-year trips, teachers across the country are tasked with not losing sight of learning objectives and setting pupils up for their next year of schooling. Hopefully, you're looking forward to the final stretch and a well-deserved break. But if you're already on the wrong side of the popular memes showing 'Teaching in September vs in June' – that is, more than a little frazzled – we've got your back.

And it's not just teachers that can get a little discombobulated at this time of year; you might be noticing your pupils are a tad distracted, too. If you're struggling with keeping their attention during the hot days, try out some of Tom Sherrington's tips on engaging passive learners (p11). He lists eight ideas, from removing opt-outs to scaffolding answers, which can help you hook in even the most fervent daydreamers.

If you're keen to take your learning outside and reap the benefits of rain-free days, Emily Hunt's step-by-step instructions for a scientific flower dissection (p19) could be right up your street. Speaking of outdoor work, as part of our humanities special this issue, Julia Mackintosh makes a case for the importance of fieldwork in primary geography, and sets out how you can make it work in practice, all the way from EYFS through to Year 6 (p66).

Whatever you're planning for the next few weeks, I hope it all goes smoothly. Thanks for taking this ride with us for another year, and if you have any comments or ideas for things you'd like to see in the future, do feel free to get in touch on Twitter or via email. Wishing you a restful summer – see you in September!

Charley

Charley Rogers, editor
 @TeachPrimaryEd1

*Don't miss our
 next issue, on sale
 1st September*

POWERED BY...



BEN LEVINSON, OBE
 on why Rishi Sunak's
 'maths to 18' idea is a noble
 one, but we really need to
 sort out primary, first

*"If children don't have core
 maths skills by 11, something
 has gone seriously wrong."*

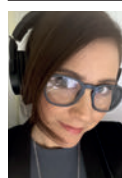
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DAN SMITH
 shares how he uses one free
 website to improve vocab
 lessons, and drastically
 reduce workload

*"I found a time-saving tool,
 and reassurance that the
 fundamentals of literacy work."*

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LOUISA SMITH
 on common mistakes
 made in RE, and how you
 can learn from them to
 decolonise your curriculum

*"If we're lacking the right
 knowledge or tools, how can we
 decolonise the RE curriculum?"*

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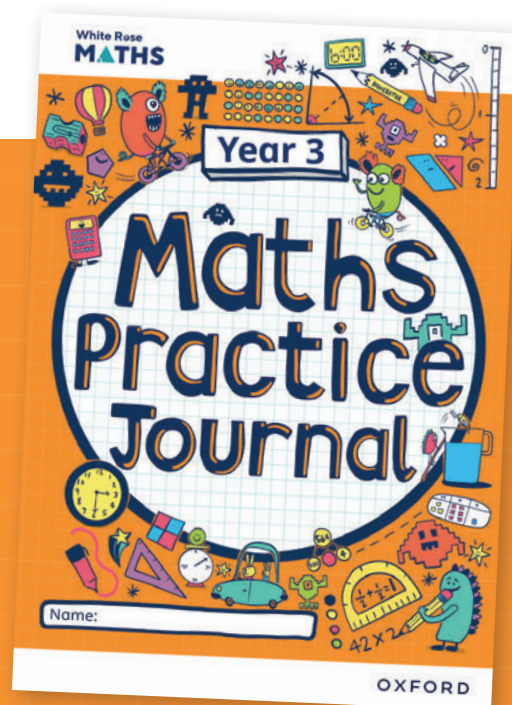


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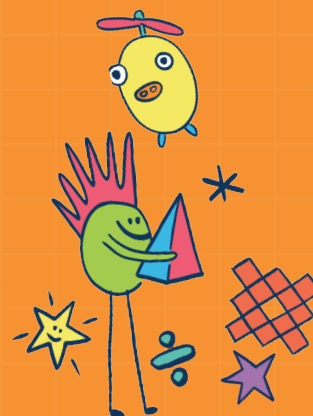
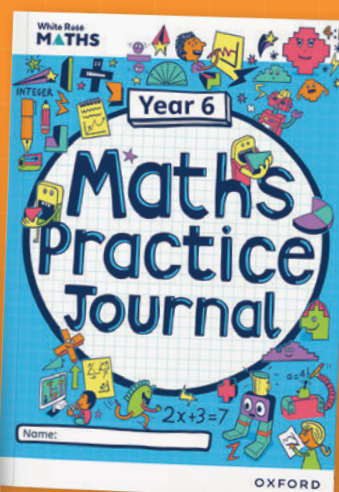
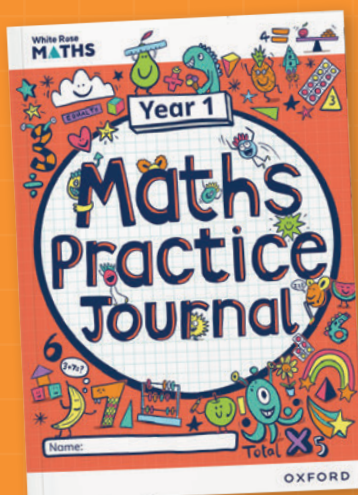
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We're all ears!

We want to make sure our magazine is a brilliant resource for teachers and are always striving to improve. We love hearing from real teachers about what they liked and what they would change. Got feedback about this issue? Contact us via the details in the yellow box below – we'd love to hear from you!

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We want to hear from you!

Get in touch with your rants, comments, photos and ideas.



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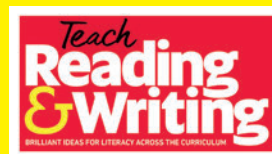
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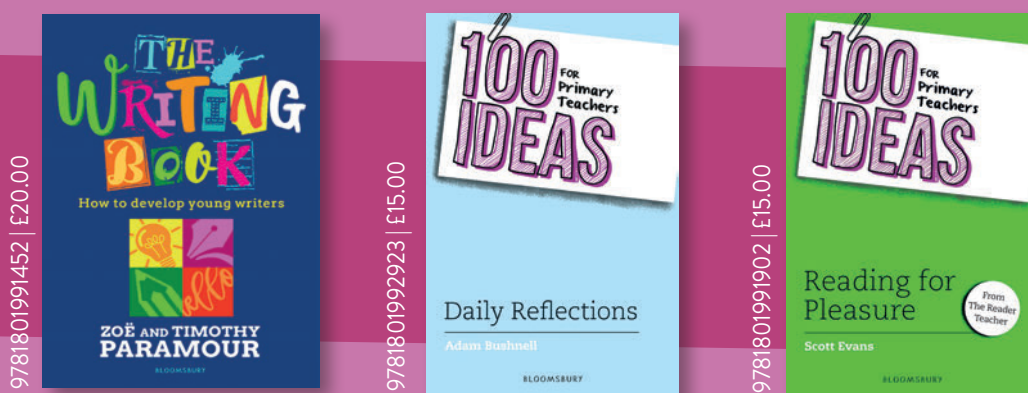
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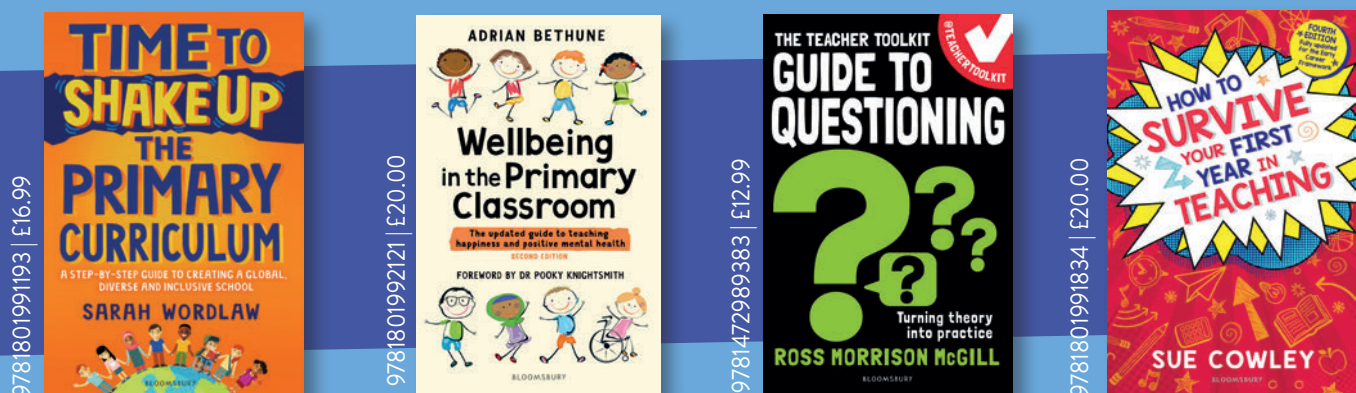


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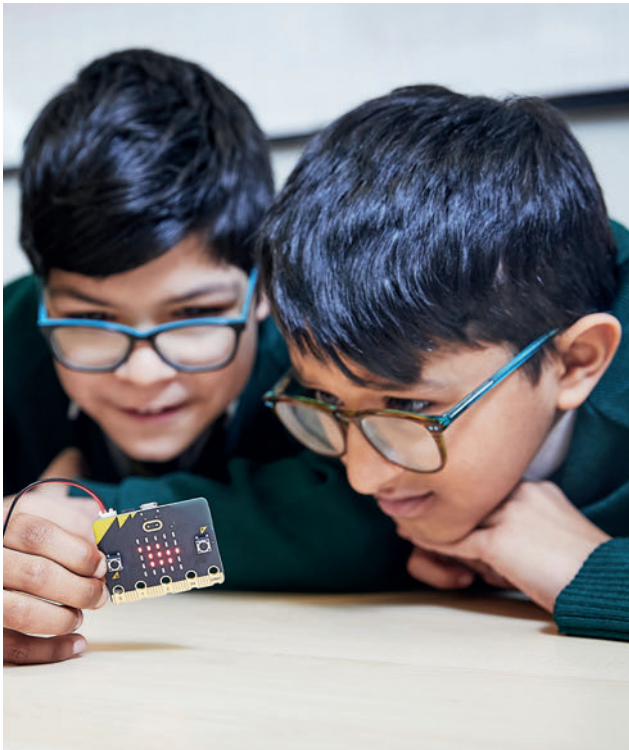


JULY 2023

SEPT 2023

Breaktime

News | Interviews | Ideas | Resources | Research



Free micro:bits!

Looking for some computing equipment but don't have any budget? You're in luck! BBC Education is teaming up with the Micro:bit Educational Foundation (MEF) and Nominet to donate 700,000 free micro:bits – plus education resources and teacher training – to primary schools across the UK, in a bid to digitally upskill the next generation. The initiative, titled 'BBC micro:bit – the next gen', has been launched in light of response to research from MEF which suggests that 65 per cent of primary school children will end up working in jobs that do not exist today. Nick Gibb, Minister of State for Schools, said: "The BBC's decision to roll out the programme to all primary schools will benefit millions of children and support teachers to offer them the best possible start in their digital education."

Register on the BBC micro:bit website today to receive a set of devices and a resource pack between September 2023 and March 2024: tinyurl.com/tp-MicroBit

3 INSTANT LESSONS... (You're welcome)



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→→→ TODAY'S **TOP** **RESOURCES**



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One for the money

BESA, the British Educational Suppliers Association, has released a new paper for school leaders with advice on how best to spend their ICT budget. The paper, supported by NAACE, highlights the challenges that school leaders face when it comes to implementing and using edtech in their schools. These challenges include a lack of training and support, a limited understanding of its potential benefits, and a lack of time to plan and implement edtech initiatives. To help school leaders make informed decisions about their school's edtech infrastructure, the report provides a number of leadership questions for consideration, including: what is the purpose of our edtech investment? How do we ensure that our infrastructure is robust and reliable? And how do we measure the impact of our edtech initiatives on pupil learning and achievement? Find the full paper at tinyurl.com/tp-BESAedtech



Poor housing fuels poor attendance

Education charity School-Home Support (SHS) has revealed that, according to their recent research, there has been a 73 per cent rise in children's concerns about where they live, compared to last year. Poor housing has a significant impact on school attendance for young people, and housing issues are now one of the top three presenting issues for both young people and their families. SHS CEO Jaine Stannard said: "Our data shows that the housing crisis is feeding the education crisis. The attainment gap is widening, and inadequate housing is accelerating it." Learn more about SHS' campaign calling on government to fund support for schools and families at tinyurl.com/tp-SHS



^{*Tes} **25%** of school staff don't think pupils feel safe at school

Look ahead / Book ahead



TAKE ONE PICTURE

The National Gallery's Take One Picture exhibition, featuring children's artwork from 40 UK primary schools is back, with free admission, from 13 July – 8 October 2023. Learn more at tinyurl.com/tp-OnePic

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Q & A



Photo © Charl Marais

Dr Zoe Williams, NHS GP and media medic, on the issues facing young girls today

What was primary school like for you?

I absolutely loved it. I remember being devastated when I left in my final year. My favourite things were singing in assembly, games and maths.

What do you think are the biggest struggles facing young girls these days?

I think that young girls have a lot to look forward to growing up. It can be exciting, but also challenging. On top of the body changes, emotional rollercoasters and shifting relationships that girls have always had to negotiate through puberty, there are new challenges. One of those is maintaining a sense of true self in a world of social media and filters. My book explains how we can use social media to our advantage if we know how to 'curate our feed' so that it works for us and not against. Confidence, respect and self-love are important values for girls aged 9-12 to adopt and maintain, so there are tips, tricks and practical activities throughout the book that are designed to empower and build these, as well as to approach the world around us with kindness and compassion.

How would you like teachers to use your book in the classroom?

My prescriptions feature throughout the book, which include activities to help girls be kinder to themselves, be more confident and foster a caring, respectful relationship with themselves, as well as others. Some involve interacting with another person, so you could model and practise them in the classroom.

You Grow Girl! The Complete No Worries Guide to Growing Up by Dr Zoe Williams, illustrated by Luna Valentine (£9.99, Wren and Rook), is out now.

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8 WAYS to engage passive learners

Avoid drama and get every pupil joining in with these simple approaches to classroom questions and answers

1 | KEEP IT LIGHT

Throughout this process, it's vital not to fall prey to any game-playing or drama-seeking. Keep it bright and breezy and make it clear that every individual student is as valid as any other and has responsibilities to themselves and the class. You're just not going to let them opt out; you're going to support them to participate in the learning process – because that's the deal.

2 | REMOVE OPT-OUTS

Design routines for tasks, questions and any practice activities so that they explicitly involve everyone. Avoid question phrases like "Who would like to...", and "Can anyone..." because this invites a volunteer and – by default – opting out. Make sure everyone in the class knows they are a potential target for questions. For example, a good show-me board technique communicates the firm expectation that when you ask a question, everyone needs to show an answer on their board. By insisting, pupils have to actively resist not to participate. Most passivity is not active resistance; it's more often a kind of casual lethargy.

3 | USE INCLUSIVE QUESTIONING

Make cold calling, think-pair-share, and show-me boards absolutely default, everyday occurrences. This way, every child knows they are expected to formulate and share answers one way or another. If cold calling feels hard at first, start with pair-share and show-me boards and then ask pupils to explain their answers.

4 | SCAFFOLD CHOICES

Pupils often opt out if they're unsure how to engage or if they feel overwhelmed by the options. For example, children often don't respond well to being asked "What would you like for tea?" They're paralysed by needing to generate a response. However, if you ask, "Would you like fish fingers or beans on toast?" they have a simple scaffolded choice to make. If a child is giving you the 'I don't know' fob-off, give them a simple choice: answer A or B? True or false? Increase or decrease? Then ask them to explain why they made that choice.



Tom Sherrington
is a headteacher,
author, and education
consultant.



@teacherhead



teacherhead.com

5 | PROVIDE ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE

Make sure you're asking questions fully rooted in the work you've been doing so pupils have every chance to answer well, building confidence. Passivity can be a habit borne out of a continual lack of understanding or a feeling that it's all beyond you... like watching *University Challenge*, where you don't really expect to know the answers. Turn that around – give seemingly passive students a way back in by making your questions highly consolidatory with a degree of repetitive reinforcement.

6 | MIX SHORT AND LONG TASKS

Some long tasks can make pupils drift; they perceive that they have ages left so don't commit to getting started. Conversely, if tasks are always short, it can feel that, given the teacher will explain it soon anyway, there's not much point making the effort. So, shake people out of habits. Set some punchier short tasks – quick repetitions that require energy.

7 | GIVE VALUE TO REHEARSAL

Often, passive students simply need ultra scaffolding to engage. A good example might be around using a knowledge organiser. Before you start quizzing, ask students for facts, definitions and quotes from memory – make sure it is simple for them to read where the information sits in the resources.

8 | MIX PAIR AND SOLO WORK

One more source of passivity lies in students piggy-backing on the work of others. To break habits here, make sure you structure tasks so that everyone always has to contribute – especially for anything they do in groups or pairs. It's important to make everyone think and be ready to participate. However, if you only ever do things one-on-one, this can be quite stressful. It's helpful to have some time in the safe space of a pair or small group to air thoughts without scrutiny. Blending these approaches is the key.

Focusing too heavily on parental engagement (or lack of it) in reading may be worsening the attainment gap...

Penny Slater

 @mrspennyslater  hertsforlearning.co.uk



I try to avoid tweeting when riled. Having witnessed time and again the implications of an ill-conceived or poorly worded tweet, I prefer to post with caution. But, several months ago, frustrated and ill-tempered, I ignored my own advice and threw caution to the wind. This is what I tweeted [sic]...

I'm not up for censoring language, but I'd happily ban the phrase: 'it's because parents don't read with them at home' (as a reason for underattainment of disadv pupils in reading)! It's irrelevant. The qu remains 'what can we do to raise attainment during the school day?'

Judging by the number of comments, I was not alone in this sentiment. Many leaders and teachers responded sharing their belief that this phrase could do with booking a one-way trip to Room 101!

To be crystal clear from the outset, I am not denying there is some truth to the statement. The tremendously difficult job of teaching children to read, and just as importantly, to enjoy reading, can be made a great deal easier when there is an adult at home ready and able to support, guide and enthuse. However, we must never consider a lack of home support as a deal-breaker to securing success. If we accept this as fact, we face a reality whereby all children who find themselves in less than advantageous circumstances are condemned to a life of poor educational outcomes, which is simply unacceptable.

It is the futility of the statement that bothers me most. Because, when it comes to correlating underachievement in reading with lack of home support, if we ever hope to reduce the attainment gap we need to accept the unpalatable truth that support is not forthcoming and move on!

Although we may not wish to admit it, the unspoken, and most likely subconscious, message we convey when we utter these words is: 'The problem here lies outside my control; until the problem 'out there' is fixed, there is



nothing I can do!' In saying so, we are effectively outsourcing the problem and, in turn, denying ourselves the opportunity to explore practices that could lead to improved outcomes for these pupils.

Thankfully, our understanding of how to support struggling readers has advanced considerably in the last decade or so. There is no shortage of easily accessible, low cost, evidence-informed guidance that we can access. With this comes the opportunity to turn the lens inwards and to focus on what lies within our control; the reflective and progressive advancement of our own pedagogy alongside developing a rock-steady understanding of effective, inclusive practices.

To return to my initial point of contention, undoubtably, having support from home brings tremendous benefit. As such, school leaders must continue the important job of engaging all parents in their children's learning. But we must acknowledge the challenge and limitations of achieving this aim. Engaging hard-to-reach parents is time-consuming and requires heavy investment of energy and resources

over a sustained period. It also requires the collective endeavour of many stakeholders. Change like this takes time and, regrettably for children at risk of falling behind, time is not on their side. In order to do right by them, we must accept an uncomfortable truth; that despite our very best efforts, some children won't receive that help, and those children should not be further disadvantaged as a result.

Put simply, a lack of home support must never be a reason for a child failing. Instead, where home support is absent, we should recognise this as an opportunity to harness the power we have. While those around us with the authority and reach to make a change at a societal level work hard to leverage the bigger social challenges that may prevent this engagement, we can take solace knowing that in our classrooms, we hold the power. When we acknowledge that, not only are we moving on, but we are empowering ourselves to make a difference. **TP**

Penny Slater is education development & partnership lead at HfL education.



"The course was delivered in such a captivating way and the library is beautiful and inspiring. Every talking point was meaningful and there wasn't a second wasted."

PARTICIPANT ON PHONICS IN
A RICH READING CURRICULUM

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Deep understanding

Another key part of reading for pleasure comes from pupils being able to think deeply about the text, and relate the story to their own experiences. Whole-class reading activities that facilitate conversations around a book's themes, motifs, plot, settings and character can pique pupils' interest in how a story develops. You can also encourage the children to share their own experiences, and relate them to the themes and ideas represented in the book. If they're able to connect with a story, whether that's through personal similarities with a character, recognising an event or theme that's occurred in their own lives, or identifying with a particular place or setting, pupils are much more likely to want to engage.

Choice

Finally, having a wide range of books to choose from is an essential element in learning to enjoy reading. Let children pick a book themselves, and provide them with the time to apply the deep understanding skills they've learned in class. We also need to make sure we have plenty of diverse books in the classroom. Using eBook libraries such as those offered by Primary Ebooks NOW means that pupils can read (or listen) to a large collection of books and comics at home on any device, and schools do not need to be concerned about whether the book will return, or have to keep buying new copies all the time. Of course, we need to ensure fair access, but according to Ofcom, nine in 10 children own their own mobile phone by the time they reach the age of 11, so providing access to these libraries and discussing the content that's there may encourage a few more pupils.

Essentially, the point is that the term 'reading for pleasure' can exert too much pressure on young children who genuinely do not enjoy books, whether that's because they find reading difficult, or they haven't found the right title for them, yet. What's important for us as teachers is to do our jobs and teach our pupils how to read with confidence, so should they decide to pick up a book on their own time, they'll be fully equipped to enjoy the experience. **TP**

Neil Almond is deputy head at a south London school.

 @Mr_AlmondED

 nutsaboutteaching.wordpress.com



WHY I HATE THE TERM 'READING FOR PLEASURE'

I want my class to enjoy books, but we need to find a phrase that's less damaging to the cause, says **Neil Almond**

Reading for pleasure has been a key concept in schools for a very long time.

As primary teachers, we all know how important it is for children to read in various areas of their lives. A National Reading Trust report from 2006 stated the vast wealth of benefits of reading outside of school, such as improved reading attainment and writing ability; better text comprehension and grammar; increased breadth of vocabulary; and greater self-confidence as a reader.

But I really don't like the term *reading for pleasure*. Here's why.

I think it's incredibly important to distinguish between *being able* to read, and *wanting* to. There are many children (and adults!) who are perfectly capable of reading when they need to, but simply choose not to do so during their own time. Demonising these decisions risks creating even more problems in developing reading skills, making children feel like they have to be reading at all hours of the day in order to get on in life.

Because of all the benefits it

produces, of course we'd all love our pupils to enjoy reading. As teachers, then, we should focus on getting children to be able to read, should the desire arise, rather than trying to force them to genuinely like it before they have the requisite skills. So how can we implement this in the classroom?

Decoding

One of the most important components of setting pupils up to engage in reading for pleasure is to make the decoding process enjoyable. It makes sense that children wouldn't choose to read for pleasure if they found decoding frustrating, and therefore couldn't move through a book at a reasonable speed. As teachers, we need to focus on phonics and reading fluency instruction to ensure that our pupils have the skills to read fluently and confidently. This means teaching them to decode words accurately and at speed, so that they can read with ease and enjoyment. We should be using a range of strategies, such as choral reading and repeated reading, to help children develop their fluency and confidence.

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V&A

Each issue we ask a contributor to pen a note they would love to send

A letter to... *the Prime Minister*

Improving maths is a noble goal, but we need to start interventions much, much earlier than age 16, says **Ben Levinson, OBE**



Dear Prime Minister, thank you for the recent attention and priority you have given to education. I chose this career because, more than any other, it has the power to simultaneously address the challenges and realise the opportunities we face individually and collectively. I know you believe the same and I have watched with interest your recent announcements regarding maths.

I am passionate about maths personally – in fact leading maths was my first step into school leadership. As such, I agree with some of your hypotheses. I think there is a culture of greater acceptance around struggling with maths. And, partly as a result of this, we have too many adults who do not have the numeracy skills and knowledge required to thrive in their day-to-day lives.

As I say, I chose this career to change lives. This is also the reason I chose primary over secondary: because the earlier we intervene, the greater the chance of success. Unsurprisingly, I believe the bulk of any work to address the challenges you've rightly identified needs to be focused on children as early as possible. Not just because this is where you will impact the mindset and culture, but because, except in a minority of specific cases, if children do not have the core fundamentals in maths they need for life by age 11, something has gone seriously wrong.

First and foremost is what we teach. If we look at our aim – to ensure people are sufficiently numerate for life and that there

is a positive culture around maths – I would argue that a key barrier is the amount of content in the primary curriculum – particularly in Key Stage 1 and Lower Key Stage 2. We need children to be leaving primary school positive and enthused about maths. They need to have the foundations in place to go on and experience further success at secondary school: deepening their knowledge and applying it to a wider-range of practical contexts as these become conceptually relevant. No child (who doesn't face a specific learning challenge) should leave primary without a strong grasp of number, place value and calculation. These are the core building blocks of maths, and the vast majority of what we need in life.

We have embraced the concept of a mastery approach in this country and yet the curriculum itself does not match the theory. Even by seven years old, the breadth of what we expect children to know is overwhelming. It means teachers have to move through the curriculum too fast to cover too much content and, inevitably, too many children do not have sufficient time to fully master the concepts they so desperately need. Once this has happened, it starts to be compounded year-on-year with children developing increasingly negative attitudes – fear, embarrassment, anxiety – around maths. By secondary school, this is incredibly hard to undo, let alone by 16.

At Kensington Primary, we have reorganised the curriculum to address this challenge and we are beginning to see the impact. However, it will take time and it is despite the system not because of it. We need a fundamental rethink of what it is all



children (and adults) need in maths for daily life. Doing this would both ensure everyone has the skills and knowledge they need to succeed, and impact the culture so that more people would be enthused about maths and choose to pursue it beyond GCSE, developing the specialist skills and knowledge needed for specific career paths.

Maths also needs to be relevant. Too often, maths is seen to be about the right answer, but we know it is so much more than that. Problem solving; strategic thinking; paying attention to the detail; and resilience are all skills the subject teaches us, that we can use in numerous other areas of our lives. Not only will altering the focus on the subject in this way build greater enthusiasm and shift attitudes, but it will also improve people's experience of success, further improving the culture around maths. Unfortunately, SATs do not prioritise this. Instead, too often, children are taught to the test and maths is boiled down to a very simplistic equation – whether they meet the expected standard (EXS) or not.

With the right focus and commitment, though, I am confident that we can significantly change the narrative around maths.

Thank you for your support with this. I hope we see some further solutions to boost maths knowledge and skills, and change attitudes from an early age very soon.

From, Ben

Ben Levinson, OBE, is headteacher at Kensington Primary School



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SCHOOL ADVENTURES

How I do it

Get hands-on with the natural world and help pupils understand different parts of the flower with this scientific dissection

EMILY HUNT

1

Begin the flower dissection by asking the children to carefully remove the sepals and petals. Explain that the outer parts are sepals and that they protect the flower when it is developing. Ask them to use their magnifying glass to see if they can spot any pollen on the sepals and petals. Then ask them to give the petals a sniff. Explain that they are fragrant to attract pollinators such as bees to the flower.



A dissection is a hands-on, fun way to get children engaging with the different parts of a flower for science lessons. Specimens like lilies, tulips or daffodils are particularly suitable for this activity. I find it works well for children to lay each dissected flower part onto a large piece of paper, then to label the part and its purpose underneath. This activity is also a great way to make real-world links to different jobs, such as botanists, who study plants, as well as helping to conserve and protect them. So grab your favourite blooms and dig in!

Next, ask the children to carefully remove the stamen. Explain that this contains the male reproductive parts of the flower and consists of anthers (containing pollen) and filaments (supporting stalks). Remind them to be careful when handling the pollen because it can easily stain your clothes! Encourage a closer look at the pollen using a magnifying glass. These tiny grains have evolved to be transported on pollinators.

2

The children will now be left with the pistil. Explain that this is the female reproductive part of the plant and consists of the style (the stalk) and stigma (the sticky bit at the top). Let the children gently touch the stigma to feel how sticky it is. This is to help it catch pollen. Ask them to use their scissors to cut the stigma open. Can they see the gap inside it? Then ask them to look closely at the style. Can they spot the hollow path down the middle?

3

4

Now ask the children to locate the ovary at the base of the style, just above the plant stem. Explain that pollen on the stigma travels down the hollow path inside the style and fertilises the ovules in the ovary. These fertilised ovules will develop into seeds. Encourage the children to carefully cut the ovary in half lengthways using scissors and use their magnifying glass to take a closer look.



Finally, take the children on a nature walk outside to look at different types of flowers. Take a closer look at each flower with magnifying glasses to see which parts they have in common. What are the similarities? What are the differences? Challenge them to find and take photos of other flowering plants that have both male and female parts in a single flower.

5



Emily Hunt is an experienced primary teacher and senior leader with a passion for STEM education. She is the author of the 15-Minute STEM book series and shares STEM activities on her website [HowToSTEM](http://HowToSTEM.co.uk).

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UNDERCOVER TEACHER

Our anonymous educator gets something off their chest

It's time we stopped hiding behind tame adjectives and instead gave the honest truth in our end-of-year reports

I'm sure I'm supposed to say reports are a vital part of parents' feedback and will be treasured and valued. But are they really? Reports are treasured and valued for many reasons – but a useful part of feedback? I'm not convinced.

Almost all teachers put a lot of effort and thought into their reports. But are they more than a lightly worded snapshot, filled with teacher jargon and obscure adjectival changes to shift meaning for those who can read between the lines, and pull the wool over the eyes of those who can't? Meanings are clear to us teachers, but are they clear to the parents? I've seen it in reports I've read, in reports I've scrutinised for appeals; I've seen it in my daughters' reports, and yes, I've written it in reports myself. Are we just trying to cover ourselves? In fact, reports in some places have reduced in scope and detail so much that they end up saying very little. I understand why – they are a massive undertaking and, if they aren't actually being used for honest feedback, are they worth the time investment?

Maybe we don't want to deal with the hassle from the parents at the end of the year, but maybe, more importantly, we don't want to be told something is our fault. Little Johnny who has been difficult all year and the subject of countless meetings and behaviour plans suddenly becomes a child who 'has progressed well, despite a tendency to become distracted and lose focus at times'. However, if we tell it like it is, then we run the risk that Johnny's lack of progress won't be anyone's fault but our own. It doesn't matter how many interventions we've run, how many booster groups have been delivered and how much extra support has been given, it will still be the school's fault if there hasn't been an improvement. It doesn't matter that he hasn't done a shred of homework, or that he's late every day. It doesn't matter that he's spent the last three months trying to write upside

down with his wrong hand in italics, bold and starting every other sentence with one of those Superman 'S' shapes. We feel like we can't say that. We don't want to risk offending, of being told we didn't do enough, but is this to the long-term detriment of the child?

It's easy to frame a damning report in a positive way. But why? We should be able to say what we mean. We are the experts, we are the professionals. We spend the most time with the children, we know

how to help them improve. We've been doing all we can for the last nine months. Why shouldn't we tell it like it is? We should have faith that we have done all we can. We can prove we have offered everything we said we would. Teachers are a modest breed, always thinking of what extra they could have done instead of everything they have done to support and help. I'm not advocating ranting, being borderline offensive and more negative than needed. Maybe though, it's time that we stopped hiding behind tweaked adjectives and gave the honest truth. Reports are a celebration of what has been achieved, but they also should deliver more than that: useful, practical and honest summations of the year that has passed and how things can be improved moving forwards.

It's not blame shifting.

It's not an absolution of responsibilities. It is honesty. It's realism. It's helping prepare children for a world when there isn't always someone there to gloss over the tricky bits and overemphasise the good. Parents need to know what's really going on in the classroom. We'll of course help pupils, we'll work with parents and give their children all the support we possibly can, but we need support too, and folks at home need to know the extent of the issues. We are the experts, and we should have nothing to fear because actually, deep down, we all know it is for the best. TP



“Reports are a celebration of what has been achieved, but should also deliver more than that”

The writer is a teacher in England

Land your DREAM JOB

Stride into the spotlight and learn how to wow an interview panel with these approaches gleaned from 30 years of experience, says **Marva Rollins**

With over 30 years' experience of sitting on interview panels, reading supporting statements, interview coaching, listening to feedback and leading interview preparation training, I've learned a lot about what impresses during the teacher recruitment process. With the end of the academic year fast approaching, some of you will be considering what the next 12 months hold for your career, perhaps searching for a new challenge and rung up the career ladder.

So, here's what I've learned over my three decades on the job...

Prep

Firstly, you need to think and plan well ahead of making your next career step. Give yourself a time frame to reach your goal, and allow for some flexibility within it. Life events can get in the way of your career plans so a road map with different options is a great idea.

You also need to ask yourself a few crucial questions and document your responses:

- How do I know I am ready for my next teaching role?
- How have my current roles and responsibilities prepared me for this next step?
- What is my evidence?
- How much time do I need to give to the process of applying?

When you are researching

your next step, see what roles are available near you by visiting job boards such as Teaching Vacancies. If your search is more speculative, sign up for job alerts so you can stay up to date on the opportunities out there.

Create a learning journal

The Teachers' Standards that you worked through during your early years in the role will continue to be pivotal as you move through your career. Documenting your

“Annotating against the Teaching Standards will give you plenty of content to pull from for applications”

growth and experience in a learning journal, and annotating them against the Teachers' Standards, gives you plenty of content to pull from when drafting applications. Consider also including:

- **For headship:** add points from the Headteachers' Standards and annotate with examples to demonstrate your skills.
- **Your current roles and responsibilities:** record actions and impact, termly.
- **Support the next teaching cohort:** take every opportunity to mentor Early Career Teachers (ECTs) as this gives you an opportunity to regularly observe a colleague and

give feedback. Document your reflective process to show critical thinking.

- **Your appraisal targets:** review these regularly, not just before mid-year or end of year reviews. Evidence impact along the way.
- **Seek out support:** who in your current school is carrying out the roles you are aspiring to? Tap into their expertise and cross-reference the skills they think are most vital for the job with your own experience.

- **Analyse data:** you will likely need to analyse data as part of the appointment process for any role below headship or senior leadership. This is often the most challenging part. Arrange to work alongside the data leader in your school now. You need to be able to analyse the data for all three key stages.

Job descriptions and person spec

It's a good idea to download the application form for the role you are considering well in advance. Annotate the job description and person specification with evidence from your current role that matches the expectations. This gives you an opportunity

to review your current skills, knowledge and expertise – and areas where you need to develop further. This takes time and commitment, but it pays off when writing the supporting statement.

To progress in any career, you often have to step outside your comfort zone and take on new responsibilities, which will require you to learn new skills. It's important, in primary schools, to be secure in the skills of a curriculum leader (a wider purview than subject leader). As you move on to another school, and up the career ladder, you may be asked to lead a subject

you have not led before.

Preparing now gives you the advantage at the interview, and in the role. This means developing a deep understanding of the whole-school curriculum maps, assessment, data, and the knowledge expectations of each subject, plus the rationale for any cross-curricular links.

When completing the personal aspects of the application form, ensure that there are no gaps in your work history. This is a safeguarding issue. If you were travelling or working at home and, for example, caring for your children, make that clear.

Supporting statement

Your opening statement creates an immediate impression, as you give an overview of your skills, knowledge and experiences. You should then go on to expand on these in the rest of the statement.

Use your annotation of the job description and person specification to guide your statement. You may need to cut your first draft down to make it more succinct – aim for no more than two to three pages. Some schools will specify the

Form (SEF), School Development Plan (SDP).

- **Assessment:** Assessment for Learning (AfL), Assessment of Learning (AoL), adaptation, interventions, needs of SEND pupils, English as an additional language (EAL) pupils, early reading, and greater depths.



maximum number of words or pages, so take note.

When drafting the supporting statement, key points to consider are:

- **Overview:** a brief paragraph of experiences that have prepared you for the role.
- **Teaching and learning:** how your current role impacts on improvement in teaching and learning, supporting colleagues, curriculum development, CPD, impact on pupils' attainment and wellbeing. Involvement in whole school development – School Self Evaluation

- **Data:** to identify strengths, and where learning needs to be re-visited. How you addressed the needs of individuals and specific groups.
- **Budgets:** demonstrate awareness of priorities when setting budgets.
- **Safeguarding and Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE):** your understanding of pupil and staff wellbeing.
- **Beyond the pupils:** successful engagement with the community, governing body, and parents.

Shortlisting

Person specification criteria is used to shortlist

interviewees from all applications. If the role is internal, do not rely on the panel knowing your worth; you are still in competition with external candidates.

Be gracious regarding current or previous work environments. It is always best to focus on the positive impact you've made, the skills a school has provided you, and the lessons learned – avoid focusing on negatives or personal grievances.

Preparing for interviews

Don't wait until you are shortlisted before you start preparing for the interview. Before you start applying for jobs, seek out a colleague or a professional coach to help you get ready for the potential interview stage. Some of us are not as confident as others and doing 'rehearsals' of how different interview scenarios could unfold will mean you go into your first interview with refined responses, and a level of confidence.

Above all, be clear about

5 TOP INTERVIEW TIPS

- 1 Be aware of your body language and nonverbal cues.
- 2 We all have fillers. These are habits and act as thinking time, but may distract from your answers. Practise eliminating them as far as possible.
- 3 Listen to the questions carefully - note key words - this gives you a few seconds of thinking time and reduces the possibility of you rushing into an answer.
- 4 Prepare two or three initiatives you have led prior to interview - note processes and successes.
- 5 Get in role - you are walking into the interview room as the new 'assistant headteacher' or 'headteacher', not as the potential candidate.

your purpose for going for a promotion: providing an excellent level of teaching for all pupils. Finally, step confidently into the spotlight. **TP**



Marva Rollins OBE is a retired headteacher with over 24 years' experience.

She is now a consultant supporting school leaders in challenging circumstances through coaching and practical mentoring.

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5 REASONS TO TRY... Premier Education extracurricular clubs

Encourage children to keep active, and provide a much-needed service to busy parents



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Premier Education's extracurricular clubs promote active learning and boost confidence. Clubs are run by fully qualified professionals who deliver engaging and exciting sessions to improve physical literacy and keep kids more active for longer. They also enhance sporting participation and help pupils of all interests and abilities to find an activity they love.

1 EXPERT COACHING

Premier Education prides itself on a 'best in class' network of over 1,000 expert activity professionals who are able to deliver over 40 exciting sports and activities. Many are former PE teachers or sports specialists who run sessions that are tailored to nurturing individual personal development of pupils. Planning, delivery and staffing are taken care of, with coaches building a genuine rapport with school staff to become an extension of the team. Coaches are also subject to rigorous training which includes paediatric first aid, safeguarding, equality and diversity.



clubs to include other desirable subjects such as gymnastics, handball and drama.

4 NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Thanks to its longstanding reputation, Premier Education partners with a number of leading UK Sports Associations and National Governing Bodies such as the LTA, British Gymnastics, England Handball, England Lacrosse and Table Tennis England. These partnerships allow for comprehensive training for over 1,000 coaches, ensuring it is at the forefront of educational sport delivery. In turn, schools have confidence that the clubs on offer are of an outstanding level.

2 HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROMISE

Schools wanting to show their commitment to pupil health are enriching their extracurricular offering with expert-led clubs and activities. Premier Education clubs are aligned to the individual mission and ethos of each school, and for leaders who are passionate about prioritising wellbeing, the extracurricular offering is an opportunity for children to enjoy the benefits that go with living a physically active life such as improved fitness, reduced anxiety, enhanced self-esteem, improved cognitive function (thus boosting attainment and focus), and stronger bones and muscles.

3 VARIETY

When offered a diverse range of activities, children are more likely to have a positive attitude to physical activity, resulting in increased levels of participation and engagement. Children get to try new activities and explore other interests, which can improve physical literacy, boost confidence and develop social skills. As well as offering popular sports such as netball, basketball and rugby, schools can expand their range of



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5 ATTRACTIVE TO PARENTS

Extracurricular clubs offer a lifeline to busy parents. Beyond providing wraparound childcare options, schools that offer Premier Education clubs are making a commitment to upholding unparalleled levels of physical activity delivery and the highest professional standards. Parents can rest assured that their children are developing new skills, improving their physical health and extending their social network, all under the watchful eye of fully qualified experts who are at the forefront of the industry.

KEY POINTS

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MEDIUM TERM PLAN

KS2
ART

C'MON, VOGUE!

ADELE DARLINGTON

Fashion truly is an artform. From practical items that launched decades-long trends like denim jeans, to the modern displays of architectural ensembles at the Met Gala, the clothes we put on our bodies not only keep us warm and covered, but can also express elements of our identity to those that don't even know us. Encourage and excite the future designers in your class with this six-week series of art lessons focused on the colourful and unique world of clothing design. In this learning sequence, pupils will develop an understanding of the thought processes and thinking skills associated with this creative career, and will design a spectacular outfit for a chosen celebrity to wear to an event of their choice!

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tw **teachwire**

My mood board

Colours What colours do you want to include in your outfit?

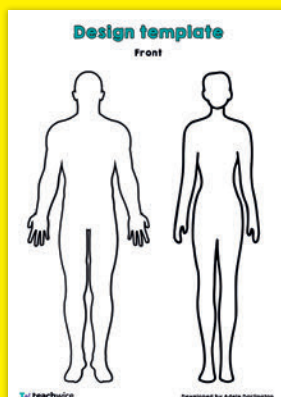
Textures Think about the fabric textures you want to use

Lifestyle inspiration Who could be wearing something you like? Think about celebrities, models, people you like.

Style What are your initial thoughts on outfit style? Think about accessories, hair.

Words Write some words that could be associated with your outfit.

tw teachwire Developed by Adele Darlington



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explanations of their job role, and some examples of their designs. Give pupils a choice of media to use in their work (cutting and sticking from magazines; printing images from websites; pasting in fabric swatches, etc) and let them be creative with their page layouts. The pages can be enhanced with pupils' thoughts and feelings on the designs they find. Encourage them to annotate their work with likes and dislikes. They may even wish to have a go at drawing some of their own clothing designs on these pages, too.

Assessment

Pupils should be able to confidently answer the following questions – what is fashion design? What does a fashion designer do? They should also be able to name a fashion designer and comment on their style of clothing.



WEEK 1 Learning objective

- To know what fashion design is and what a fashion designer's job entails

In this first session, introduce your class to the idea of fashion design. List some well-known designer names and display their photographs for all to see – Vivienne Westwood, Oswald Boateng, Coco Chanel, Matthew Williamson, Vera Wang, Ralph Lauren – have pupils ever heard of them? Do they know what they do? Explain they are fashion designers – people who create original designs for clothing and accessories. They sketch out ideas, choose fabrics and patterns,

and instruct garment production teams on how to make them. Show your pupils a mixture of outfits from the fashion houses of these designers – catwalk photos demonstrate a mixture of both wearable and less wearable styles, which children find very entertaining! Pupils will also enjoy seeing photographs of celebrities in clothing created by these designers; pop star Harry Styles can often be seen dressed in Vivienne Westwood creations, and Hollywood actor Jamie Foxx has shown off Oswald Boateng suits on the red carpet.

This session is all about exploring the fashion design world. Ask pupils to create a double-page spread in their sketchbooks full of fashion design research, photographs of designers,



WEEK 2 Learning objective

To create an outfit mood board and exercise some principles of 'design thinking'

Begin this session by recapping the role of a fashion designer. Explain that today pupils are going to be designers themselves, developing outfit ideas for a celebrity of their choice to wear to an imaginary event of their choosing. Encourage the children



to think carefully about their celebrity – do they have a particular style or favourite colour? Do pupils want to design this new outfit in-keeping with their celebrity’s image in the media, or do they want to create something different and new for them? The event they choose will

also have an influence on the clothing ensemble they put together – a trip to a football match will require a very different outfit to a red carpet event. This session is all about exploring ideas and possible themes for the outfit. Each pupil will create a mood board – a collection of images, patterns, words and colours on a theme – to communicate their thoughts and ideas.

This will help the children think creatively and organise their thoughts about their outfit designs, before refining their ideas in week 4.

A mood board could be collage based or a selection of drawings on a piece of paper or on a page in their sketchbooks. Pupils will need to have access to a selection of resources such as paper, scissors, glue, paints, pens, pencils, fabrics, newspapers and magazines. Relevant pictures can also be gathered from online image searches. Alternatively, they can create their mood boards digitally using pictures from the internet pasted into a software application such as PowerPoint. Give pupils free rein to style their boards as they wish; you can find examples online, or use the **mood board template** included in the download for this lesson.



Assessment

Pupils should be able to discuss their mood boards, articulating their reasons for adding individual elements to them. They should be able to talk about their developing outfit ideas.



WEEK 3

Learning objective

To design a fabric swatch and create a colour palette

In this session, pupils have the chance to refine their mood board ideas further by exploring tints, tones and shades of their chosen hue, and playing about



with fabric pattern and design. They will need palettes and brushes for exploring colour, as well as their chosen starting paint hue, such as blue, red or yellow. They will also need white to create tints and black to create shades. By adding a small amount of white or black at a time, and then swatching each on paper, pupils will build up an extensive colour palette to choose from when they create their designs. Some may also wish to mix other colours in to make, for example, a more yellowy blue, an orangey red or a bluey purple. Basically, let them play, discover and choose! Children may also wish to team their chosen main colour with accents of another when it comes to creating their outfit. For example, a yellow dress may have contrasting or complementary colour accents in the form of pattern or accessories. As well as focusing in on colour, this session also gives pupils the opportunity to think about the patterns they wish to incorporate into their outfits. Look at a selection of fabrics and discuss their details. What do the pupils notice? Are they striped, spotted, floral or something else? Do they have repeating or symmetrical patterns? Ask pupils to create a fabric design for their outfit. The fabric will mainly use the colour palette they created during the first part of this session but can be mixed with other colours of their choice, as well.



Assessment

Can pupils explain how they created their colour palettes using accurate,

subject-specific vocabulary (*primary, secondary, complementary, contrasting, pale, pastel, bold, earthy, vibrant, subtle, tone, etc*)? How did they create tints and shades? Did they use primary or secondary colours? Can they describe the colours they created?



WEEK 4

Learning objective

To create fashion illustration outfit designs including a front and back view

Now it is time to transfer the ideas gathered over the last couple of weeks into an actual outfit design! The mood board, the colour palette exploration and fabric designs all come together. Start this session by looking at fashion illustration examples; some are painted, some drawn in pen or pencil, and some are digitally produced. Discuss their style with pupils. Fashion illustrations are more than a flat, technical sketch used to convey information to patternmakers or production houses, they show what the clothing will look like on a body. Note the way they not only include the colour and texture of fabrics but also a feel for the way clothing hangs and moves. This illusion is created using effective shading and use of line. So, when pupils create their outfits, they need to draw on their knowledge of, and play with, different sketching techniques to add fabric texture, fit and movement into their illustrations. They could try hatching,

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cross hatching, stippling, block shading and more to try and add realistic dimensions to their creations. You could either give pupils body outlines to build their designs on (**see resource 1 in the download above**), or they could draw them themselves. When drawing outfits on the human form outlines, pupils should lightly sketch in pencil first to give them the opportunity to rub out and change features if they need to. Once happy, colour can be added using watercolour paints, ready-mixed paint, pencils or pens. It is worth noting that many fashion illustrators use ink markers in their creations, and the children may wish to use black pen to emphasise the lines in their artwork, in-keeping with fashion illustration style.



Assessment

Can pupils describe the style and purpose of a fashion illustration? How is it different to a technical sketch or clothing pattern?



WEEK 5

Learning objective

To design complementary accessories for the outfit

Now it's time to add a bit of va va voom to these outfit designs, and think about accessories. Accessories are items that add to the overall effect of an outfit and are often said to 'complete' and add interesting detail to a look. They are also able to reflect a wearer's personality and identity. Examples of outfit accessories include hats, fascinators, bags, shoes, brooches, corsages, sunglasses, jewellery, scarves, belts and more! Look at some photos of celebrities and spot the accessories. Discuss either in pairs, groups, or as a whole class. Interesting individuals to look at could include the late Queen Elizabeth II with her simple yet sophisticated style, Lady Gaga with her wacky outfit enhancers such as wigs and masks, or Stormzy and his beloved trainers. Pupils should design accessories to complement the outfits they designed in week 3. Again, they need to think of the celebrity they have designed for, and which accessories would reflect their individuality. They must also consider the occasion the

outfit is being designed for to ensure the celebrity has everything they need. For example, a relaxing, sunny day at the park may require sunglasses, a sun hat, flat shoes and a bag to carry sun lotion in. Pupils can use pencils to sketch out their designs on paper, or in sketchbooks, before adding them to the fashion illustrations created last week. Once happy with their additions, they can add colour to them using a medium of their choice such as paint, pens or pencils.



Assessment

Have pupils successfully enhanced their outfits with accessories? Can they discuss their reasons for choosing certain pieces with a peer? Are the accessories functional or purely for aesthetic purposes?



WEEK 6

Learning objective

To create branding designs for their fashion house, including a name and logo

Finish off this art sequence with a focus on creating fashion house branding. What do pupils think this means? Give them the chance to think, pair and share their ideas. Successful branding helps a business stand out with a distinctive name and design. Some brands are instantly recognisable by their logos alone – can the children name any? In this session, pupils need to think of a name for their own fashion house and create a logo design to work alongside it. Do they want to use their own

personal names like many of the top designers such as Lagerfeld, Armani or Chanel, or do they want to think of another name to reflect the style and personality of their brand? Suggest to pupils that they write down five to 10 possible names to discuss with their peers before deciding on the one to use. Once they've decided, they can play about with how they want to write it, and explore different typography ideas. Which colours do they want to use for their brand name, and which font style? Do they want their letters large or small, capital or lowercase? There are so many options to consider and play about with, which pupils can do in their sketchbooks. The children also need to design a logo for their fashion brand. Look at and discuss some examples such as the instantly recognisable interlocked Cs of Chanel, the Nike tick, the Lacoste crocodile and more. What do these logos say about the brands? Give pupils time to explore ideas and develop and refine their imagery.



Assessment

By the end of this session pupils should have a fashion house brand name and logo. They should be able to discuss their stylistic choices and be aware of the role good branding can play in the success of a business. **TP**



Adele Darlington is an EYFS teacher and art lead in Rutland. She is also the author of 100 ideas for primary teachers: art published by Bloomsbury.

 @mrs_darl



Making MFL MAGIC

Teach kids to become language detectives and develop their very own linguistic superpowers with these six simple steps

KATE PERCIVAL

That certain MFL ‘magic’ – the x-factor that inspires pupils and adds intercultural understanding to the classroom – is not to be underestimated. Sadly, it’s also easily missed.

With over 15 years’ experience teaching modern foreign languages (MFL), and training and supporting other teachers, I see first-hand the understandable gaps that exist in primary schools. At the heart of this is confidence: for children, of course, but critically for teachers – both trainees to experienced pros. But what are the ingredients for that special something?

Practical application of language, developing effective speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and where these fit within the curriculum, remain a stumbling block for many. Effective coordination of teaching and learning, celebrating languages, and the school ethos and community reach are all necessary, too.

All the while, of course, we can’t lose sight of targets, and what children need to move on to the next stage of their MFL schooling. So here are six creative ways to incorporate DfE attainment targets into your planning, improve your confidence, and make your lessons sparkle...

1 Promote a ‘have a go’ culture

With languages, we all make mistakes all the time. I will

often have to double check a spelling in a bilingual dictionary or play a phrase back using an audio file to check pronunciation. It is crucial the children see this as a strength to improvement and not a weakness. Rewarding strategies, skills and a positive attitude to learning are really important for fostering a growth mindset (and that seismic shift from ‘I can’t do it’ to ‘I will do it’).

A culture of ‘having a go’, and of recognising children who have stepped out of their comfort zone to try something new and learn from it, is

something we should all be encouraging in our language lessons and beyond.

2 Discuss metacognition

We use learning strategies all the time in our MFL lessons. But do you discuss why we use them, and how they help, with the children?

When we put our ‘silly’ actions to new words, there is a scientific reason behind it. It is called a Total Physical Response or TPR –

by linking something physical with language, the connection strengthens within the brain. I wow the children with this nugget of science and, for some who are initially reluctant to keep up with all the physicality, when you explain that next week when we play a competitive game, those joining in with actions might have a chance of winning, they are usually swayed to join.

In fact, when the next week comes and children are focusing on recall, it is often the action they remember first, but soon after the language follows.

write a number of words that relate to a certain topic) with target language they know or remember. For others, dual coding supports them and we always accompany new vocab with clear pictures, photos, flashcards, etc.

Active learners thrive in games like Simon Says, drama and mime activities, and of course MFL appeals to the auditory senses too, teaching by songs, rhymes, poems and the richness of sound when focusing on phonics and speaking tasks. They lead to the fun, joy and laughter that is also key for that all-important motivation.

“I award ‘language detective’ points to pupils who share their memory hooks and allow others to ‘magpie’ them”

3 Encourage active learning

We know children learn through a combination of styles, and it is useful for them to work out how they learn best.

Some of my Year 6s like to take notes in language lessons, and I am all for that. Some bring a little notebook in from home, some like to practise spelling patterns over and over on a whiteboard, and some like to annotate their tracking clouds (in which children can

LOW-PREP
ACTIVITIES**Mind-readers**

• Write a target word or phrase on a piece of paper or mini whiteboard, but keep it hidden. Give the children a go at guessing what you're thinking of. That's really all there is to it! You can have recent vocabulary or phrases on the screen as support, or make this a true recall activity where pupils retrieve the language recently learned from memory (obviously give your class a clue as to which topic area it is). The magic really happens when a child guesses correctly; they truly think they can read your mind!

**Head-to-head**

• Select two children to stand up and challenge each other. You (or another member of the class) say a target word or phrase, and the first person out of the two who correctly translates it gets to stay standing and take on another member of the class. This can be done both working from target language to English and vice-versa of course. Set a timer and whoever is still standing at the end of the time wins a prize!

using your PE warm-up time to recap new words in a game of corners.

Little and often is most effective with language.

I always say registrations are the most under-used time for learning. The two-and-a-half minutes it takes to do the register, twice a day, can be a great opportunity to use the target language. Answer with the name of a sport or an opinion phrase, for example.

computer games, working out that it means a lack of energy.

One of my favourites recently was how to remember the difference between the pronouns for he and she (*il* and *elle*). A Year 5 child told me if you put a B in front of both you would get Bill and Belle helping you to remember which is which.

4 Memory hooks: the sillier the better

Mnemonics, sound similarities, links with other words and concepts... whatever the word makes you think of can help in remembering its spelling and meaning. What makes these hooks even more powerful is sharing them.

I award 'language detective' points to those who tell the rest of the class what their memory hooks are and allow others to 'maggie' them if they work for them too. As an example, gamers might link the French word for tired, *fatigue*, with the fatigue level meter on their

5 Practice, practice, practice

Ideally, your warm-up/starter should be a retrieval task recapping previous learning. And then, why not make use of those two minutes here, five minutes there during the week – such as at transition times – to re-visit language? Try listening and joining in with a song during tidy-up time, choosing who lines up for break or lunch by listing vocabulary or answering a target language question,

6 Superpowers

In adult speak, 'language detective superpowers' are the transferable skills that will go with pupils to KS3 and beyond: the ability to identify foreign language words and phrases learned previously, and apply that knowledge to an unfamiliar context; being able to spot *cognates* and *near-cognates* (words which are the same or similar in English as in the target language); using all clues to decipher meaning often with an educated guess if needed (pictures, diagrams, context); and of course using a bilingual dictionary or online reference tool to look up words that may be key to meaning.

Alongside these linguistic 'superpowers', of course, are the further skills of problem-solving,

communication, appreciation of culture and diversity and collaborative learning, all of which will prepare learners for secondary school – they can apply these skills to any language and be on the path to success! **TP**



Kate Percival is a primary school teacher, primary MFL consultant at Primary

Languages Network, and associate subject consultant for primary languages at the NASBTT.



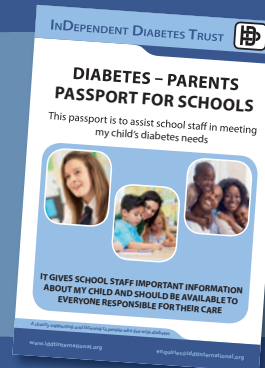
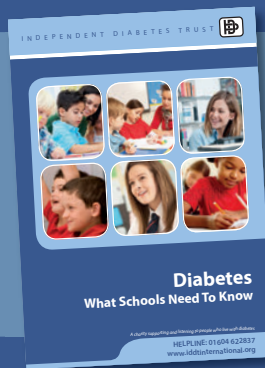
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4 REASONS TO TRY... Striver, from 2Simple

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4 SPORTS PREMIUM-ALIGNED

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At a glance

- + Focuses on individual progression and encourages a growth mindset.
- + Makes PE accessible to all teachers from EYFS to Y6, regardless of their background and experience.
- + The integrated school planner and in-built reporting tools are the PE lead's best friend.
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At a glance

- + Accurate assessments and feedback to increase teacher capacity
- + Personalised learning for tailored interventions
- + Empowers teachers

Word PLAY

Questions about eggs in boxes and change from shopping can tie pupils in knots, but by using this approach to mathematical word questions, you'll soon see an improvement, says **Gareth Metcalfe**

I know he can do the maths, but he hasn't read the question properly!"

It's so common for children to make great strides in mathematics, but then be inconsistent when it comes to answering multi-step word questions. Keen to quickly find an answer, pupils will often skim-read the information given in a question, focusing mainly on the numbers provided. They look for the first clues as to the correct operation to perform, often making errors or missing important steps.

In contrast, an expert problem-solver may take longer processing and representing the information that is given in a question. They can consider whether an answer is realistic. They may even have the capacity to course-correct if they make a mistake.

Break it down

The research paper 'Removing opportunities to calculate improves students' performance on subsequent word problems' (Givvin, Moroz, Loftus & Stigler, 2019) has helped me to see how all children can learn to break down word questions. If pupils are given all the information in a word question in full, they have a lot of data to process all at once, which can be a significant barrier. Also, children often don't think about the mathematical structure of the question as they quickly try to calculate the answer.

But what if the information in a worded question was revealed more gradually? This limits the amount of detail that needs to be processed in any one moment. Also, by making it *impossible* to calculate an answer straight away, children are forced to think about the structure of the question. They can predict the extra information that they might need. Or given all the information, children

can guess what the question *could* be. We might not show numbers, so children can calculate different *possible* answers. Suddenly, what was previously a closed question becomes an interesting, open task!

Let's consider an example 'slow reveal' prompt, where to begin with we've concealed parts of the question behind coloured bars, like this:

STEP 1:
Pencils: 20p Rubbers: 15p



Here, I can start by reading the information and asking, 'What could the question be?' and, 'If that's the question, what would the information be?'

The children might suggest it's, 'How much does it cost?' or, 'How much change does she get?'. We can model some simple question-answer combinations as examples.

STEP 2:
Pencils: 20p Rubbers: 15p



How many rubbers can Jen afford?

Next, the question is revealed. To be able to answer this question, what information is needed? What could the missing information be?

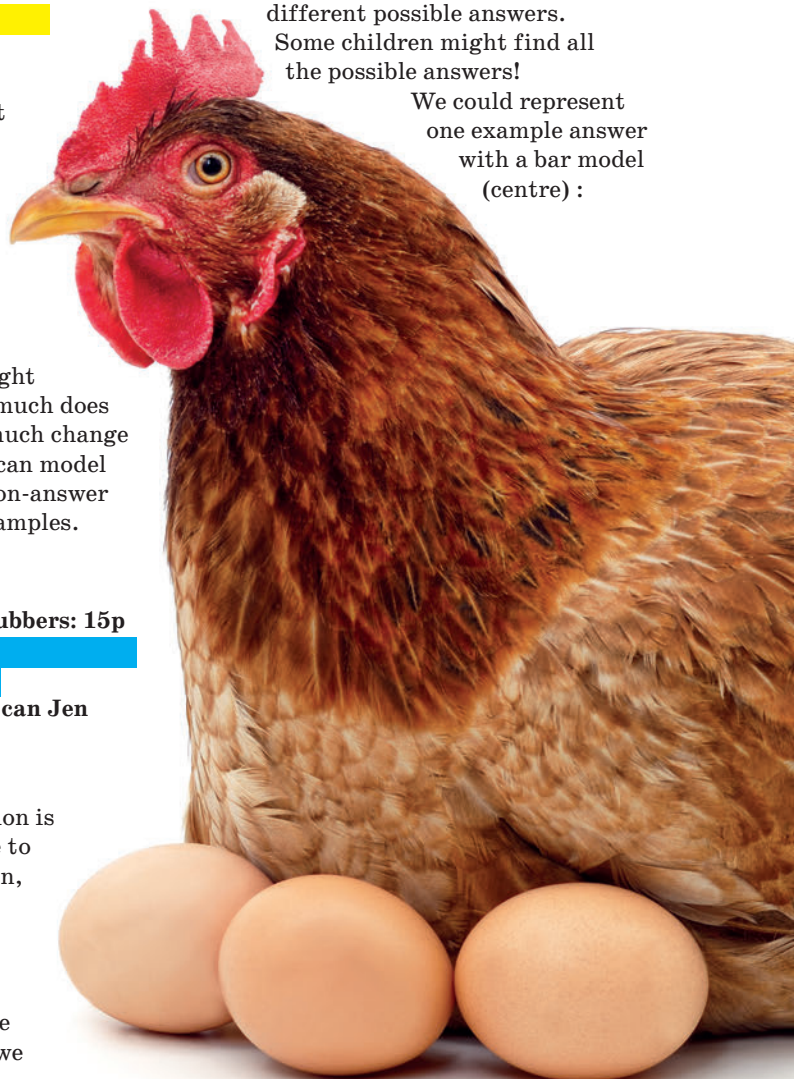
At this stage, we can recognise that we

will need to know how much money Jen has. We might ask a question like, 'If the missing information is Jen has 50p, what would the answer be?'

STEP 3:
Pencils: 20p Rubbers: 15p
Jen has £1. She buys ____ pencils and some rubbers.
How many rubbers can Jen afford?

Now we have all the information, but one number is still hidden. This allows us to calculate different possible answers. Some children might find all the possible answers!

We could represent one example answer with a bar model (centre):



Jen could buy 4 pencils and 1 rubber				
£1				
20p	20p	20p	20p	15p

STEP 4:

Pencils: 20p Rubbers: 15p
Jen has £1. She buys 3 pencils and some rubbers.
How many rubbers can Jen afford?

Finally, the question can be revealed in full. By now, all children have a much deeper understanding of the question.

Exploring division

A classic division context for children to explore is eggs in egg boxes. Typically, for a given number of eggs, we will ask, 'How many egg boxes are needed?'. Often, we want pupils to identify from the context what to do with any 'remainder' eggs. Are they supposed to round up or round down? Here's an example of how this context can be explored. At each stage, you can use counters to model the calculation if required.

STEP 1:

The farmer packs ____ eggs into boxes.
Each egg box can hold 6 eggs.

Here, we can ask, 'What could the question be?' or, 'What different questions could be asked?'.

STEP 2:

The farmer packs ____ eggs into boxes.
Each egg box can hold 6 eggs.
How many egg boxes can be filled?

Now that children know the question, they can give a possible answer. Often, they will choose to work in a number range that is comfortable for them, for example choosing 12 eggs.

STEP 3:

The farmer packs ____ eggs into boxes.
Each egg box can hold 6 eggs.
How many egg boxes can be filled?
Answer: 3 boxes

This time, rather than giving the number of eggs, we could give children the answer and ask, 'How many eggs could there be?'. Now there are different possible answers. Can children find them? There could be 18 eggs. But there could also be as many as 23 eggs!

“What if we reveal information in a worded question more gradually? It forces children to think about structure”

STEP 4:

The farmer packs ____ eggs into boxes.
Each egg box can hold 6 eggs.
How many egg boxes are needed to hold all the eggs?
Answer: 3 boxes

For the final step, a slight change is made to the question. Now, if there are any remaining eggs, the answer is rounded up. By making only a small change to the question, and by keeping all the other information the same, children can see the difference between the two questions. You can change the challenge in the number range used as appropriate, and again the answer(s) can be modelled using counters if you like.

By revealing the information in word questions slowly, or by making small changes from one version of a question to the next, we help to slow down children's thinking and create rich opportunities for discussion. In using this technique, I have seen pupils experience less anxiety when working through word questions, as they have had more time to process the information. It can also support children with English as an additional language (EAL) to identify the meaning of key terms. Finally, it helps all pupils to understand and explain the process of breaking down a multi-step question. I hope it's a useful tool for you, too! **TP**



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Tackling the STEM GENDER GAP

Don't let stereotyping limit the academic and career potential of girls, says **Maria Rossini**

A few years ago, I read of piece of research that completely changed the focus of my work at the British Science Association. Despite a huge amount of effort and money being put into encouraging girls in STEM at secondary school, research has suggested that by the time children reach age 10 they have already developed a fairly set idea about whether they aspire to be a scientist. By focusing efforts on girls in secondary school, many well-meaning initiatives were missing the fact that the crucial stage for young people to develop their STEM identity is actually at primary school. It has led to a complete shift in the way my team allocates time, funds and focus.

As educators, we have the power to implement strategies that engage all pupils in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects. In order to be effective, these strategies must take a holistic approach, addressing wider factors that often discourage girls from pursuing a career in STEM, such as fewer famous role models and the internalisation of gender stereotypes, as well as giving girls the opportunity to develop –and be rewarded for– their STEM skills and knowledge.

Challenge stereotypes

International studies suggest a male-centred view of

STEM. For example, when researchers asked seven to 11-year-old pupils to draw what they wanted to be when they were older, they found gender stereotypes influenced answers across the board. Boys were four times more likely to want to be an engineer in comparison to their female counterparts, and nearly double the number of boys said they wanted to become scientists.

“A more diverse STEM workforce will produce a more dynamic, innovative and prosperous environment for everyone”

Girls were more likely to favour more traditionally feminised STEM careers that involved caring or nurturing roles. They were 2.5 times more likely than boys to aspire to becoming doctors, and nearly four times more likely to want to be a vet.

Gender stereotypes that are engrained so deeply at such a young age mean that when these children reach secondary school and beyond, very little changes. In fact, studies both in the UK and USA found “children as young as six often rule out options for themselves because of the ingrained stereotypical views they have about the jobs people do based on their gender”.

It would be unrealistic

to suggest schools can completely overcome societal gender biases, as they are so systemic and entrenched that they have a strong influence over even the youngest pupils. However,

as a community of educators, we do have the power to make a positive difference in three key ways:

1. Be intentional in your examples

Primary teachers can make sure to highlight the achievements and contributions of a diverse range of scientists of all genders and backgrounds, to help provide a broader understanding of the subject and encourage pupils to pursue science,



if this is their passion. There are some excellent examples of diverse role models, such as British Science Week's Smashing Stereotypes project and NUSTEM's STEM person of the week activity, while WISE's My Skills My Life resources are brilliant ways to help children identify with STEM role models in a very personal way.

2. Link to children's lives and community

Highlight the scientists

who are relevant to the lives of the children in your school. Collaborate with local businesses and parents working in STEM and either invite them to speak with students or organise a school trip to bring the industry to life for pupils.

3. Reflect and challenge

Challenge stereotypes the way that you would any other misconception in the classroom, and reflect on your own internal biases as you plan and teach.

Get practical

It is important for schools to give all young people the opportunities to develop their STEM skills, understanding and passions – especially those who may feel less able to develop this interest outside of school, including girls.

Project-based work can help achieve this, as this form of learning encourages pupils to investigate their interests just as a real scientist would. When children are given the opportunity to explore an area of STEM which interests them most – a project where they can prove what they can do and understand how they can contribute to the field – they can thrive in their own unique way. This process can help affirm the skills and achievements and boost the confidence of all pupils. We see this happen across the UK in schools which offer our CREST Awards, which are taken up equally by male and female pupils who want to demonstrate their passion for science.

Make it relevant

Making links between science and children's real lives is important. This can be achieved through eliciting and valuing children's

experience within the classroom or signposting opportunities to explore STEM at home or in the community. It helps normalise engagement with STEM, and applying scientific knowledge to different circumstances enhances learning.

Engaging communities and parents can be challenging at times, but we've seen some brilliant examples of schools using British Science Week or CREST Award activities as a focus for home or community learning.

If girls are supported to explore their interest in STEM, and celebrated as scientists in the classroom and at home, they will be equipped with far more tools to help them overcome the hurdles which might discourage them from pursuing the subject.

Know your strengths

Primary teachers hold powerful keys to unlocking girls' STEM passions. Central to this is acknowledging the barriers which may discourage some from fulfilling their potential, such as gendered stereotypes, which influence all pupils. Once these have been acknowledged, they can be addressed through actively challenging stereotypes and providing relevant, practical and personal STEM teaching and experiences.

All pupils deserve a world in which everyone can thrive in science. So too does the science industry as a whole – and the first step to achieving this is in primary schools. **TP**



Maria Rossini is head of education at the British

Science Association.

EMPOWERING GIRLS IN STEM

ENCOURAGE DISCUSSIONS

If we avoid addressing stereotypes in STEM, it can be a barrier to girls taking an interest in science and maths related subjects. By creating a safe discussion space where pupils of all genders can question and critically analyse false stereotypes, as well as express their own thoughts and feelings on the topic, it opens the way to challenging any ingrained feelings about who can and cannot do STEM subjects.

BE A MENTOR AND ROLE MODEL

It is incredibly important when tackling gender stereotypes to be inclusive when featuring the work of scientists in pupils' learning. Through initiatives like the British Science Association's #smashingstereotypes campaign, which features a collection of over 30 stories from individuals and teams demonstrating how science is for everyone, teachers can help encourage all young people, of all genders and backgrounds, to see themselves as scientists. In addition to including examples of female scientists during lessons, providing girls with a real-life STEM role model can have a huge impact on the development of their interest and confidence in the subject. Whether it be a female science teacher, a member of the local community or even senior pupils from neighbouring schools, a science mentor can provide essential guidance and help answer any questions that students may have about careers in STEM or their lessons, as well as supporting them to lead their own investigatory science projects.

ASK THE EXPERT

Develop your oracy provision

Annabel Thomas MacGregor, of the English-Speaking Union, explores how to embed oracy throughout your school



1 CELEBRATE CURRENT WINS

All primary schools encourage pupils to talk, contribute and listen. This is a great start, and building on what you are already doing supports staff buy-in and helps any new intervention to fit seamlessly into your existing curriculum.

2 PROVIDE CPD

While many teachers are aware of the importance of oracy, we know that not all are confident to deploy oracy techniques, or even about what oracy actually is. We offer built-in CPD for our Oracy in Action programme, with other CPD available on request.

3 LINK TO THE CURRICULUM

At the ESU we believe that oracy skills are taught, not caught, and require specific modelling for pupils to develop oracy effectively. This is why we have created Oracy in Action as a stand-alone programme. However, everything developed in Oracy in Action can be translated across the whole curriculum, and we signpost how to do this seamlessly.

4 SHOWCASE ACHIEVEMENTS

Could you run a public speaking or debate competition in your school? Or create

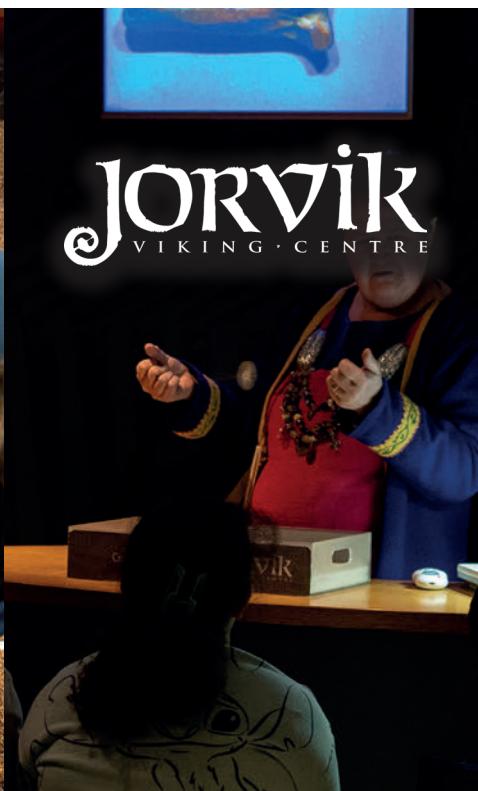
opportunities for informal debates in form time or in class? Try inviting parents and carers in to showcase the children's development. Local dignitaries may also be happy to attend to give out certificates, which will add a sense of ceremony to the occasion. The ESU can help with setting up a competition or running further skills workshops, too, should you want a bit of guidance to get you started.

At a glance

- Build on what you already do
- Embed oracy into the whole curriculum
- Celebrate and showcase your success

Contact: esu.org/oracy-in-action

education@esu.org



For the good of THE SCHOOL

Governor visits might at first seem like an extra meeting you don't need clogging up your timetable, but here's how you can make them work for you

REBECCA LEEK

As we all know from our days whizzing around classrooms, time in schools is at a premium. Faffing about is not an option, and all activity should be as purposeful as possible. This remains true, even for those who aren't necessarily based at the school. Like governors.

Governor visits are an essential accountability mechanism. So, even if it is a rare occurrence, it's unlikely that you will go through your career without being asked to take part.

With such little slack in our current school system, these kinds of meetings often happen in what I call the 'margins of time'. Governors are often very busy people. The adage, 'If you want something done, ask a busy person' is the perfect fit for these wonderful people who voluntarily support our schools. In considering governor visits, then, it is useful to remind yourself why governors visit at all. There are quite a few answers to this question. Here are four for starters:

- **Momentum:** I don't know about you, but I always need a deadline. If I know I have to talk something through with a governor on a set date, then it keeps the momentum going. This is accountability in action.
- **Triangulation:** leaders will *think* they have embedded something.



Or that staff are pleased about a recent change. Governors will be able to tell leaders whether this is really true or not. This is not spying – it's an extra pair of eyes and ears.

• **Balance and focus:** there is often a risk that a school is trying to change, or improve, too many things at once. Meetings with staff, and hearing what they are saying, will help gauge whether the balance is right.

• **Diversity:** we *always* need different brains and people with different experiences, thinking and contributing to the strategic direction of a school. Uniformity of thought is dangerous; governors bring an additional dimension.

With this in mind, here are some ingredients that will make a visit purposeful and useful, rather than burdensome and potentially a waste of time.

1 What is the visit for?

There should be a very clear, articulated reason for the visit *that is written down*. For example, it might be to find out the impact of a new action-planning approach where groups of subject leaders work together. The governor may meet with a group of subject leaders, ask about the action plan, and enquire about the impact so far.

2 Annual cycles

I recommend schools outline a complete cycle of visits and governance activity in advance, preferably for the full year. For example, the internal school diary could have 'governor visits' marked for a particular week. If these are scheduled at the right time, then it will mean a brief write-up will also feed into the correct committee meeting, a week or two later. Unexpected meetings are terrible for

staff wellbeing. Avoid at all costs.

3 Systematic paperwork

Don't let meetings happen over blank pieces of paper. The purpose should be at the top, and you can include some suggested questions to ensure a quality discussion. For example: *What is the timeframe for this work? How does it relate to the school improvement plan? Is there anything that is hindering the likelihood of its success?*

4 Tight

The visit should link back to the overarching priorities for the school. Governors and staff should know what the aims are and activity should be focused around these areas.

At the end of the day, the key aim is to keep our schools healthy and dynamically improving. Governor visits, when done well, can be really effective in keeping the cogs turning – all for good. **TP**



Rebecca Leek is a former teacher, head, and MAT CEO. She is now the executive

director of the Suffolk Primary Headteachers' Association.

 @rebeccaleek

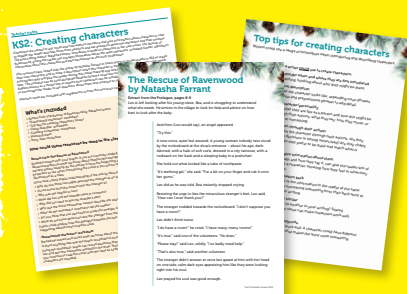
 rebeccaleek.com

WAGOLL

The Rescue of Ravenwood by Natasha Farrant

Peer inside the mind of the author, and help pupils understand how to write fascinating and believable characters...

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Download your **FREE**, exclusive teaching pack to help you explore both this extract and the rest of the book with your class.

tinyurl.com/tp-RR

On the top of the hill, overlooking the sea, that's where you'll find a magical place... To Bea and Raffy, Ravenwood is home. In its own way, the house rescued them, even if it did have a fallen-down tree taking up most of the kitchen. So the idea that it could be sold – demolished even – well, that's unthinkable. Then again, it's not like the children get a choice. But the truth is, we can all make our own choices, especially if we care enough...

Every story has a different starting point, and *The Rescue of Ravenwood* was born of a desire to write about the climate and ecological crisis on a scale that felt manageable for children, and in a way that balanced truth with hope.

It was a difficult book to write, chiefly because I wanted to stay true to the complexity of the issue while delivering not a lecture but a thumping good read.

In this story, three children band together to save a place they love – a home and garden; a solace for wildlife and for people. There are stowaways on trains and international police searches, heatwaves and fires, near drownings and swimming with seals, full-blown protests and long-buried secrets, friendship and family. But of course, it's those three children who are the key to the story. How can you be swept away, laugh, cry, care, if you don't love the heroes? Or indeed share their struggle, fear for their lives, and urge them on, if you don't believe in the villains?

It's all very well having an idea as a

starting point, but ideas don't live and breathe. The two biggest questions I ask myself when creating new characters are, 'What do they want?', and 'What do they need?'. These are rarely the same thing. For example, in my book, Noa wants her parents to get back together, but she needs to accept their separation. These questions, applied to every single character, provide the framework on which the plot will hang, and those twin quests (one conscious, the other subconscious) will drive it forward, making for a satisfying read in which plot and character are completely intertwined. They will also illuminate all those other questions you will need to ask about your characters' qualities, flaws, and even their backstory. Here's how I go about developing my characters... TP



Photo © Red Photography

Text © Natasha Farrant. *The Rescue of Ravenwood* (£7.99, Faber & Faber) is available now.

FIVE STEPS TO BELIEVABLE CHARACTERS

THE BASIC STUFF

How old are your characters? What do they look like? The reader only needs a few details, but you need to know more – you need to know everything about them! Sometimes it helps me to draw them.

NAME

Names are important, and worth spending time on. I look for them everywhere.

Online lists, books, film credits, newspapers... When the name is right, the character suddenly comes alive.

GOAL

What does your character want more than anything in the world? Love? Revenge? Think carefully about this, as it's going to drive everything they do. What are they prepared to sacrifice in order to get it?

PERSONALITY

Are they brave or worried? Were they always this way? What has happened to make them so? And what do they need to change to reach their goal?

FEAR

What are they, perhaps secretly, most afraid of? This is also important in driving the plot forward.

Extract from

the prologue,
pages 8-9

Prologue

Leo is left looking after his young niece Bea and is struggling to understand what she needs. He arrives in the village to look for help and advice on how best to look after the baby.

And then (Leo would say), an angel appeared.

"Try this."

A new voice, quiet but assured. A young woman nobody knew stood by the noticeboard at the shop's entrance – about his age, dark-skinned, with a halo of soft curls, dressed in a city raincoat, with a rucksack on her back and a sleeping baby in a pushchair.

She held out what looked like a tube of toothpaste.

"It's teething gel," she said. "Put a bit on your finger and rub it onto her gums."

Leo did as he was told. Bea instantly stopped crying.

Resisting the urge to kiss the miraculous stranger's feet, Leo said, "How can I ever thank you?"

The stranger nodded towards the noticeboard. "I don't suppose you have a room?"

Leo didn't think twice.

"I do have a room!" he cried. "I have many, many rooms!"

"It's true," said one of the volunteers. "He does."

"Please stay!" said Leo, wildly. "I so badly need help."

"That's also true," said another volunteer.

The stranger didn't answer at once but gazed at him with her head on one side, calm dark eyes appraising him like they were looking right into his soul.

Leo prayed his soul was good enough.

An important part of this section is that it happens some time before the main story started. I wanted to give a sense of the importance of these events, which have passed into family legend, and used this device to suggest how often they tell the story.

Sometimes you only need a little word to tell you a big change is coming. I also chose not to use a verb in this sentence. I'm wary of doing this too often, but sometimes it gives just the extra punch or immediacy I'm looking for.

This is so typical of Leo! He rarely thinks twice. Sometimes it's a good thing, and his spontaneity leads to wonderful things. Other times, it leads to trouble. But there's an understanding here that impulsive Leo and the thoughtful stranger may be a good match.

Recognising when you need help and learning to work with others is one of the themes of the book, introduced right from the beginning. Here we get an insight into Leo's willingness to admit that.

Of course it's not a real angel who appears, but to Leo in this moment, that is how the young woman seems. The angel/religious theme is picked up in other places in this passage, through the words *halo*, *miraculous* and *soul*.

This is our first introduction to the character Martha, and this is the whole point of her – this sense of calm that she brings to everything. But of course she has a secret also... why is she here? Why does she need a room?

I did this for comic effect – all this talk of angels and miracles, and it boils down to a tube of teething gel that looks like toothpaste!

The volunteers don't play a big part in this scene, but they are very important at the end of the book. I needed to introduce them early on, and also to show that they know and appreciate Leo.

This line shows us how high the stakes are for Leo. He needs her help with Bea – but also the stranger already means more to him. I wanted the reader to think about what Leo's motivations are, and what he might do next.

Resource roundup

Eight ideas for exceptional literacy teaching

1



Book-based learning

Used by over 50,000 teachers, the Literary Curriculum from Literacy Tree is a comprehensive and cohesive award-winning, book-based approach to primary English. Written by teachers for teachers and using expertly chosen, high-quality texts, children are immersed in fictional worlds to heighten engagement and provide meaningful contexts for writing using its unique 'teach through a text' pedagogy, which ensures all National Curriculum objectives are embedded. School members have access to over 400 book-based resources for writing, reading comprehension and spelling, as well as resources for catch-up and home-learning.

Book onto the next free Introduction at literacytree.com
email info@literacytree.com or call 0203 196 0140.

2



Children's writing competition

The BBC is relaunching 500 Words, the UK's most successful children's writing competition, this September. This year, the competition is supported by BBC Teach and hosted by BBC Breakfast. There are two age categories: 5–7-year-olds and 8–11-year-olds, and children of all abilities can enter and not worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar. The best-selling authors Frank Cottrell Boyce, Francesca Simon, Charlie Higson and former Children's Laureate Malorie Blackman all return as judges, and joining the judging panel for 2023 will be Sir Lenny Henry! 500 Words will also enjoy the support of Her Majesty, the Queen Consort. Find out more at bbc.co.uk/500words

3



Free back-to-school support

The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) creates a yearly free back-to-school unit to support all primary school teachers to inspire the whole school community to come together around one book at the start of the academic year. This year the unit is based on *In Our Hands* by Lucy Farfort (Tate Publishing) and focuses on working together to achieve more. #CLPEInOurHands

Sign up to be the first to receive free notes in June at clpe.org.uk/backtoschool

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4

Boost physical literacy

A programme designed to improve children's physical literacy and activity levels has been launched by Premier Education. Wow Active helps primary schools measure the impact of their PE delivery and tracks pupil progress through a series of fun and inclusive challenges. Schools using Wow Active identified on average a 24 per cent increase in performance, with children participating in PE more effectively and being more accountable for their own health and fitness. Teachers can access Ofsted-compatible data, track and monitor individual pupils, compare class average scores against national averages and identify those requiring interventional support. Sign up now to get 50% off Wow Active until the end of the school year. Visit premier-education.com/wow-active

5



CGP+



6

Over 10,000 teaching resources

CGP+ saves you time and effort when planning lessons. It has complete coverage of the whole Primary Curriculum with engaging resources to download for every subject – including worksheets, interactive games, PowerPoints and more. New resources are added all the time, like EAL and Comprehension, so there's always something exciting to discover (plus exclusive member benefits!). Teachers are giving CGP+ 5 stars; here's just one of the reviews: "The time I've saved already makes the subscription excellent value for money." Visit cgpplus.co.uk today to start your free trial, then it's just £3 a month!

Meeting the reading challenge

Over 20 years ago Robinswood Press introduced the Lifeboat Read and Spell Scheme. While immediately recognised as an excellent reading scheme for all children, it was also seen as particularly well-suited to pupils with dyslexia and SEND, due to its practical handwriting requirement, multisensory exercises and incorporation of repetition. Since then, many thousands of schools around the world have made use of the Scheme – not just in English-speaking countries, but in many cases as an EFL resource. The resources making up the Lifeboat Read and Spell Scheme are among a range of products from Robinswood Press that have helped many children with a variety of challenges. For more information, contact **01684 899 419** or email ops@robinswoodpress.com

7



BSL for beginners

Learning British Sign Language is fun, fast and effective with our online course. We offer a comprehensive introduction to BSL that covers a wide range of topics, beginning with the basics – such as fingerspelling, greetings, and colours – before moving through subjects such as food, time, money, animals, weather, feelings, and occupations, including education. Learners find out about the unique grammar and syntax of BSL along the way, and by the end of the course should feel comfortable holding basic conversations in BSL – even in topics that haven't been covered in the content. british-sign.co.uk/learn

8



Word PERFECT

How one website saved this teacher time and reduced the anxiety around teaching vocabulary...

DAN SMITH

Even as an experienced teacher, it still made me nervous when I thought about how I taught vocabulary: am I using the right methods? Should I use the Frayer model? Should I use vocabulary lists? How often should I test pupils?

Some teachers would rightly argue that even before I got to the methods of teaching vocabulary, I needed to correctly identify what words I should be teaching! Firstly, there are the three tiers of vocabulary: basic, academic and specialist. Secondly, the words generated by each topic. Thirdly, words that students would find useful in their own reading and writing.

Scaffolds and reassurance

As an English teacher I felt added pressure to be the expert in this field and to immediately come up with effective strategies to ensure that students improved their vocabulary. When I discovered Rewordify (rewordify.com), it helped in two important ways: it had some amazing tools that helped save me and my department hours of prep time. But perhaps more importantly, it also made me realise that I knew what I was doing all along: if there was a website that had the option to produce a glossary, matching exercises, and multiple-choice

quizzes (all things I was already doing independently), then surely I was doing something right!

Probably the best thing about Rewordify is how easy it is to use: you simply copy and paste any piece of text into the box on the home screen and press the 'Rewordify text' button. The website immediately identifies the tier two vocabulary in the text and gives you a range of options. The default option is a copy of the text with all the difficult words changed into simpler ones, highlighted in yellow. Pupils are therefore able to read the text fluently without being 'interrupted' by words they don't know and having to check across at a glossary.

However, although this option is useful, I find that simply replacing the difficult language with simpler words does not help children tackle more difficult language; it certainly won't help to embed new words into their long-term memory! So, instead of sticking with the default option, I click the 'print/learning activities' button, which presents a menu of options. From this menu you can immediately produce a copy of the text with all the difficult

vocabulary highlighted, and a glossary down the side with those words defined. This can be printed immediately with or without a space for the pupil's name to show it is their personal copy. They are now able to engage with more challenging vocabulary.

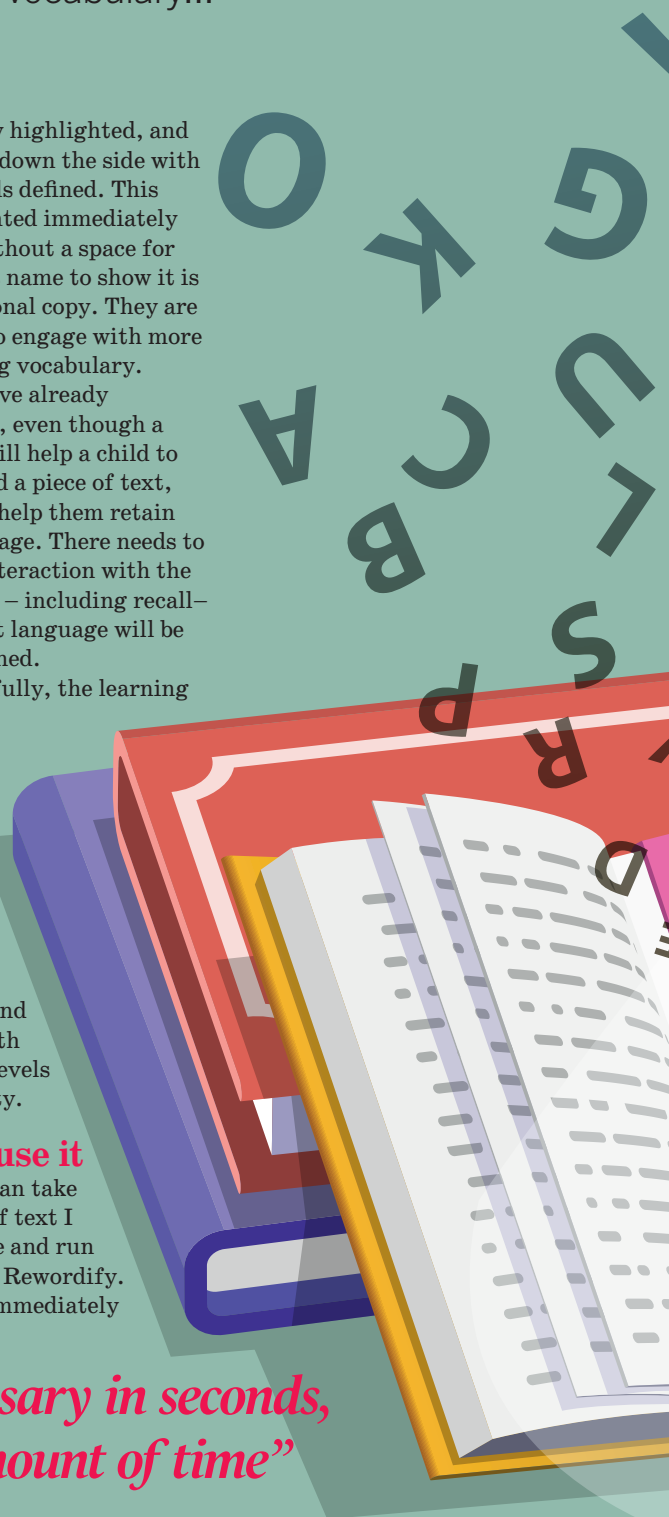
As I have already mentioned, even though a glossary will help a child to understand a piece of text, it will not help them retain that language. There needs to be more interaction with the new words – including recall – before that language will be really learned.

Thankfully, the learning activities menu contains a range of useful ideas for literacy activities, including matching exercises and quizzes with different levels of difficulty.

How I use it

Firstly, I can take the piece of text I wish to use and run it through Rewordify. This will immediately

"I can create a glossary in seconds, saving a huge amount of time"



identify and produce a list of the tier 2 vocabulary, and I can then decide whether to pre-teach it, or use the text with a glossary and then further embed the vocabulary afterwards. If the vocabulary seems particularly difficult, I usually choose to pre-teach it. However, if I feel that pupils will be confident and not

overwhelmed, I use the extract with a glossary first and then

embed the vocabulary in the following lessons.

For example, in our scheme of work we have an extract from *Great Expectations*: the extraordinary moment where Pip is confronted by Magwitch in the graveyard. This is for a secondary class, but the approach would work just as well with an extract for KS2. The description of Magwitch as a villain is vivid and terrifying; however, as a 19th century text there are several words that students wouldn't understand. I was able to identify all of the tier 2 vocabulary in the text so that students had a glossary to use while they were reading. After this, the matching exercises and word quizzes became literacy starters for the next few lessons. Students would come into the room and immediately complete a matching exercise

or a multiple-choice quiz in silence (you can scaffold this for KS2). The regular use of multiple-choice quizzes in particular helped to embed the vocabulary from this moment in Dickens' brilliant novel.

Another benefit is that once I have created a glossary for an extract I want to use in class, I have it forever. I can also add comprehension questions myself, thereby creating a powerful resource for my lessons. I have done this for a range of gothic extracts; stories such as *The Red Room* and *Dracula* would not be accessible without sensible scaffolding, but with the additions I have mentioned, students are able to explore the elements of a gothic story.

Best to check

This website of course isn't perfect; there will be times when you have to edit the glossary as it has either defined a word incorrectly, or it has identified a word that is too easy and given a definition. Even in the age of AI and ChatGPT, there still needs to be a professional teacher in charge of the final product or resource. However, it still saves a huge amount of time to be able to create a glossary and print one in seconds with a couple of tweaks, rather than generate the definitions and the template yourself. The same is true of the matching exercises and the quizzes.

There is an option to store your work on the website, however I simply download it myself so that it is stored on my drive. My department uses a central drive for schemes of work, so I have been able to produce extracts with glossaries and comprehension questions for everyone in my department to use. This benefits teachers and students alike and they can be used for several years, until we deem

HOW TO USE REWORDIFY

- 1 Copy any piece of text that you want to use.
- 2 Open rewordify.com and paste the piece of text into the box on the home screen and click the 'rewordify text' button.
- 3 The website will automatically produce the 'rewordified' text: however, I think it is better to choose the other options, so click on the 'print/learning activities' button, as simply replacing the difficult words won't help much with vocab development.
- 4 If you want the original text with a glossary on the side, you choose the 'text with vocabulary option'.
- 5 If you want a 'matching' exercise or quiz, simply choose these options from the same activities menu.
- 6 You can either immediately print the resource you have created, or you can copy the resource and save it to a Word document (I prefer to copy to Word).

it necessary to change our materials. However, the idea of changing materials and extracts is also less daunting as a result of using the tools we now have.

I found a time-saving tool, but I also found reassurance that the fundamentals of literacy work. **TP**



Dan Smith has been an English teacher for 12 years, and shares a variety of resources online.



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Years
1-6

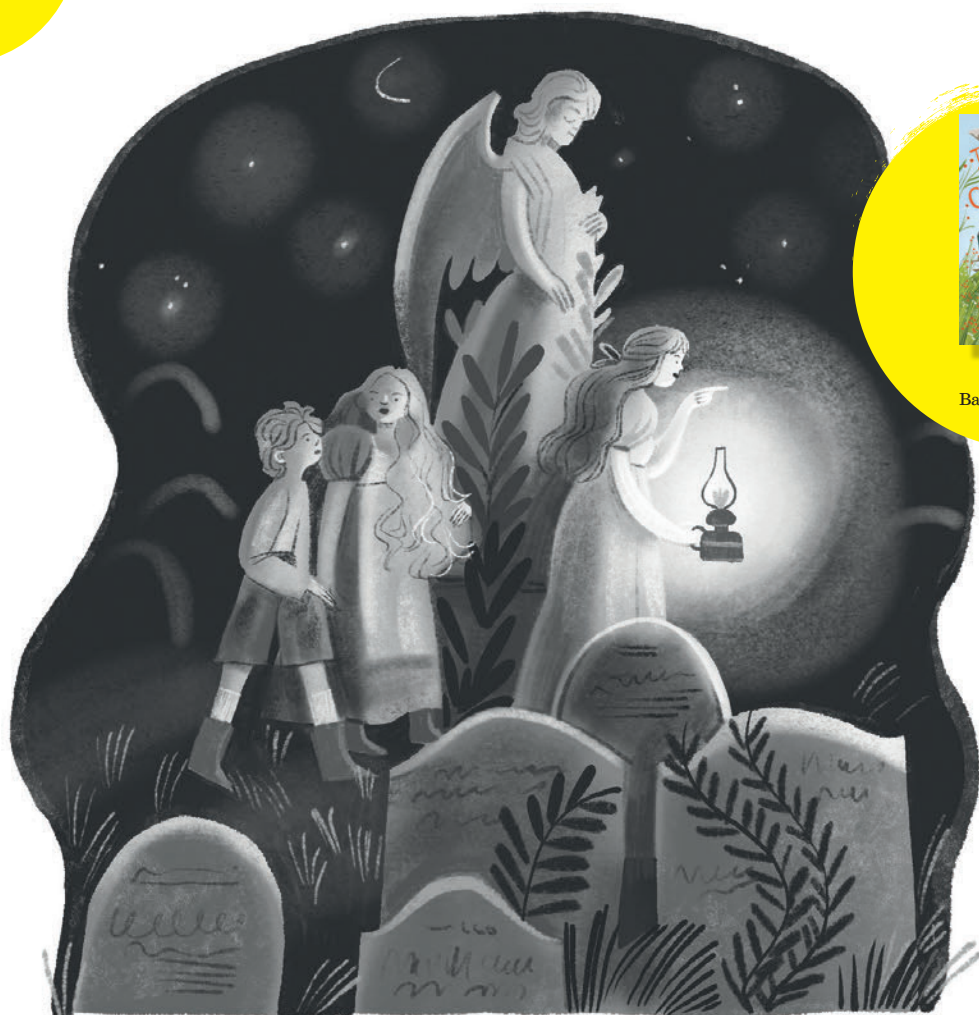


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Published by
Barrington Stoke,
2023

The Curio Collectors

Investigate Victorian botany and get hands-on with a suitcase full of curiosities in Eloise Williams' historical adventure

JO CUMMINS

There were two main reasons I was excited when a copy of *The Curio Collectors* dropped through my letterbox. Firstly, it was written by the award-winning author Eloise Williams, and secondly it was published by the wonderful people at Barrington Stoke.

Eloise Williams is a Welsh author who lives on the coast. This influence of the wildness around her is apparent in her beautiful writing where nature and the elements often play a key role. Her longer middle-grade novels are rich and atmospheric with punchy lead characters, so I'm thrilled that a new audience is now also able to enjoy

her work through her tightly written and pacy titles.

Barrington Stoke specialises in writing short, snappy, highly accessible books in a specially developed dyslexia-friendly font. They have an extensive range of titles from some of the very best children's authors, aimed at a variety of reading ages and interest levels. Eloise Williams is one of a growing roster of fabulous middle-grade authors to have joined Barrington Stoke's illustrious ranks.

The Curio Collectors invites much exploration over a range of subject areas, so it would be a great choice as the focus of a class topic on

the Victorians. The story could easily be used as a stimulus to help deliver curriculum objectives in English, history, science, geography and art. With that in mind, I have a few ideas to share with you to get your book topic started...

Activities Cover detectives

I often like to introduce a new book by having pupils explore the cover for clues as to what the story might be about. You could put a picture of the cover up on the whiteboard or have copies on tables for children to look at. Try asking them some of the following questions:

- What can you see in the front cover?
- What is the title?
- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- Who do you think are the main characters? Why?
- Where do you think the story might be set?
- When do you think the story might be set? What evidence do you have for this?
- What genre of story do you think this might be?
- What questions does the cover make you want to ask?
- If you could ask one of the characters on the cover a question, what would it be?

This is a wonderful way to encourage pupils to make predictions about a story and provide evidence for them. It also allows you to gauge what prior understanding of a genre or theme the children already have, and whether they are able to link the subject of the book to their own pre-existing knowledge or experiences. For example: "There is a traditional caravan on the front cover. I've been on holiday in a caravan. There wasn't much space, but you could travel



to a new place every day. Maybe the people in this story travel around too."

Tell me a story

One of the ways that Lily, Tom, and Ma Hawker persuaded people to buy their collection of curios was by weaving wonderful stories about where the objects had originally come from: a piece of leather and some old teeth become a snakeskin crown complete with venomous fangs; or an old piece of blue glass is a precious gem plucked from an ancient pharaoh's tomb.

Have a feely bag or old suitcase full of interesting objects – an old key, a chicken bone, an old doll etc. Reveal them one at a time and discuss what each object could be. Award bonus points for the most imaginative interpretation! You might like to record these as a class for children to refer back to later.

Allow some time for close examination, if possible, then ask pupils to pick one of the objects and answer the following questions:

- Where did it come from originally?
 - Who has it belonged to or where was it made? When?
 - What was it used for?
 - How did it come to be lost or thrown away?
 - Where could it have been found?
- For example, was it left behind at a caravan site or washed up on the beach?

Remember – the children need to make their objects sound as fascinating and fantastical as possible. They are going to use their ideas as the basis of their very own crowd-enthalling story. Ensure that lots of rich detail is included to create a vivid picture in their audience's mind and so convince them to part with their money.



For an interesting twist on this idea, pupils could try writing their stories in the first person from the perspective of the object itself, as though the object is recounting its life story.

Class museum

This book may also provide excellent inspiration for a class collection of curios to be displayed as though in a museum. You can encourage the children to bring in a 'found' object or an interesting item from home which could then be used to form an exhibition.

Visit some museum collections online and look at how the artefacts are displayed and labelled. What key information do the labels provide? (A description of what the artefact is, what

Take it further → → →

Clay tiles

Flora, the maid, is an avid collector of scrimshaw, as were many Victorians. Although scrimshaw is most commonly associated with items made from carved bone, rams' horn and seashells were also very collectable.

Give each child a clay tile and a selection of shells. Look at the various textures and sizes of the shells. After arranging them into the desired design, slowly but firmly push them into the clay then carefully remove,

leaving an imprint. When the tiles have dried out or been fired, the textured shell prints can be highlighted using paints or varnishes.

Lino printing

Shells are also the perfect inspiration for lino printing – this can also be done using polystyrene tiles and a pencil. Closely study a range of shells. Aim for a selection that has a variety of different markings, textures, shapes, and sizes. Real is better but

photographs would also work. The children need to create a sketch of their chosen shell or shells, which will be transferred onto a polystyrene tile using a sharp pencil. If the children want to create two-colour designs, they may just want to draw the outline of their shells onto the tile first, then print. When the print is dry, trace on the rest of the pattern using a different colour and print again over the top of the outline.

This technique would lend itself well to producing repeated printed patterns in the style of renowned Victorian designer, William Morris.

it's made of, where it was found, when, by whom.) Pupils could then write a similarly detailed label for their own artefact. This could be based partly in fact or in fiction – can they weave a tale that will draw in the crowds?

Once the items of curios have their labels, decide how the collection will be organised and displayed – in a timeline of discovery, by function, or by material, etc. The children will be able to devise lots of imaginative ways to organise them. You could then produce a map or guide to help visitors navigate the collection.

As an end to this project, you could invite families or other classes to come to a special viewing of the collection. There are lots of ways that pupils could be involved in organising and publicising this. They could help to write formal invitations to take home; produce persuasive, crowd-pulling posters; or make announcements in school assemblies.

Beautiful botany

One of the key issues within the story is that of Henrietta Meriweather's botanical research and notes being stolen by the wicked Mr Pinch and presented as his own. During the Victorian era, women were allowed greater access to the science of botany than other areas. The collecting, drawing, and studying of flowers was considered an elegant accomplishment. However, there were those who believed botany should be only for those with a formal education, meaning many women became excluded. I can certainly imagine many male botanists being jealous of the wealth of knowledge being collected by women and being very keen to claim some of it as their own.

Take time to explore some images of

Victorian botanical studies – what do pupils think of the illustrations? Do they have a favourite? Have any of the studies used pressed flowers? Can they identify various parts of the plants? What information has been included? Collect a list of technical terms which could be included in a glossary for use in their own writing later.

The children should be encouraged to become botanists and study the flora within their local habitats. Head out into the school grounds and survey what plants can be found. There are lots of free plant identification apps which could be used alongside classification keys or British flora guides. It might be interesting to be more scientific in your explorations and investigate whether different plants grow in different locations around the school grounds.

Collect samples of the plants within the grounds (for example: daisies, dandelions, buttercups). Take them back to class and try using flower pressing techniques to preserve them. This can easily be achieved by placing the leaves and flowers between two



Loved this? Try these...


- ❖ *Gaslight* by Eloise Williams
- ❖ *What a Shell Can Tell* by Helen Scales and Sonia Pulido
- ❖ *The House of One Hundred Clocks* by A. M. Howell
- ❖ *Where the Wilderness Lives* by Jess Butterworth
- ❖ *Fagin's Girl* by Karen McCombie

sheets of absorbent paper such as coffee filters or blotting paper, then placing them between the pages of a heavy book. An adult should also carefully dig up some samples with the roots intact.

Use magnifying glasses to carefully observe the collected specimens. What details are pupils able to see that are not easily visible to the naked eye? The children should then create careful pencil sketches or watercolour depictions of the flowers. When finished, add labels and information as per the Victorian studies you looked at earlier. Encourage pupils to use some of the technical vocabulary collected in the glossary of *The Curio Collectors*. **TP**



Jo Cummins is an advisory teacher for a specialist provision, an experienced English lead, and a children's book blogger. She has been part of the judging panel for several children's book awards and has delivered workshops at conferences across the country.

 @BookSuperhero2

 librarygirlandbookboy.com

The power of persuasion

The children could investigate some of the persuasive techniques the characters use to sell their curiosities, and try creating posters or persuasive slogans for a school event or for their own class museum.

Read page 30 as a class. What are some of the ways that the Curio Collectors try and draw in a crowd – what are they doing? Look at the language they use.

Can anyone find an example of alliteration? A superlative? Are there any words or phrases the children particularly like?

Pupils are now going to write their own

persuasive phrases. Start by thinking about some alternative names for the collection: *objects, artefacts, items, collectables*, etc. Create a whole class list. Do the same for superlatives: *amazing, awesome, outstanding, brilliant*, and so on. Use these lists as a basis for a persuasive alliterative phrase which could be used to convince people they want to come and see or do something.

Fantastic females

This book touches upon the injustice suffered by many female botanists during

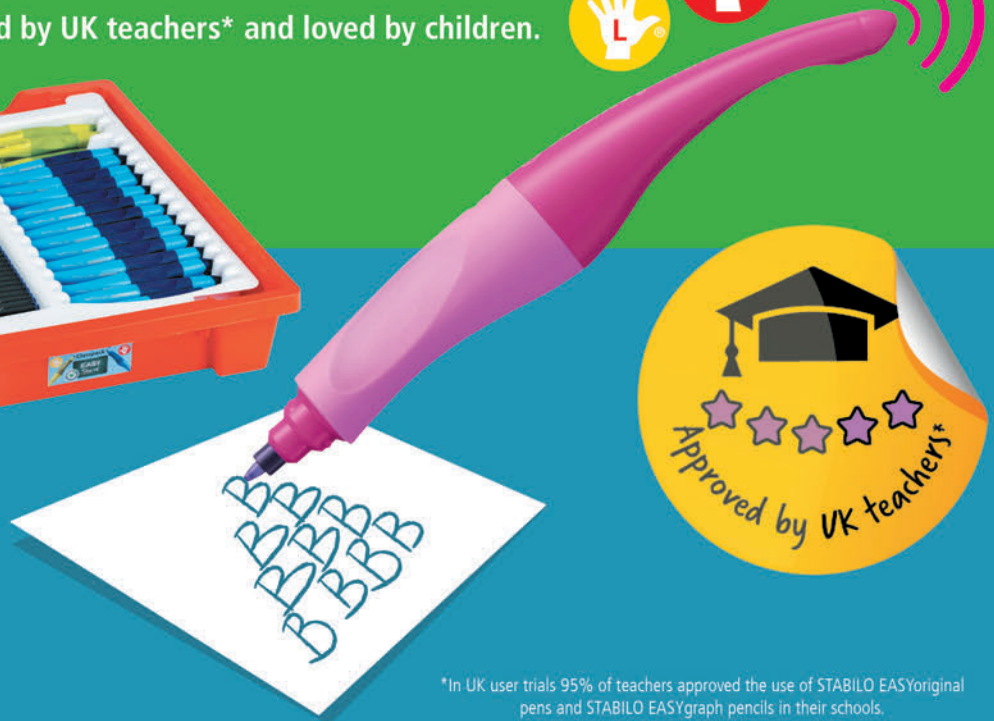
the Victorian era. Unfortunately, this gender bias was not limited to the study of botany, but across the sciences and many other areas too. Wouldn't it be fantastic if pupils were able to complete some research and create their own alternative timelines or texts? You might choose to focus upon science, but children may also want to look at other areas such as sports or computing, where the achievements of women have historically been swept under the carpet. There are lots of great biography templates online that you can use as the basis for a research project and more extended piece of writing.



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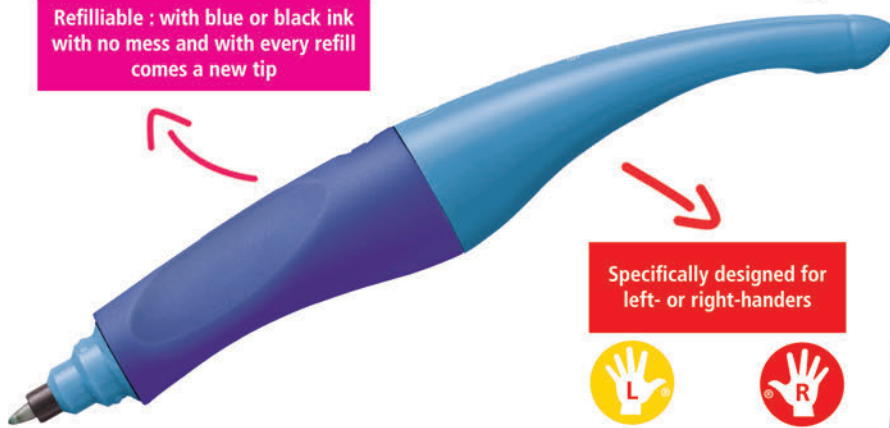
*In UK user trials 95% of teachers approved the use of STABILO EASYoriginal pens and STABILO EASYgraph pencils in their schools.

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sounds and smells of Viking-age York at JORVIK; get hands-on with archaeology at DIG; or experience the medieval period brought to life at Barley Hall. To find out more, get in touch with the friendly reservations team on **01904 615505** or schools@yorkat.co.uk



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Conway Centres understands every residential should be as unique as the school that visits, which is why they can tailor programmes to support your goals and your curriculum focus.

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Children's writing competition

The BBC is relaunching 500 Words, the UK's most successful children's writing competition, this September. This year, the competition is supported by BBC Teach and hosted by BBC Breakfast. There are two age categories: 5–7-year-olds and 8–11-year-olds, and children of all abilities can enter and not worry about spelling, punctuation or grammar. The best-selling authors Frank Cottrell Boyce, Francesca Simon, Charlie Higson and former Children's Laureate Malorie Blackman all return as judges, and joining the judging panel for 2023 will be Sir Lenny Henry! 500 Words will also enjoy the support of Her Majesty, the Queen Consort. Find out more at bbc.co.uk/500words



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Timotay Playscapes creates inspirational outdoor spaces for schools and Early Years settings. To support the Sport Premium initiative, it has developed a proven range of engaging products that will motivate children and increase participation in sports and help to reduce obesity.

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A quest for MEANING

Take pupils on an investigative journey, and help them ferret out the clues they need to properly exercise their inference skills

RYON LEYSHON

I recently read a meta-analysis examining the impact of inference-focused instruction on reading comprehension (Elleman, 2017). It was both enlightening and concerning at the same time...

The headline takeaway, on the surface at least, was clear: teaching children how to make inferences led to significantly improved reading comprehension in both skilled and less-skilled readers. That's great, right? So, why was I so concerned?

From my own background reading and personal experiences as the English lead in a primary school, I know that what one teacher considers to be an inference-focused instructional activity could be wildly different to another teacher's views. While one may be identifying meaning-rich words and phrases in their focus text to encourage children to consider, discuss and share ideas collaboratively, another could be teaching an entire 'inference-focused' reading lesson without a single word or text in sight! Yes, you read that right; I have witnessed many teachers getting children to analyse pictures during reading lessons in the hope that pupils will develop a generalisable inferencing skill that would in turn improve their reading comprehension. This is where my concerns were rooted; without a shared, research-informed understanding of what inference is, this

research could end up being misinterpreted and misused.

So, what do we really mean when we talk about making 'inferences' during our reading? Unfortunately, there are actually two main ideas, with slight differences, and this is where some ambiguity can creep in...

Text-based (cohesive) inferences

In the classroom, this conceptual understanding of the term 'inference' is less frequently used, but it's still important for us all to be familiar. It refers to the connections we must make between text-based information to

build a coherent understanding of the text. For example, we would make a simple text-based inference to connect the following two sentences: "Tom loved his new bike. He went straight outside to try it out." The text does not explicitly state that Tom rode the bike, but it is the only logical inference to make based on the information we have stated within the text (a simple understanding of pronouns doing most of the work here). Text-based inferences can

benefit from explicit teaching, especially when cohesive ties (words used to connect ideas across a text) are particularly difficult to match up to one another (say, for example, the nouns used to refer back to the same subject across many sentences are repeatedly varied – *the dragon... the sinister beast... the mythical creature... the fire-breathing monster*). It is also worth



noting that, as Zheng et al.'s (2023) recent meta-analysis in this area suggests, by developing children's understanding of word order (syntax), sentence structure and cohesive ties as part of their grammar instruction, we can make significant improvements to children's ability to successfully piece together text-based inferences, leading to improved reading comprehension.

Elaborative inferences

This is by far the most common conceptual understanding that we as educators refer to when using the term 'inference'. Elaborative inferences involve the reader drawing upon their existing knowledge base and wider understanding of the world around them to make sense of 'gaps' in the text. Here's an example of a sentence in which a very basic understanding of the world is required to piece together the events stated: "The coffee mug slipped out of her hands. Her favourite rug was surely ruined!" Amongst various other elaborative inferences we could make (for example, the girl might be a bit careless or clumsy!), we will likely use our experiences and knowledge of the world to sensibly assume that the coffee spilled out of the mug causing a stain on the rug that would be difficult to get out. Because elaborative inferences are so heavily based on, and constrained by, an individual's existing knowledge/experiences, it doesn't make sense for us to view this as a generalisable

'skill' that should be practised in isolation (and especially not with pictures), but more of an accumulation of useful, relevant knowledge we are aiming to build up and refine, with high-quality texts, over years of carefully-sequenced instruction.

Making inferences then, both text-based and elaborative, sits at the heart of what reading is all about! Piecing together the clues, speculating and revising our ideas as more clues are revealed, is what makes reading an active and enjoyable activity. Wouldn't it be great if we could spend more of our instructional time with children on these 'meatier', more enjoyable aspects of reading without all the other little activities

"There are two main ideas as to what we mean by 'inference'"

bogging us down? Well, that is actually what the inference meta-analysis I mentioned earlier suggests...

The kinds of instructional activities included in the studies analysed weren't revolutionary or overly complex; in fact, most of them would be fairly common in many classrooms. So, why did they have such a significant positive impact on children's reading comprehension? I think the answer lies in the exclusion criteria of the meta-analysis. What the researchers did was exclude all studies in which too much instructional time was devoted to developing literal comprehension and/or reading strategies, leaving them with a wide range of studies that had one thing in

common: they skipped the fluff, and went straight to the good stuff! The studies included in the meta-analysis all focused on helping pupils to uncover, explore and make connections between the deeper, richer meaning hidden within the inferences of high-quality texts, avoiding extraneous activities that would take instructional time away from this goal.

It's also interesting to note that the duration of the majority of the studies included in the meta-analysis were fairly short (less than 10 hours), suggesting that the gains in reading comprehension might be linked to an improved outlook on the reading process as a whole. Being immersed in meaning-rich activities may have helped some children to realise what this whole 'reading' thing was all about! It's likely that the habits of good readers were being instilled by the

constant and largely uninterrupted focus on exploring inferences and that pupils' 'standards of coherence' (the minimum amount of meaning they were willing to take from a text) had been raised, putting them in a stronger position when approaching future reading.

One last fascinating detail that emerged from the meta-analysis was that the least skilled readers – ones that would normally have difficulties with both literal and inferential comprehension – showed enormous gains on their literal comprehension of the texts. They didn't need to be 'drilled' on mind-numbing retrieval activities (that would have potentially 'switched them off' the text);

COMMON INFERENCE-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES

- **Inference question practise:** teachers provide questions that require an inference to be generated about the text.
- **Text clue integration:** teachers show children how to use key clues within the text to construct and revise text understanding.
- **Perspective taking:** the emphasis is largely on children empathising with the characters to better consider their motives.
- **Background knowledge strategy:** children are given explicit guidance on how to choose relevant background knowledge to fill in gaps in the text.
- **Text structure and organisation focus:** graphic organisers are used to make the text structure clear and encourage the use of relevant background knowledge.

they were able to build a more coherent literal understanding of the text through inference-focused instruction.

The message here is clear: inference is the key. But it is also vital that we truly understand the extent to which children's inference-making abilities are dependent on the knowledge bases that we, as educators, carefully create. Luckily for us teachers, this happens to be the fun stuff! **TP**

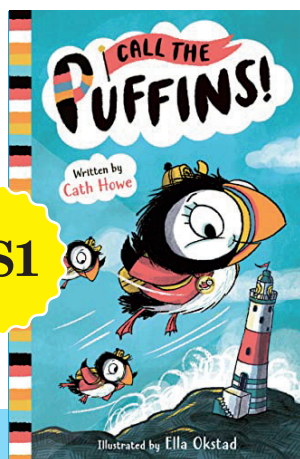


Ryon Leyshon is an experienced primary school teacher and English subject lead/coordinator.

Book CLUB



We review five new titles that your class will love



KS1

Call the Puffins!
by Cath Howe, ill. Ella Okstad
(£6.99, Welbeck)

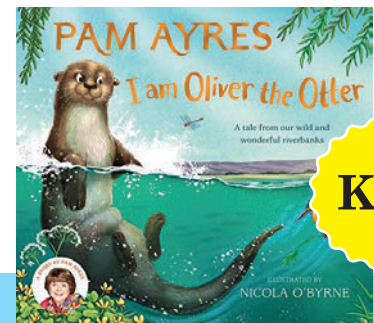
I promise to be unflappable / To bravely cross the sea and sky / To rescue eggs and also birds / It may not work, but I'll always try. Meet Muffin the Puffin, who is training hard to join a search and rescue team on the island of Egg. As Muffin starts her training, she meets new friends who must all work together to help all the birds on the island. The first book in a new series from Cath Howe, this uplifting tale explores teamwork, belonging and resilience, and is perfect for your youngest pupils. The delightful illustrations throughout will help those who are transitioning from picturebooks to longer chapter books, and for an extra kick of knowledge, the back pages include a series of fascinating facts about puffins – including that their beaks light up in the dark!



KS1

Luna and the Sky Dragon
by Bethan Woollvin
(£7.99, Two Hoots)

Luna is fascinated with astronomy, and even has her own observatory where she can gaze at the sky through her telescope, and learn all about the planets, moons and stars that she sees. But Luna is alone in this educational adventure – the villagers where she lives are all convinced the sky is ruled by a terrifying Sky Dragon, who must be appeased, lest he send fiery storms and tear open the heavens. Luna tries explaining to the villagers that they need not be scared of the Sky Dragon, and that all of the phenomena they're witnessing can be explained by science, but they're not so sure... An excellent tale of the intersection between science and mythology, Luna is even based on a real-life female astronomer who lived in Ancient Greece and used her studies of the sky to predict lunar eclipses.



KS1

I am Oliver the Otter
by Pam Ayres,
ill. Nicola O'Byrne
(£12.99 HB, Pan Macmillan)

This stunning picturebook from British poet Pam Ayres is a joy to behold for all animal lovers. Told in rhyming verse from the point of view of Oliver the otter, it introduces us to this adorable species and how they live, as well as our duty to protect the world we all inhabit. Oliver is happy enough swimming about in nice clean rivers and eating delicious fish, but can sometimes get lonely. When he meets fellow Otter, Ottilie, he is spellbound and they start a family. Filled with information on otters and their habitats, this book is at once an educational delight and a sweet story to engage young readers. Stunning illustrations from Nicola O'Byrne add a classic feel and can serve as inspiration for pupils to explore their own local area, and draw pictures of the animals they find there. Can they spot signs of an otter like Oliver?

→→→RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

plazoom

EXPLORE OLIVER TWIST IN UKS2

Part of Plazoom's powerful Unlocking Inference collection, this resource pack includes a fully annotated extract, with close vocabulary work as well as questions designed to elicit sophisticated, evidenced inferences from all pupils. A complete course of video training explains the layered reading approach that will ensure deep understanding of the text for the whole class – try it today, at bit.ly/PlzOliver



Meet the author

STEPHEN MULHERN ON THE JOY OF MAGIC AND NEVER GIVING UP ON YOUR DREAMS

Photo © Oliver Rosser



What was primary school like for you?

I absolutely loved every minute of primary school. It was the best

time of my life – it was just brilliant! Interestingly, I still have three friends that I made from primary school who are friends of mine to this very day, which is amazing.

When did you first get into magic? What inspired your interest?

I got into magic when I was just 11 years old, and my dad taught me how to do my first few magic tricks. It just grew from there. At 18 I did work experience for the famous toyshop Hamleys and the department store Harrods in London, and became their resident magician, and then it just continued on and on and I've never looked back – I love it!

How would you like teachers to use your book in the classroom?

I'd love teachers to use the book as a fun story, and as a resource where kids can actually learn a new talent if they choose to. There is a magic QR code at the back of the book which they can scan and learn all kinds of cool tricks to use on their family and friends. It's always been my aim that the Max Magic books are accessible for every level of reader; they're purposely formatted in a dyslexia-friendly layout to make them easier to read.

I also hope that it's clear to readers that each book delivers a different and encouraging message. In my first book, *Max Magic*, the main message is that anything is possible. In the sequel, *Max Magic: The Greatest Show on Earth*, the key message is to never give up. I think both of these are essential lessons for young people – and not-so-young people! – especially in today's complicated and often overwhelming world.

Max Magic: The Greatest Show on Earth by Stephen Mulhern and Tom Easton, illustrated by Begoña Fernández Corbalán (£7.99, Piccadilly Press) is out now.

KS2



Call of the Titanic by Lindsay Galvin

(£7.99, Chicken House)

Set sail into the past for one of history's most famous disasters, and learn all about what really happened aboard the RMS Titanic. Kicking off with fictionalised court records from a real-life steward, Sidney Daniels, this book provides an insight into the historical facts, all wrapped up in the joy of an invented story. From the first page, Galvin's telling is captivating, and the main narrative – a first-person recollection from the fictional Clara, a stowaway on the Titanic's rescuer ship, the Carpathia – perfectly complements the transcripts from Sid's inquiry. This would be the perfect book to read as part of a topic on the Titanic, and will spark fascinating discussions around how we can use fictional structures to help us understand historical facts. So dive in and get your history lessons off to a fascinating start.

Max Magic: The Greatest Show on Earth

by Stephen Mulhern & Tom Easton

(£7.99, Piccadilly Press)

The keenly awaited sequel to the best-selling *Max Magic*, this new title finds Max entering the world's biggest magic competition – The Greatest Show on Earth. But as always, things aren't smooth sailing. Can Max and his talking dog Lucky harness their self-belief and resilience – not to mention the magical powers Max has had ever since opening a magical chest in Gran's antique shop – to defeat the bullies, and a rival magician, determined to bring them down? Printed in a dyslexia-friendly font and interspersed with illustrations from Begoña Fernández Corbalán, this is a great story to share with children to help inspire them to follow their dreams, and, importantly, to never give up. IN addition, Mulhern and Easton have included instructions for real-life magic tricks – a lovely touch.

KS2





Are your students ready for the Elements this summer?

We've teamed up with Disney and Pixar to celebrate the release of their new film **Elemental**, in cinemas 7 July, and to help young people make the most of the summer no matter what the elements bring.

Downloadable poster

Each summer lots of us get caught out by the changing elements. Whether that is getting too hot, getting caught in the rain or even having your garden furniture blown around. We've designed a downloadable poster for your classrooms with tips to help everyone make the most of the summer months.

Let's all be ready for the elements this summer!

Visit our website for more details and to collect your free download.

www.metoffice.gov.uk/WeatherReady

Join the conversation [#WeatherReady](https://twitter.com/WeatherReady)



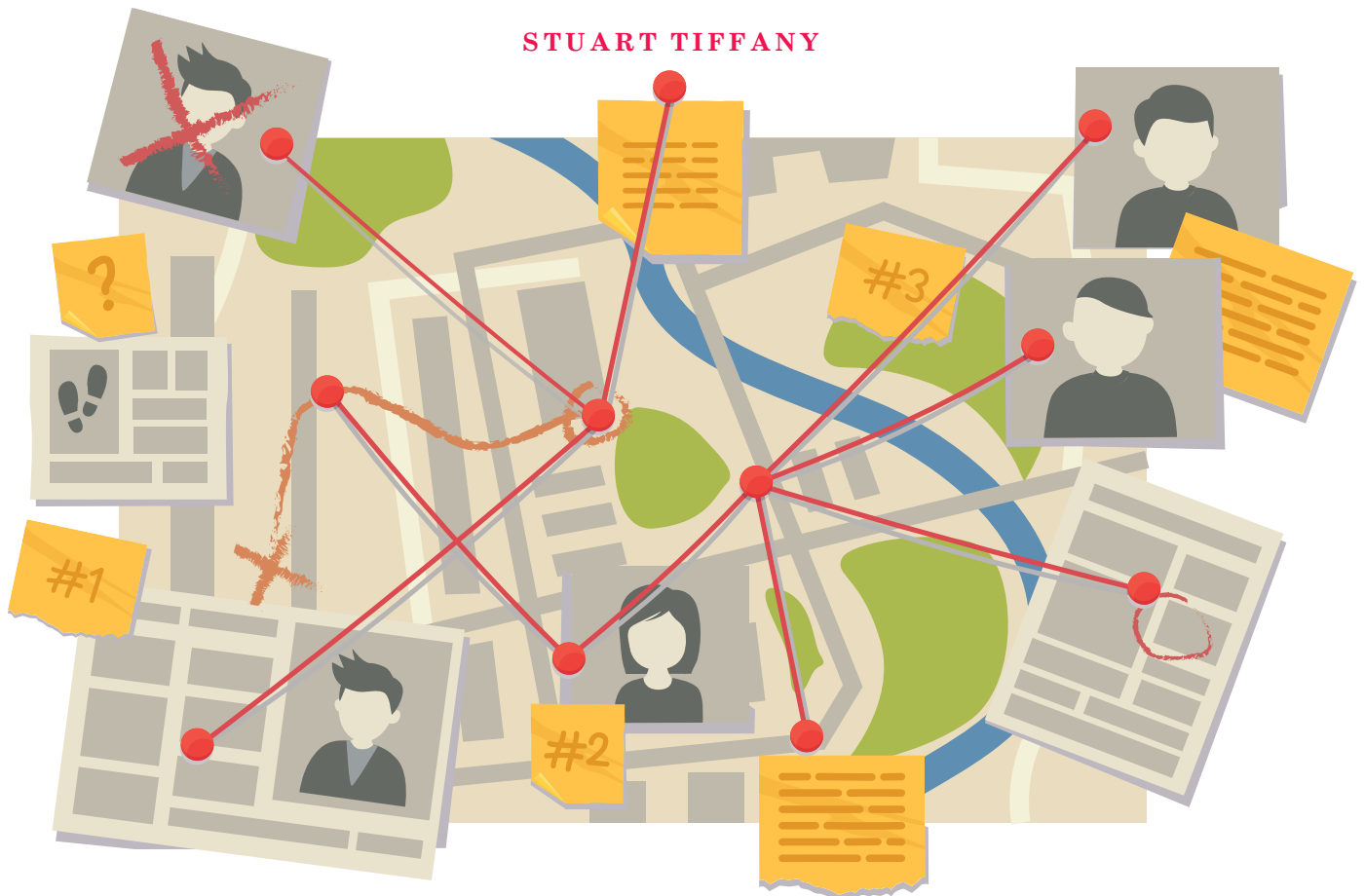
Don't miss Disney and Pixar's Elemental, in cinemas 7 July



PROVE IT!

Do you know the difference between a source and evidence?
Here's how to use them both to bolster pupils' historical understanding...

STUART TIFFANY



There has been a big shift in the teaching of history since 2019, and the role that sources of evidence play in the acquisition of knowledge and the wider discipline of history shouldn't be understated. Think about what you would define as a source in history teaching... is this the same thing as evidence? They overlap but are not in fact the same! A simple definition to begin with:

- A source is anything that contains information about the past.
- Evidence is what we take from that source to utilise it for a specific purpose.

The reason I use the phrase 'anything' is that the list of what we could use is potentially endless. In *What is*

“Think about what you would define as a source in history. Is this the same as evidence?”

History? historian E. H. Carr wrote: 'The facts are available to the historian in documents, inscriptions and so on, like fish on the fishmonger's slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him.' The implication is that facts are the backbone of the historian's crafts. Sources of evidence are what allow historians to acquire those facts, but then something must be done with them. This is important to consider because the breadth of what teachers *could* use is

potentially daunting if they are unsure about which offers most value to the unit in question.

So... what does this mean for teachers?

Primary and secondary sources

Two terms that present immense amounts of confusion are primary and secondary sources. Should we introduce them in KS1? You can, but personally, I wouldn't because it is not mentioned in the curriculum and is so

nuanced, it needs to be done deliberately and carefully. By the end of Year 2, if children know what a source of evidence is, how they are used in history and that a range of them exists, that's a great starting point! In KS2, you can add to this understanding by distinguishing between primary and secondary. Primary sources are a snapshot in time with a direct link to the matter in question. Secondary sources have a layer of interpretation and are not directly connected to the matter.

How can we use them within history teaching?

When teaching, sources of evidence need to be embedded throughout so children



understand both what we currently think about the topic in question, and how that knowledge was acquired. The national curriculum refers to this in both Key Stages 1 and 2 in two main parts:

- 1) The different ways in which we find out about the past.
- 2) The different ways in which the past has been depicted.

Therefore, when teaching we must accomplish both parts to meet the NC specification but, more importantly, support children in gaining a more in-depth understanding of what it means to 'do history'. When planning and teaching, I would suggest the following approach in order to facilitate this.

First, clearly define history units with enquiry questions. This allows you to emphasise which parts of the period are most important to their learning. In addition, this narrows down which sources of evidence are most likely to offer the valuable knowledge needed to understand and then answer said question.

If this is not currently how history is approached at your school, I would suggest taking a look at the Historical Association's enquiry toolkit, which can be accessed for free at tinyurl.com/tp-HAtoolkit

Once this is in place, define the knowledge that is central to understand the enquiry question and then answer it. This once again allows you to further narrow the field of study, considering which sources of evidence are the most pertinent. Once this in place, the key is to find a range of sources to build as clear a picture as possible.

Modes of delivery

The language of Rosenshine's Principles of Instruction is common parlance in many primary classrooms, even if they aren't aware of the work that underpins it. If we teach maths in small steps because it's beneficial, why wouldn't we do it in history too? I do, we do, you do... the same principle still works here!

Start by thinking about what the children have studied so far, specifically

around the range of source material and how it was utilised. Do they have knowledge we can activate and build on?

Then, model the relationship between the enquiry question and the source material so children know that what we learn from a source must add value to that question. Without that, we may only get generic information that doesn't add to the enquiry process.

Why does this matter? It's important that pupils gain both substantive and disciplinary knowledge. However, history has the word *story* in it for a reason. The knowledge needs to be historicised in order that the knowledge is placed within a particular 'story' of the past. Focus on building a more detailed picture of the past and connecting the various snapshots and interpretations the children have encountered to form a stronger and more secure understanding.

Sources of evidence, then, are what we use in history in order to construct our knowledge of the past. Therefore, we need to teach them explicitly and throughout the teaching sequence. Ensure children know that sources offer us some evidence towards our enquiry but are unlikely to provide a complete picture – such is the nature of history! **TP**



Stuart Tiffany is a primary teacher, history CPD

provider and consultant. He is also the author of Mr T Does Primary History (£21.99, SAGE), out on 8 July.

@Mr_S_Tiffany

mrtdoeshistory.com

3 COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

1 There is a definitive list of knowledge to take from sources of evidence. This is not true because there are many categories of source material we may choose to tap into. An archaeological object is inherently different to a diary, therefore what they offer is also fundamentally different. Historian Christine Counsell said a key difference is whether the source offers conscious commentary or not. The question we ask is what drives the evidence we take from the source.

2 Sources are either useful, or they're not. Once again, the answer is more complex and led by the important role enquiry questions play. Can an object be unreliable given it just is? The reliability is more likely a feature of what we endeavour to learn from it and our interpretations based on the limited picture it presents. Reliability is more likely to be an active consideration when dealing with a commentary. Here, bias does matter and considering it is right and proper. Make sure the children are aware of who wrote it, when, why, etc, alongside their perspective. Without that, we may know what someone said about something, but are missing what facilitated their particular perspective of that event.

3 Primary sources are better than secondary. This is not the case even if the person writing the source material actually witnessed the event to which the source relates. They offer a perspective on what happened, but this is one snapshot of many. A secondary source collates a broad range of evidence and therefore has a wider field of study which includes primary source material.



30 SECOND BRIEFING

Kapow Primary's history and geography schemes empower teachers and subject leaders to teach impactful lessons with confidence. The geography lesson plans are relatable and relevant, enabling children to connect easily with the subject matter. For history, contemporary resources feature an exclusive interactive timeline that fosters the development of chronological awareness...

5 REASONS TO TRY... Kapow Primary's humanities schemes

Find complete curriculum coverage and lesson plans for engaging history and geography classes

1 TEACHER SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE VIDEOS

Kapow Primary delivers integrated CPD via its popular teacher videos. These bite-sized videos will help you to deliver high-quality, relevant and engaging lessons. Learn about Roman Army formations and how to recreate them; gain in-depth knowledge about the threats to the Great Barrier Reef; or explain how the physical features of Ancient Greece affected governance and trade. Each original video, created by a team of subject specialists, introduces key vocabulary and facts while addressing common pupil misconceptions.



4 UNIQUE PRIMARY SOURCES

Amongst Kapow Primary's wide range of history resources are several unique primary sources. These include Tudor inventories describing the possessions of real Tudor people, and an original transcription of Elizabeth I's visit to Worcester. The lesson plans provide detailed guidance for teachers about how to use these remarkable resources to create meaningful experiences for children. Using primary sources of evidence helps children to form a link between now and the past and adds a deeper level of reality to their learning.

2 INTERACTIVE TIMELINE

Kapow Primary has produced a digital timeline to help develop children's chronological understanding of history. This innovative tool enhances children's comprehension of duration and concurrency in a highly engaging and visual way. The interactive timeline enables pupils to explore and compare different periods and reveal the key events. The website explains how to make the most of the timeline's customisable features – such as how to pin specific events for future reference or to filter for particular time periods.

3 FIELDWORK OPPORTUNITIES

Put the fun back into fieldwork with Kapow Primary's geography scheme. Teaching effective fieldwork in primary schools can be difficult due to logistical and locational challenges. These lesson plans offer alternative suggestions to remove these barriers and make fieldwork accessible to all schools. The resources use various methods to present human and physical features in the locality, including sketch maps, plans, graphs and digital technologies. They also support teaching fieldwork skills and how to apply them to the modern world.

Kapow Primary

Contact:
Visit: [kapowprimary.com](https://www.kapowprimary.com)
Email: enquiries@kapowprimary.com
Call: 0203 873 1326

5 CUSTOMISABLE RESOURCES

Kapow Primary's geography and history pupil-facing lesson presentations are customisable on the website. You can personalise presentations by uploading your own images for some of the lessons using the presentation mode. The upload function is a versatile tool for both history and geography, and you can use it to compare photographs of historical figures, view artefacts side by side, plan fieldwork routes, discuss different geographical features and consider old documents. Online instructions take you through how to customise your lesson content and save your work.

KEY POINTS

With programmes created by subject specialists, Kapow Primary supplies everything you need to teach engaging and effective history and geography lessons with confidence.

Kapow Primary subject resources offer extensive subject leader support, including built-in assessment tools and full national curriculum coverage.

As well as geography and history, Kapow Primary provides lesson plans for art & design, wellbeing, French, computing, music, design & technology, and RSE & PSHE.

Schools that take up subscriptions for both history and geography are covered for humanities planning and resources across Key Stages all year round!

The science of SEQUENCING

Unlock understanding for pupils by using the key concepts of cognitive science to organise your humanities curriculums

MARC HAYES

Imagine this: you've spent hours and hours on your latest unit of work, you've done a ton of research, you've identified potential misconceptions, you've created beautiful resources... and by the end of the unit, the children still fail to tell you at least five things they've learned.

This familiar frustration plays out in primary schools across the land. But why does it happen so frequently?

Cognitive science offers us an answer. It explains that a child's working memory can only hold three to four pieces of information before being overloaded. For content to be stored in long-term memory, a child must spend a substantial amount of time thinking about it and consider it repeatedly over time.

Teaching new content in bitesize chunks and reviewing it afterwards until pupils have memorised it are two important principles for effective teaching and learning. However, with so much content to cover – especially in the humanities subjects – this can be a real challenge.

Considering how content is sequenced can help; the way teaching units are structured and sequenced has a significant impact on what children learn. By thinking about how content builds on prior knowledge and returns to key concepts, we can unlock opportunities to

support memorisation. This makes our teaching more effective, as pupils develop their understanding and make meaningful links to what they already know.

At my school, we've been working on making content more memorable for a number of years. We've tried being more specific with the content. We've tried regular retrieval practice. We've tried finding high-quality texts and reading them repeatedly. All have had some impact, but we still found that children's ability to discuss their learning in their own language and on their own terms was quite limited.

Considering the sequences of learning more carefully, especially referring back to similar ideas throughout a unit has, however, had some promising effects. We feel now that children are more able to articulate what they have learned and more easily give examples.

If you're interested in introducing something similar, here are three ways in which content in

humanities subjects could be sequenced over different periods of time:

History – sequencing a unit

A key idea of Ancient Egypt is the concept of pharaoh. If children have one lesson on Egyptian monarchs, their understanding is likely to be limited. They may remember that *pharaoh* is the name for an Egyptian king or queen – a concept that's already familiar to them, so is more easily remembered. They may also remember some catchy

names like Tutankhamun or Cleopatra, but if all the more ambitious content about pharaohs is given in one lesson, they are unlikely to be able to recall it all later.

Instead, we can return to the concept over a series of lessons. Pharaohs can be understood in terms of their position in the social hierarchy when exploring Ancient Egyptian society, their divinity when exploring Ancient Egyptian religion, and how their tombs can help historians understand this period of time.



Returning to the concept not only enforces the definition of pharaoh, but it also develops children's conceptual understanding – their schema. By structuring content to make repeated links back to the core knowledge of the curriculum, we can not only prevent forgetting but actually deepen understanding.

Geography – sequencing across a Key Stage

Some concepts in the humanities are massive and really do require more teaching time than we might first think.

I used to think climate could be learned in a couple of hour-long lessons... how wrong could I be? Whilst previously I might have been happy with my children being able to parrot that 'climate is the average weather of a place', I've become increasingly bothered that not only is this a superficial understanding, it is also next to meaningless without rich examples underpinning it.

It's important to remember that the national curriculum describes the 'outcomes' of teaching sequences, and for something like climate, the outcome – being able

“Returning to a concept enforces its definition and deepens understanding”

to understand climate as a concept – is a consequence of being taught about its many components and thinking about how they are related. For children to achieve this outcome, they will need to have learned about weather, the water cycle, the sun's intensity at different latitudes, climate zones, the relationship between climate and biome and why certain vegetation grows in certain parts of the world. Embedding these components in different units of study across KS2 is one way to provide sufficient examples of a concept without overloading children in a single lesson or series of lessons. It's important, however, to make sure pupils are aware of how all the components are connected to the central concept.

RE – sequencing from EYFS to Y6

Whatever the local specification for RE, determining what content to teach is a substantial task for any RE leader. To gain

a rich understanding of the many concepts that might be taught, we need to return to them time and time again, with meaningful examples used to illustrate key components.

Whoever designs the curriculum at your school can support you to achieve this by setting out the content required for each year group and, importantly, describing how that content links to and builds on what children have already learned.

Take, for example, the concept of forgiveness in Christianity. Children in KS1 may learn that forgiveness is a core Christian belief and may learn about stories such as the Prodigal Son. In KS2, pupils might return to the concept of forgiveness but approach their learning with increased sophistication, going into more depth. Returning to a familiar story gives children the chance to extend their understanding of what that story means for Christians. Afterwards, they could then learn about other important stories, such as Joseph and his brothers, once the more sophisticated content about forgiveness has been practised in a familiar context.

The curriculum is never done, and we can always find ways to improve and optimise our teaching sequences at every level. When you're next reviewing your subject, planning or teaching materials, thinking about how the content fits together can be a promising avenue in supporting children to remember more of what they have been taught. **TP**

COGNITIVE SCIENCE GLOSSARY



• Working memory

This is the part of the brain where information is held and manipulated while we think. It's a bit like the brain's workspace. Like a physical workspace, it becomes difficult to think effectively when there is too much going on. Cognitive scientists suggest that working memory can typically hold three to four pieces of separate information before becoming quickly overloaded. They also suggest information can be held for about 30 seconds before being lost, unless it is rehearsed.



• Long-term memory

This is where information is held for long periods of time. If children have information in their long-term memory, we can class it as having been learned. LTM is characterised by being stable and somewhat infinite in its capacity. Memories are strengthened by retrieval practice.



• Cognitive overload

This is where the working memory has too much to think about. Unfortunately, it isn't limited to curriculum content: it includes any sensory information such as sights and sounds, including any background noise and distractions. We should try to reduce any sensory information which is non-curriculum content to optimise learning for our pupils.



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Out in THE FIELD

Gather your maps and head outside to give pupils a skills-packed, meaningful geography experience they won't soon forget...

JULIA MACKINTOSH

Many of us can remember very little about the geography we studied at primary school, whereas field trips to the local river, town or even (in my own case) the sewage works can be the exception to this rule. However, the importance of engaging in fieldwork in the primary phase goes beyond providing memorable experiences.

Well-designed fieldwork has the potential to inspire in pupils a curiosity and fascination about the world, an appreciation of other people's values and attitudes, and offers opportunities to develop key geographical skills.

Although fieldwork is one of the signature pedagogies of geography, Ofsted's Geography in outstanding primary schools blog (2020) notes that subject inspections highlight that many primary pupils have weak geographical skills due, in part, to a paucity of meaningful fieldwork.

Here are some practical pointers that geography subject teams can apply to kickstart fieldwork planning and delivery...

Planning: five key questions

Co-planning sequences of lessons between subject leaders and teachers that include fieldwork provides the opportunity

to discuss the essential concepts, knowledge, skills and principles of geography, as well as ideas about enquiry-based approaches to learning. It's important not to lose sight of the aims of the curriculum; refer back to the 'big ideas' of geography and familiarise each other with key concepts. For example, before visiting a locality, pupils can use maps and aerial photographs to find out 'Where is this place?' (key concept: space), and 'How does my view of this place change when I zoom in and out?' (key concept: scale).

During their visit, pupils can investigate: *'What is this place like?', 'What kind of physical and human features does it have?'* or *'How do I feel about this place?'*. Activities back in the classroom can help pupils to consider *'How is this place changing?'* or *'How does it compare to other places?'* (key concept: place and environment).

As Simon Catling and Tessa Willy say in *Understanding and Teaching Primary Geography*, there are five key questions to consider when planning fieldwork:

1. What is the purpose of the fieldwork, and why is it included in this topic?
2. What types of data are to be gathered and in what form (e.g. mapping, taking photographs, counting)?
3. Given the pupils' age and experience, what skills and techniques will help them to gather the data?

4. Which of these skills can they already use and which are new to them?

5. How do pupils build on what they can do already, and how will they develop and apply new skills or techniques?

Asking these questions can prompt conversations about how to build upon pupils' prior experiences and when and how to introduce new concepts and skills.

You can also consider opportunities for children make use of the skills learned in different subjects. For example, you might give thought to how data handling techniques learned in maths can be applied to design questionnaires, tallies, tables or graphs, and how features of persuasive arguments or non-chronological reports



learned about in English can be used by pupils to share their fieldwork findings.

Determining the nature of fieldwork

In undertaking fieldwork, children should be encouraged to adopt an 'enquiry approach', where investigation questions are driven by a genuine 'need to know'. Support pupils to answer questions using evidence in the form of numerical data, observations, and opinions from people or other artefacts, and to use geographical skills to analyse, describe, classify, and explain findings and patterns. Finally, encourage them to reflect on their findings, communicating what they have learned and evaluating the whole process.

It's also ideal to plan fieldwork activities that seek to solve real-life problems, with a genuine purpose, audience and outcome. This is not only highly

motivating for pupils, but helps them understand what it means to 'behave like a geographer' and to be an active citizen, caring for and having a say in how their local environment is maintained.

Effective classroom-based activities pre-fieldwork

Fieldwork gives pupils authentic learning experiences, but as easy as it is to get carried away about the fieldwork itself, there is essential work to be done in the classroom beforehand.

Initial classroom-based activities might include the use of maps and aerial photographs to locate and initially investigate the chosen place. This might be followed by lessons supporting pupils to understand how to collect data in the field and practising the skills needed for this. Also, 'walking through' planned fieldwork activities together with pupils and adult helpers before leaving the classroom ensures that fieldwork aims are understood by all. Using photographs of the route to the fieldwork venue and place itself can highlight safety issues relating to traffic and other possible hazards, and using 'social stories' can help children to understand who and what they will see.

Providing adult helpers with a list of key questions will help support focused discussion during fieldwork activities.

Engaging with fieldwork on this level illustrates that geography is concerned with asking questions about the world and developing the skills needed to answer them. So let's go outside! **TP**

7 enquiry question ideas



EYFS

What would the Naughty Bus see in our school?

Read *Naughty Bus* by Jan and Jerry Oke. Explore the outdoor area, noting and naming features the Naughty Bus might see. Follow a photo trail to find hidden toys.



YEAR 1

How does our school change with the seasons?

Visit one place in the school grounds four times over the year to observe weather and seasonal change, focusing on deciduous trees or plants. Record changes using digital photographs and/or collections of natural objects.



YEAR 2

How do we feel about the local park?

Follow a route to and from the local park, observing physical and human features. Note how people use this place and express



YEAR 3

How are rocks used in our local area?

Follow a predefined route around the local area and identify the location of rocks used in buildings/natural features. Record these features using a digital mapping package. Personal feelings using happy/sad faces and plot on a map.



YEAR 4

How does our local river change from the source to the sea?

Using OS maps, trace the route of a local river, identify the source and key features. Visit the river, make annotated drawings to record river features and collect data about river flow and the shape of the channel.



YEAR 5

What is changing in our local area?

Using local news reports, investigate a current local issue, e.g. a new housing development. Collect data using photographs, questionnaires, tallies and record findings using charts, graphs and maps. Suggest possible future changes.



YEAR 6

How can we make the school grounds more sustainable?

Pupils design enquiry questions to investigate how the sustainability of the school might be improved, e.g.

biodiversity, use of resources, pollution. They also design and use tools to collect data and present findings to the headteacher.

• From 'Geography' by Julia Mackintosh and Martin Sutton in *Essential Subject Knowledge for Primary Teaching*, ed Nasreen Majid (Sage, 2023).



Julia Mackintosh is a postgraduate primary tutor and subject lead for primary geography at the University of Hertfordshire, and a subject consultant for primary geography at NASBTT, where she supports Subject Development Resources for trainee teachers and early career teachers.

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Warwick Castle

Warwick Castle has a full day of learning and discovery jam-packed into its walls, with an experienced education team dedicated to bringing history vividly to life through a full programme of tours and workshops.

A trip to the castle is made easy for teachers, with one-to-one booking support and a brand new schools officer, who helps make sure your trip goes perfectly, even helping organise your day upon arrival. Look out for the brand new Falconer's Quest, starting from Easter – it's set to be the UK's largest bird of prey show and is included in your ticket price.

For more information call 0871 222 2772 or visit warwick-castle.com

De Havilland Aircraft Museum

Capture and keep the attention of your pupils with a visit to one of the country's premier aviation museums, where the emphasis is not only on historic aircraft but also on the vast contribution manufacturer de Havilland Aircraft Company made to the South Herts scene. Situated at Salisbury Hall, London Colney, just off J22 of the M25, it offers a specially tailored experience for students from the age of four upwards through its collection of more than 20 de Havilland aircraft – they can even sit in some – and range of engines. For more information, visit www.dehavillandmuseum.co.uk or call 01727 826 400 (24hr).



Tonbridge Castle

Tonbridge Castle educational tours and workshops immerse students in the turbulent and fascinating history of this long-standing gatehouse, offering a fun, informative and hands-on way to learn about the past. Visiting pupils will experience a vivid recreation of the sights, sounds and excitement of the castle in the 13th century, including a visit to the basement store and the armoury, joining the garrison for supper and climbing to the top of the battlements.

For further information, visit www.tonbridgecastle.org/ educational-tours-and-workshops or email tonbridge.castle@tmbc.gov.uk

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5 REASONS TO TRY... Dove Self-Esteem Project

Help pupils discover just how amazing they really are with free body-image resources



30 SECOND BRIEFING

The Dove Self-Esteem Project helps teachers to create an open conversation around body positivity. The free evidence-based resources, written by experts, include everything you need for curriculum-aligned body confidence lessons.

1 PROMOTES POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE AND STRENGTHENS SELF-ESTEEM

When research tells us that young children are developing attitudes towards body shape and size – and that by the time they reach their teens, many (both boys and girls) feel anxiety about their body image – it's time to take action. Perceptions and feelings about body image impact young people's mental health. The Dove Self-Esteem Project strives to make this a positive impact, not a negative one, by celebrating attributes that aren't connected to the way we look.

2 IMPROVES ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE THROUGH BODY POSITIVITY

Body positivity is a critical factor in building good mental health, self-esteem and motivation, but did you realise the adverse impact on learning that a negative body image can have? Research shows that pupils who feel positive about their bodies tend to perform better academically. The Amazing Me resources – including lesson plans, slide decks, activity sheets and links to informative videos – help children to celebrate and value how unique and special they are, building self-esteem and resilience, which in turn supports academic performance.



3 ADDRESSES THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

We can't ignore the impact the digital world has on body image, which is why the Dove Self-Esteem Project tackles this head on, helping pupils understand what body image means in a digital age and how to beat the pressures to align to an 'ideal'. By showing children how to critically reflect on the way body image is portrayed in the mainstream media and on social platforms, they have the tools to override this external pressure.



Find out more:
Visit: bit.ly/DoveAmazingMe

4 ALIGNS TO THE CURRICULUM

The programme aims to help primary school teachers meet National Curriculum objectives in statutory health education and PSHE (England and Wales), Health & wellbeing (Scotland), PDMU (Northern Ireland), citizenship and literacy, by helping pupils to:

- Recognise their worth by identifying positive things about themselves and others.
- Critically explore how the media presents information.
- Examine what influences the way they feel about themselves and others.
- Justify their opinions and listen to and respect other points of view.

5 ALREADY HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT

The Amazing Me resources are already helping thousands of primary pupils on a journey towards life-long body confidence, helping them to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, self-worth and personal wellbeing. As an evidence-based programme, teachers have the confidence to know materials are age-appropriate and accurate, as well as being fully aligned with the national curriculum. But don't just take our word for it, there are already over 5,000 teachers seeing the positive impact running the programme has on their pupils. Take a look at the resources for yourself at bit.ly/DoveAmazingMe

KEY POINTS

Access these free-to-download lesson plans and resources by registering on the National Schools Partnership website: bit.ly/DoveAmazingMe

Aligned to NC objectives in statutory health education and PSHE (England and Wales), Health & Wellbeing (Scotland), PDMU (NI), citizenship and literacy.

150,000 pupils are already benefitting from the Amazing Me resources – that's 5,000 teachers making the most of Dove's free body confidence packs.

Materials are evidence-based and include everything you need for age-appropriate body confidence lessons. Amazing Me is designed specifically for ages 8-11.



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- To identify situations that are fair and unfair
- To recognise and explain feelings of unfairness
- To explore positive ways of dealing with feelings of unfairness

Put an end to cries of 'no fair!' in your class



Children are quick to cry foul when they feel wronged. Help them take a more balanced view, says **Aidan Severs**

[@aidansevers](#) [aidansevers.com](#)

Children's sense of what is fair and unfair is often based on how the outcome affects them personally, rather than on what is actually just. Young children sometimes focus on immediate consequences, such as getting the same number of treats as their siblings, rather than considering the broader context of a situation. Let's face it, even adults' sense of fairness can be influenced by self-interest and personal gain. Deliberately teaching children about fairness can encourage empathy and consideration for others, readying them to contribute to a more just and equitable society.

START HERE

Begin by introducing the concept of fairness. Present different meanings and spellings of the word 'fair' (there are many) in order to be clear that the lesson will focus on understanding the various interpretations. Ask children to share their initial definitions of fairness and record key words from their responses. Some children will inevitably tell a story about a time when they thought something wasn't fair; use these examples to draw out the principles of fairness. Using the recorded responses, agree on a co-created definition of what 'fair' means, highlighting the fact that fairness doesn't show favour or give an advantage to one person more than another.



MAIN LESSON

1 | A STORY OR NEWS ITEM

Begin by reading a picture book about fairness (you could use the well-known *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell, or a classic version of *Cinderella*). As you read, ask questions and encourage discussion about what is fair and unfair. For example, you could ask, "How do you think the character or person involved feels when things aren't fair?" or "What do you think should happen to make things fair?"

After this, ask the children to put themselves in the shoes of the characters in the story or

the people in the article, and ask them how they might have felt and how they might have responded if they were in the same (or similar) situation.

2 | DILEMMAS

Explain to the children that sometimes things happen that are unfair, but sometimes they may just appear to be unfair at first, and are actually fair. Put the children into small groups and give them the scenarios below. Their task is to discuss them, and to decide together whether they think they are fair or unfair, together.

Scenario 1: A child is given an ice cream, but their brother isn't given one



“Let’s face it, even adults’ sense of fairness can be influenced by self-interest and personal gain”

3 | WHAT COULD/WOULD/SHOULD YOU DO?

Explain to the children that it is normal to feel upset or angry when something is not fair or when something feels unfair. Ask them to share some of the feelings they experience when things are not fair, such as sad, frustrated, or angry. You could ask some children to show the facial expression they make when they feel these emotions. Ask the children to think about how they act when they feel these emotions – you could also ask them to share their responses, or to write them down privately, depending on your knowledge of the class. Discuss different strategies for how pupils can respond to situations that seem unfair, such as talking to an adult, sharing their feelings with a friend, or finding a compromise.

For the independent task, pupils can choose either the story, one of the scenarios or any examples of situations that the class has shared from their own lives. Tell the children that they are now fairness experts, and that they are going to write and draw about how to respond well to one of the situations. To scaffold, you could provide some cartoon outlines or speech bubbles to give a structure for their work.

Aidan Severs is an education consultant and former primary teacher and leader. He now supports schools with curriculum and pedagogy.

because he had one earlier that day.

Scenario 2: During break time, one group of children takes all of the balls and don’t let anyone else play with them.

Scenario 3: A teacher gives extra time to one child to complete their work, but not to the other child.

Once the children have worked in their groups, gather some feedback about their perceptions of each scenario, asking a spokesperson from each group to explain their decisions. Pupils may need some help to verbalise their thoughts, so it may be useful to ask questions and provide prompts to help them to

explain how they reached their conclusions for each case.

Talk through each of the scenarios, explaining how scenarios 1 and 3 might seem unfair at first, but when all the details are considered, actually could be seen as fair: in scenario 1 both children get an ice cream, just not at the same time; in scenario 3 there might be a really good reason, that only the teacher knows, as to why one child needs extra time.

Children will again want to share some examples from their own experiences. Encourage them to reflect on times when they thought something was unfair, which they now can see was actually fair.

EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Provide further scenarios, perhaps inspired by children’s own experiences, and ask pupils to role-play these situations to show how they would respond to unfairness.
- Move children’s understanding of unfairness beyond their own experiences by sharing an age-appropriate children’s news article about injustice in the world, such as the treatment of refugees, the way homeless people are treated, or incidents of racism. Discuss how what they have learned about dealing with unfairness in their own lives helps them to understand that it can exist on many levels.
- Refer back to the lesson during subsequent days, particularly when situations arise that are either unfair or perceived to be unfair. Take these opportunities to help children to reflect on what they have learned in real life.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to be fair?
- Why is it important to treat others fairly?
- How does being treated unfairly make you feel?
- How could you help someone else who is being treated unfairly?



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- About the topographical features of a featured location
- To interpret and articulate the meaning of maps
- To explore the ways height can be shown on a map
- To know the difference between human and physical geography
- To identify features of physical geography in a location studied

A crafty spin on physical geography



Develop relief-map reading skills and engage pupils with a real sense of place, says **Adam Jevons-Newman**

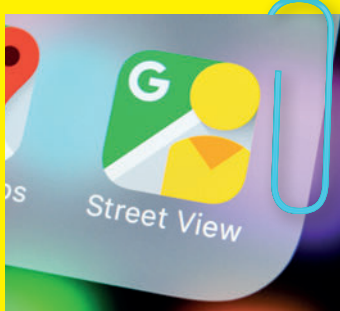
 @JNCurricEdu

Use a range of modelling materials to turn the topographical features of a place of study into a tangible model in this crafty spin on a geography lesson. The geographical integrity of the curriculum will be retained, with pupils using maps to identify features (including relief), but they will be able to express their understanding of this tangibly, through hands-on learning. The lesson can be applied to any location and can be adapted to focus in as much or as little detail as you feel is suitable. It also allows you to explore land formation outside the confines of a 2D map.



START HERE

Begin by showing your pupils some Google StreetView imagery of the location you are studying – this works best if you can find somewhere that includes hills, mountains or coastline. Talk about what you can see, focusing on these features and how they rise from your line of sight. Next, zoom out into a conventional Maps view. What do the children notice? We can't immediately identify, from this view, how the topographical features lie. If you then switch on 'terrain' view, what do pupils notice now? How the world looks and lies at eye-level can be shown on maps in a range of ways, including shading height layers (with a key), with height markers or with contour lines. Explain that we're going to apply our understanding of these approaches to help us build a model representing the topographical features of our place of study.



MAIN LESSON

1 | MAPPING IT OUT

Begin by presenting pupils with a range of maps that represent the relief and topographical features of your area studied. Atlases may offer different pages focusing on each of these, or you may need to gather them prior to your lesson. Depending on your class, it may be appropriate to have a range of representations or simply to have one for pupils to interpret.

Encourage the children to spend time working in pairs or groups to unpick what the map(s) tell them about the location. Can they identify where land is higher? Where it is coastal? Where regions

may be hilly? Where are the valleys, the mountains? How do you know?

Use stem sentences to help pupils verbally express their understanding of the landscape based on the map, e.g. "I know it's hilly here because..." or "This is an area of lower land because...".

Bring the class back together and share the discussion; if you have a visualiser, this is a good opportunity for pupils to come out and talk through their understanding in front of their peers.

You can extend the discussion further by identifying other physical features; where are the rivers (and what are their names?), and where can we identify any forests? Coastal regions? Or perhaps where



“The lesson can be adapted to focus in as much or little detail as you feel is suitable for your class”

more effective, as it would have helped to keep our focus on relief and land height rather than on décor!

3 | ADMIRING THE VIEW

Once the relief of the land has been plotted with newspaper, pupils should be able to identify and talk through how their relief relates to the maps they explored at the start. This is really important before going on to the more decorative elements, as the crux of the knowledge we want children to secure is geographical, not artistic. I found that an effective way to assess understanding was to ask pupils to pinpoint regions from the initial 2D maps on their crafted 3D models.

From here, the children can select the relevant materials to bring the land to life (crepe and tissue paper works well!). This is also an opportunity to add any other features you may wish for them to include, such as pre-printed pictures stuck on the map at places of interest, showing understanding of location.

Now, do we remember the spot in which we stood on StreetView at the start of the lesson? If we position ourselves there on our own map, how would the view compare? This is a fun way to end the lesson and revisit that initial concept.

Adam Jevons-Newman is the deputy headteacher and curriculum leader at a primary school in Nottinghamshire.

land use is significantly different between the city and the countryside. The key purpose of this discussion is to ensure pupils have a broad understanding of what the map(s) tell them about the landscape and land formation of the region.

2 | LIFTING THE LAND

With understanding of the topography in place, now it's time for pupils to bring it to life and communicate what they know. Rather than letting the children loose within the craft cupboard, it's best to encourage them to plan out their 3D map first. Use large sheets of paper (A2, ideally) and guide groups to plot out the regions where land will be highest. We found it best to work on the highest areas first

because this enabled us to make comparisons with other regions that are at a lower level.

Plotting on physical features such as rivers and any key city areas also helps pupils to keep sight of the overall map. Once they've begun to build up the land, it can become a bit messy, so keeping the map organised helps to keep work focused. How specific and precise you want pupils to be with the comparable land heights is of course up to your professional judgement.

In the example I delivered, our focus was on Spain. We built the relief up using tissue and crepe paper, but in hindsight I feel beginning with newspaper would have been

EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Try challenging pupils to work to a given scale – can they use their measurement skills to figure out what size everything on their 3D map should be?
- Use an alternative method for your map construction, such as building in Minecraft or using Lego!
- Focus on a smaller, contrasting locality within the nation studied and build comparative models with your own setting. What do pupils notice? Can they use geographical language to describe what they see?
- Add place-name labels onto your map, using existing atlases or web searches to make sure they're positioned correctly.

USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Where are the highest regions? The lowest regions?
- Can you point out a specific place on your map?
- How do the high and low regions relate to where the cities are?
- Can you describe how two different map points compare?

Music



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- The history of electronic dance music (EDM)
- Key musical features of electronic dance music (EDM)
- What a 'loop' is in music
- How to create a loop in Chrome Music Lab Songmaker

Thank you for the (electronic) music...



Get your groove on and explore rhythm and pattern with a trip to the loopy world of EDM, says **Dr Liz Stafford**

@DrLizStafford musiceducationsolutions.co.uk

In this lesson your pupils will explore the world of electronic dance music (EDM). They will listen to musical examples from different time periods, developing an understanding of how EDM has developed and changed over time, and learning about some of the most important artists associated with this style. A key feature of EDM is the use of loops (repeating sections of music) and your pupils will explore this by composing and layering their own drum and bass loops using the free cloud-based software Chrome Music Lab Song Maker.

START HERE

Play a short section of Laurie Anderson's 'O Superman'. Ask your pupils to describe the music, and what they like and dislike about it. Draw out the understanding that this is very repetitive music, made up of repeating patterns called 'loops.' Next play them Elton John & Dua Lipa's 'Cold, Cold Heart' which your pupils will probably recognise. Can the children describe this music? It is also made up of loops! Both of these pieces of music are examples of EDM – electronic dance music. 'O Superman' is one of the first examples, and 'Cold, Cold Heart' one of the most recent. Ask the children if this could explain why they sound different? (The answer is because technology has improved so we're able to create lots more sounds and effects now.)



MAIN LESSON

1| COMPUTER SAYS...

'Electronic' dance music is so-called because the music is predominantly computer-generated. Display Chrome Music Lab Song Maker (tinyurl.com/tp-SongMaker) and explain that you are going to make your own drum loop for a piece of EDM. At the bottom of the screen, you'll see two rows with dots in; this is where we add the drum sounds. The lower line does the bass drum, and the higher line the snare drum. You can click on the dots to add sounds, and then press the play button to hear what you've created.

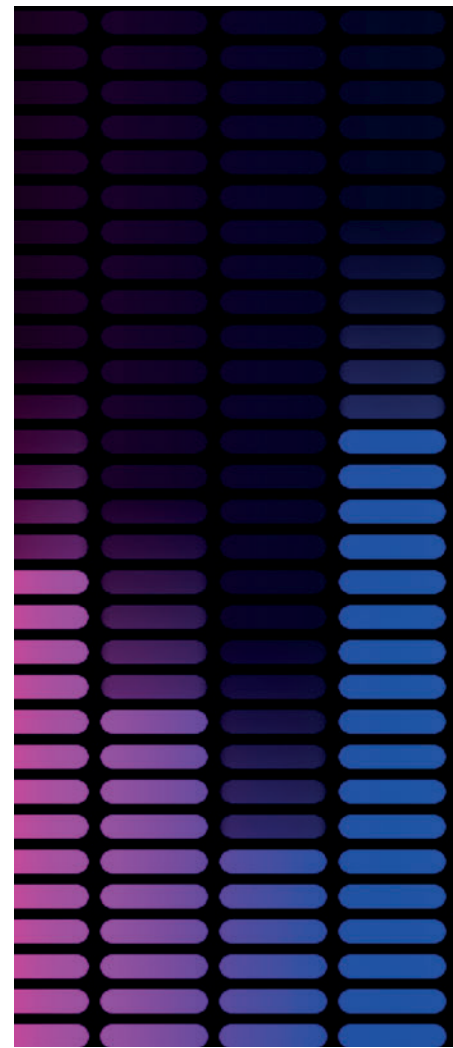
As a loop is a repeating pattern, you'll need to create

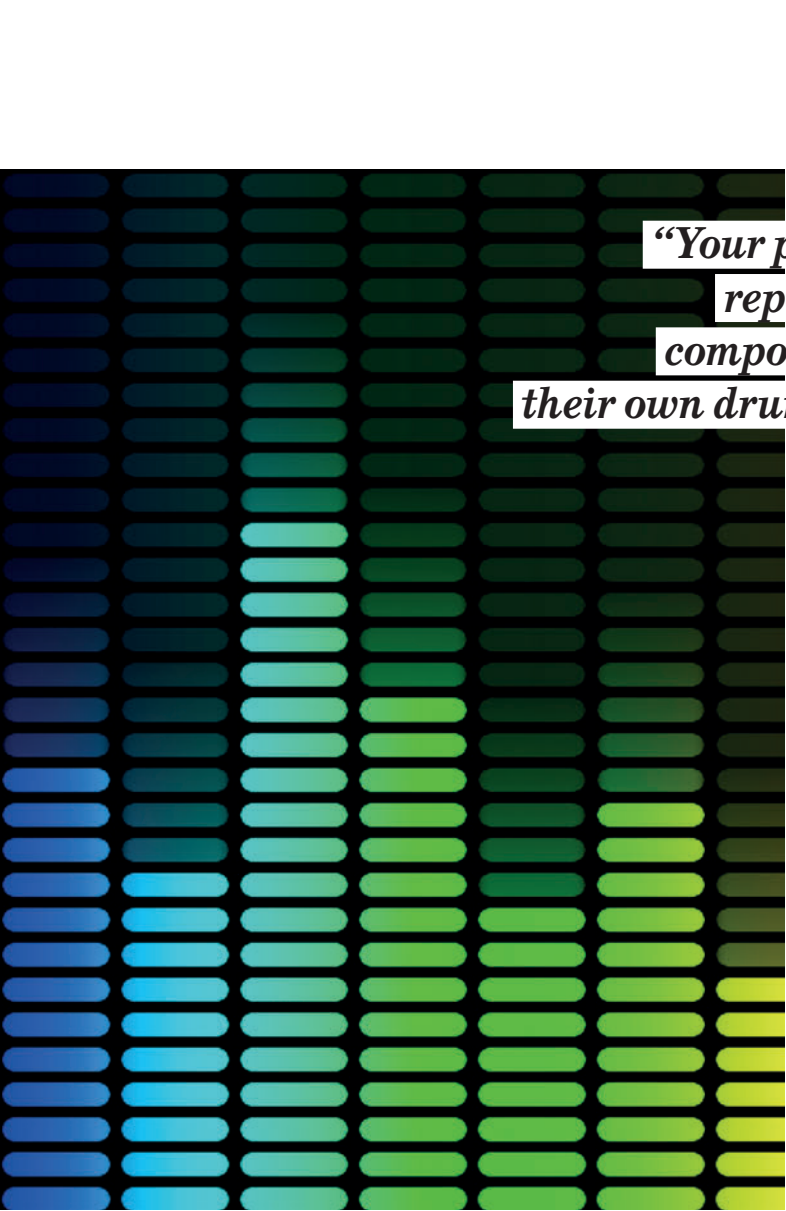
a visual pattern with the symbols on the screen. Starting with the bass drum, come up with a pattern (for example, three beats then a space; two beats then another space; repeat).

Now create another pattern on top with the snare drum, again using repeating sequences. You will now have two lines of dots, which will show pupils a visual representation of the musical patterns.

You can see (and listen to!) an example I've created in Chrome Music Lab at tinyurl.com/tp-EDMexample1 tying in what you can see with what you can hear.

Ask your pupils whether they think that dance music should be fast or slow, and adjust the speed using the tempo slider at the bottom of the screen to hear the effect! Invite different pupils to come





“Your pupils will explore repeating sections by composing and layering their own drum and bass loops”

up and create their own drum loops. The rest of the class can clap along to each loop once the pattern has been established.

2 | HEAR THAT BASS

Demonstrate how to create a bass line loop using the rows above the drum part. Open a new project without any drum beats, and click on a few different boxes in one column. Can the children tell you which notes are higher and which are lower? The lower notes are towards the bottom of each column and a bass line uses the lowest notes, so we should keep our bass line loop round about the bottom of the screen.

First you need to choose a suitable instrument – click on the circle next to the ‘play’ button that says ‘Marimba’ to change the sound, each time clicking a few boxes so you

can hear the different effects. Hopefully your pupils will agree that the ‘synth’ sound is the most appropriate one for an EDM track – because it sounds ‘electronic’!

Now create your bass loop with the instrument you’ve chosen, making a pattern in exactly the same way that you did for the drum loop. Make sure you only have one note in each column. I’ve created another example to show you what this should look like, which you can see at tinyurl.com/tp-EDMexample2

Next, invite some pupils to come up and make their own loop. The rest of the class can sing or hum along to the loop once it is ready.

For the final bit of demonstration, combine your bass and drum loops in the same project to check that they sound ok together, discussing and making any

necessary changes. The key is for these to sound as if they are made for each other, not working against each other.

Now your screen should show a few lines of repeating patterns – the original drum loop, plus the bass loop you’ve added. See what this looks and sounds like at tinyurl.com/tp-EDMexample3

Can pupils identify how the patterns they see on the screen relate to the sounds they’re hearing?

3 | MIX YOUR OWN

Finally, send the children off in groups to create their own drum loops on tablets, laptops or desktop computers. Remind them frequently that there should be an obvious pattern, rather than just them clicking on lots of random different boxes. If they are struggling to create a drum pattern they could come up with a word or phrase to use, e.g. “What have you had for tea today.” Once they are happy with their drum loop, they can add a bass line loop on top, remembering to check that it sounds like it is ‘made for’ the drum loop.

Have each group share their work at the end of the lesson for peer feedback, particularly around whether there is a recognisable pattern (loop) throughout. The acid test will be whether it sounds like music to dance to, and the only way to find out is to get up and throw some moves!

Dr Liz Stafford is director of music education consultancy Education Solutions®, editor of Primary Music Magazine, and author of The Primary Music Leader’s Handbook (HarperCollins).



EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Listen to some more examples of EDM such as Donna Summer’s ‘I feel love’, Avicii’s ‘Hey Brother’, David Guetta & Kelly Rowland’s ‘When Love Takes Over’, Calvin Harris and Rhianna’s ‘This is what you came for’, and Swedish House Mafia’s ‘Don’t you worry child’. Notice that these include vocal loops as well as instrumental loops.
- Add structural variation into your loops by using one pattern followed by a contrasting pattern, and then returning to the original pattern.
- Improvise your own vocal loop over the top of your drum and bass loops.
- Use more advanced software like Ableton Playground to add more layers to your loops using different instrumental sounds, or explore the pre-set EDM loops in Garage Band.
- Play all of your loops one after the other, and have a massive dance-off!



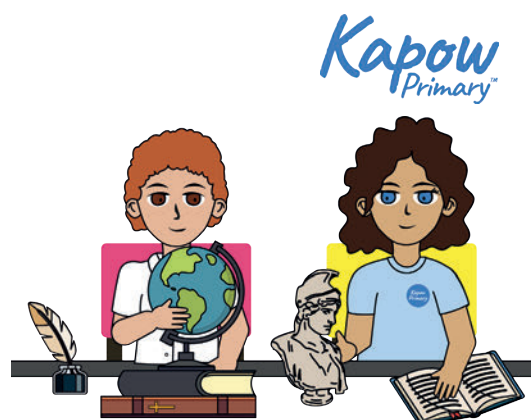
USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What key musical features make this music suitable for dancing?
- How many times does the music loop round?
- How are the sounds for electronic dance music generated?
- How many different layers can you hear in the music?

GEOGRAPHY ➔

Kapow Primary geography scheme

Impressive, updated learning resources, based on proven, detailed pedagogical classroom approaches



AT A GLANCE

- Web-based geography lesson plans and schemes of work
- Designed to help pupils progress and support teacher workload and development
- Developed by subject specialists
- Huge range of content for Y1–Y6
- Rooted in successful pedagogy

REVIEWED BY: ADAM RICHES



Kapow Primary offers a wealth of incredible resources for primary-aged children, with a reputation for efficiency and effectiveness. The most recent version of their geography offer shows the dedication of the company to continually move its platform and content forward. Learning and building on the successes of the prior content, Kapow Primary has pulled it out of the bag once more with the updated geography schemes of learning.

With a clear focus on topical enquiry, each unit is centred on an investigative question. Not only does this create an inquisitive aspect to the learning, it also makes objectives crystal clear from the outset. From a curiosity point-of-view, Kapow Primary has structured the content in a way that you could liken to a journey of discovery – what better way to inspire your pupils!

Typically with geography at primary level, pupils are encountering concepts and ideas that they have no contextual understanding or experience of. It is evident that Kapow Primary has some outstanding subject specialists working on their content, who bring expertise and oversight to the teaching materials. With an insight into prior and future learning, and an in-depth knowledge of Kapow Primary's geography teaching units, they select the information that will be most valuable to your pupils.

Centralised around simplistic and proven pedagogical approaches, the series of lessons for each topic is geared towards pupil progress

and minimisation of workload for teachers. Comprising of individual lesson plans and resources, coupled with knowledge organisers and clear overview maps, Kapow Primary geography is ideal for the high pace of the busy classroom.

The resources themselves boast the rigour and depth that Kapow Primary has become renowned for. Rooted in the national curriculum, everything has a purpose, and all bases are fully covered. The online platform provides teachers with the complete range of materials at the click of a button. Everything from displays to vocabulary resources, assessments to lesson content are at your disposal, and the best thing is that as a teacher you can mix and match. There is nothing prescriptive about the learning content and it can be used with fidelity or it can be used to supplement existing schemes of learning, depending on what your specific class needs, and your level of subject knowledge – perfect for specialists and non-specialists alike.

The icing on the cake is the embedded spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) and British values content that is clearly signposted on the online platform. The seamless integration into lessons is one thing, but the highlighting for the teacher at the planning stage is a really nice touch.

Once more, Kapow Primary has shown that it knows how to create resources to support real teachers who teach real pupils in real schools. Outstanding.

teach PRIMARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Content is well mapped and easy to navigate
- ✓ Resources are all incredibly well prepared
- ✓ Online functionality and usability are second to none
- ✓ Full package of planning from start to finish

UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for exceptionally well designed and written geography content that is adaptable and versatile. Also consider if you have no geography specialists to help your teachers plan.

Learn more at [kapowprimary.com/subjects/geography](https://www.kapowprimary.com/subjects/geography)

HEALTH & WELLBEING ➔

Collins Big Cat



Help pupils navigate tricky subjects such as emotions, friendships, family and self-esteem with this new set of purpose-written books

AT A GLANCE

- A new set of 12 mental health and wellbeing books added to the collection of 1500+ Big Cat books
- Stories showcasing diversity, inclusivity and mental wellbeing
- Levelled for guided and independent reading
- Written by a talented pool of wellbeing authors

REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL



Books are powerful tools because they can inspire, provoke, challenge perceptions and provide children with some much-needed support. They don't just help pupils learn about the world around them, but also help them to process it, and Collins Big Cat has just the bundle.

The team has produced 12 new banded titles in an eclectic collection of fiction and non-fiction covering a range of topics from healthy eating, learning how the brain works, meditation and screen-time to anxiety, friendships, family relationships, self-esteem, feelings and emotions. Written in an accessible but not patronising tone, these are must-reads for children.

The fictional tales are full of engaging scenarios and practical advice, and help to unlock a number of different routes for children trying to problem-solve and navigate their way through what can be a maze of complex situations and feelings.

There are stories that weave creative and therapeutic elements throughout in sensitive, adventurous and humorous ways. The authors include children's therapists, counsellors and top children's writers such as Michael Rosen who speak from experience, know how to pen a tale, and – critically – how to engage young readers.

Two pages of each book are dedicated to reflection and so allow pupils to revisit the preceding content, supporting comprehension skills, vocabulary development and recall. There is also a wealth of ideas for reading in the back of each book, providing practical support and stimulating activities.

Some subjects can be hard for children to talk about, but books can help to open up conversations and offer new perspectives and insights.

These Collins Big Cat books are terrific 'growing up' companions and will help pupils get to grips with and think about situations they might very well find themselves knee-deep in.

They can also be used to explore appropriate uses of language and behavioural boundaries, help children work through and let go of the anxieties that affect them, explore their feelings, and communicate with adults who may be working with them such as a parent, carer, teacher, member of support staff, social worker or counsellor.

You can also use the collection to get pupils thinking about themselves in relation to their behaviour, and start seeing the two as separate. They can help encourage children to be brave, bounce back and build resilience and resilience. There is also scope for children to help their own family members open up about their feelings, too.

There's no sugar-coating the tough topics and sometimes, especially with primary-aged children, it can be difficult to find the words to help. Thankfully we have these brilliant Collins books to help so we are not at a loss for words when it matters most.

Children can use these books as a place to turn to for information, suggestions and building habits to enhance their lives and develop a strong, positive outlook on the world and on their capabilities.

Some children's books are like shoes: when they fit the children perfectly, they work wonders.

**teach
PRIMARY**

VERDICT

- ✓ Positive mental health books to help children navigate challenging and complex issues
- ✓ A great way to start conversations from a young age and develop a growth mindset
- ✓ Jam-packed with useful tips and techniques for healthily expressing how they are feeling
- ✓ Straightforward strategies that children can use to deal with particular feelings
- ✓ Helps children to adapt to change head-on and be flexible in their thinking

UPGRADE IF...

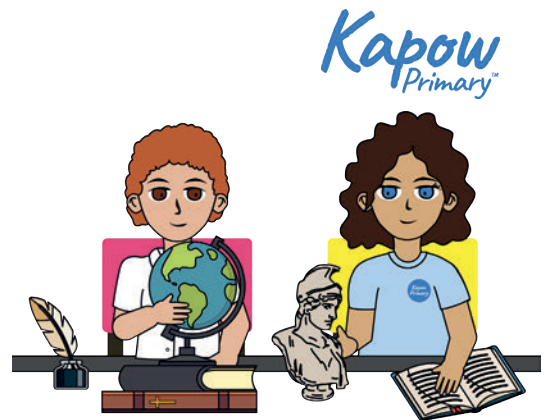
You want to regularly use books as a wellbeing support and emotional literacy tool for children going through difficult situations. Help them dive deep into their emotions and find healthy ways to deal with their thoughts and responses.

Titles range from £7 to £7.75. See collins.co.uk/BigCatWellbeing for more info

HISTORY ➔

Kapow Primary history scheme

Find a wealth of specialist content to support and supplement high-quality history teaching across Key Stages



AT A GLANCE

- Web-based history lesson plans
- Designed to help pupils progress and support teacher workload and professional development
- Developed by subject specialists
- Huge range of content for Y1–Y6
- All resources are rooted in successful, proven pedagogy
- Develops love for the subject

REVIEWED BY: ADAM RICHES



Kapow Primary history is the latest updated offer from the legends of resource creation. Boasting a plethora of content specifically designed to reduce workload and encourage pupil progress, Kapow Primary history is an exceptional addition to any school curriculum, whether it be as supplementary resources or as a replacement for existing schemes of learning.

Written by subject specialists, the content is second to none. Consisting of lesson plans, knowledge organisers, assessments, supporting resources, displays and embedded wider content, you really don't need to look any further for your history planning provision. Taking the proven ingredients from previous packages, Kapow Primary has built upon its successes, developing the content of the course while staying true to their key values and strengths. The results are more than impressive.

History can be a tricky subject to deliver at primary level given the range of topical content required for success. Kapow Primary focuses on select substantive concepts: power, invasion, settlement and migration, civilisation, tax and trade, beliefs, achievements and follies of mankind. These concepts allow learners to sequentially begin to understand some of the intricacies of historical study and plant the roots for sustainable progression in topical understanding of the subject. The resources are detailed enough that you don't have to be a history specialist to get the most out of them. The integrated CPD also helps here.

Coupled with the substantive concepts,

Kapow Primary also builds pupils' understanding of disciplinary concepts. Exploring change and continuity, similarities and differences, chronology, cause and consequence, historical significance, sources of evidence and historical interpretation, pupils are able to quickly and confidently begin to understand how to be a proper historian.

What stands out in the resources is the gearing toward progressing pupils as historians and building love for the subject. The content is centred around posed historical questions which encourages learners to gather, organise and evaluate evidence. This is coupled with the skills of interpreting findings, analysing and making connections, and evaluating and drawing conclusions, creating real sense of discovery and reasoning.

Kapow Primary knows how to create resources. The content on the platform is centralised around simplistic and proven pedagogical approaches, and the series of lessons for each topic is geared towards pupil progress and minimisation of workload for teachers. Comprising of individual lesson plans and resources, coupled with knowledge organisers and clear overview maps, Kapow Primary history is ideal for the high pace of the busy classroom.

In a time when it is of pivotal importance to be effective and efficient, investing in Kapow Primary history is a smart move. Teachers and pupils alike will significantly benefit from this well thought-out content.

teach PRIMARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Content is well mapped and easy to navigate
- ✓ Resources are all incredibly well prepared
- ✓ Online functionality and usability is second to none
- ✓ Full package of planning from start to finish
- ✓ Integrated primary and secondary sources, including an exclusive transcription of Elizabeth I's visit to Worcester

UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for exceptionally well designed and written history content that is adaptable and versatile. Also consider if you have no history specialists to help your teachers plan.

Learn more at kapowprimary.com/subjects/history

HANDWRITING

STABILO EASYoriginal pens & EASYgraph S pencils

Ergonomic pens and pencils developed by experts specifically for both left- and right-handed children



AT A GLANCE

- Skilfully designed pens and pencils based on ergonomic principles in penmanship
- Left- and right-handed versions
- Focused on comfort and efficiency
- Tested by expert scientists
- Pencil wood is sourced from responsibly-managed forests

REVIEWED BY: JOHN DABELL



How much do we think about handedness when we consider children's needs? Handedness is the preference for using one hand over another and when it comes to the school environment this really matters.

Left-handed children often struggle when the resources aren't there to support them. This is often the case when it comes to writing utensils and scissors. Left-handed pupils can often appear uncoordinated or disorganised as most equipment is set up for right-handed children.

STABILO has thought long and hard about the user experience to cater for everyone and its product range is impressively inclusive. Every operational characteristic has been considered from the size, weight, shape and length of the instrument to the surface texture and hardness of the shaft, ink flow, smoothness, writing fatigue and more.

The EASY Start range is a vibrant and ergonomic family of writing equipment specifically designed for learning and improving handwriting skills at a young age. Led by the latest research in handwriting ergonomics, these are clever products that put writing comfort, legibility, efficiency and motivation right at the centre of design so that children can have fun improving their skills.

STABILO's EASYoriginal pens are a joy. These really attractive wide-barrel refillable

pens have been ergonomically moulded so that children use the lightest grip possible while writing. The slightly arched shape helps pupils to achieve the recommended tripod grip, eliminating strain. It also features a rubberised grip around the pen barrel for increased traction.

The STABILO ergonomic pens use a rollerball design which flows freely. This helps reduce writing pressure which can lead to pain over longer pieces of written work. The nibs are broad and flexible and use royal blue erasable ink, ideal for school use.

STABILO's handwriting pencils with break-resistant 2.2mm lead have also been designed specifically for left- and right-handers. EASYgraph S pencils have a brilliant triangular design and non-slip grip moulds which magnificently support a relaxed hand posture. They also have a subtle yellow and red colour coding at the end of the pencil to indicate whether it is a left- or right-handed version.

They come in a range of five shaft colours and the S (slim) versions have a slendrer barrel than the original, but still with a space for inscribing your name.

Every child should benefit from adopting an ergonomic way of working and STABILO has given us the tools to work in a more efficient and child-friendly way. These are writing resources that truly break the mould.

teach
PRIMARY

VERDICT

- ✓ Sophisticated, intelligent and intuitive designs to tackle handwriting issues
- ✓ Non-slip, comfortable to hold and prevents stress, tiredness and potential damage to hand posture
- ✓ Revolutionary, fun and attractive designs
- ✓ Quality through and through for a great price
- ✓ Takes the stress out of handwriting

UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for writing resources that truly cater for left-, right- and mixed-handers.

Pens from £3.29, pencils from £1.04, stabilo.com/uk

Q & A

We take the famous Proust questionnaire and pose eight of its questions to a fellow educator. Take a peek into the deepest depths of a teacher's soul...

1 What is your idea of perfect happiness in your job?

Knowing I have changed a child's mindset and seeing how this alters the path of their life. That quiet child who lacked self-belief or one who thought a SEN requirement meant they were 'thick' – seeing the day-by-day small changes we can bring to them. Children are growing into an ever more complex world where they need to be leaders, in charge of their own minds and filled with quiet and humble self-confidence.

Alongside this, it is showing children how big and exciting the world is. Watching *Newsround* and discussing how our democratic system works; examining the ethics of climate justice; or debating what a fair world looks like. I love discussing those questions where the answer starts with, "Well, it depends on your worldview."

2 What is your greatest fear at work?

Forgetting a child's name! I am dyslexic and my mind can wander all over the place. Whilst I can recall every detail of their learning and interests, the simplicity of their name can elude me. The same happens with teachers' names too.

3 What is your current state of mind?

Reflective. I have recently become a father and having completed the NPQSL cannot see leadership

being for me any time soon. I love my job and my school; I'm one of those rare, lucky people who comes to work and goes home smiling. With no clear non-leadership career path for teachers, I am pondering what the next 10-20 years holds for me.

4 What do you consider the most overrated teacher virtue?

Being accommodating and diplomatic. We tie ourselves up in linguistic knots about children being 'spirited' or 'challenging'. We can shy away from tackling families due to their constant complaints. Teachers spend years training and accruing experience but then lack the gumption to push back at those who think they know better. The same can be seen in the current recruitment crisis, with the profession not pushing back against the naysaying of politicians.

5 On what occasion do you lie to your class?

When I say we need to get through something quickly and not go off at a tangent. Then there is a question, and we zoom off following their interests.

6 Which words or phrases do you most overuse with your class?

"Right then, campers/munchkins/small humans." I should use a countdown or the like, but those old habits I picked up from leading teams during my time in the Royal Navy still linger. Strangely enough, introducing a lesson and briefing the launch of a sea boat are surprisingly similar...

7 What do you consider your greatest teaching achievement?

This is a tricky question! In the classroom, it was connecting with a child whose dyslexia diagnosis had floored them. They felt useless. "You're dyslexic? So am I! Let's untie with the others and take over the world!" (Yes I did say untie when I meant unite; it became our catchphrase). This child grew in confidence over the year, finding a talent for word play, culminating in a stellar performance at the talent show. Our ribs hurt from laughing!

8 What is your most treasured teaching possession?

My reading fez. Or rather fezzes. During my first year of teaching, a child brought back a fez from their holiday for me, and it became our Reading Fez for when I read the class book. Then a child brought me a new Reading Fez; this one even has gold brocade! It suits my handlebar moustache immensely. TP



NAME: Matthew Lane
(@MrMJLane)

JOB ROLE: Class teacher; religion & worldviews subject lead

EXTRA INFO: Author of *Wayfinder: leading curriculum vision into reality* (£16, John Catt). Available to pre-order now, publishes 25 August 2023.

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Years
1-6

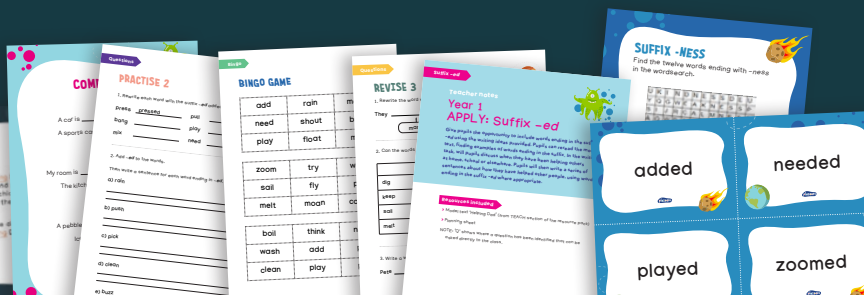
REAL GRAMMAR



Teach grammar RIGHT from the start
Everything you need to embed grammar
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- 3** Upskill your subject knowledge with terminology definitions and modelled examples

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**FREE SAMPLE
UNIT!**

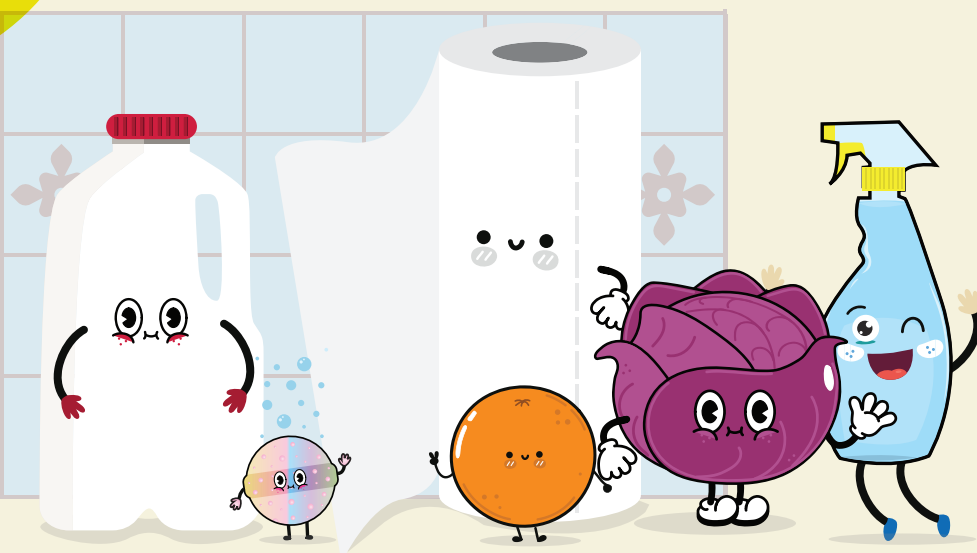


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plazoom.com/offers/real-grammar

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