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### AI tricks and traps

### THE BIG SUMMER SEND-OFF

How to end the  
year in style

## RECRUIT AND RETAIN

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- Make flexible hours work for all
- Why you're doing job ads wrong

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# Hello!



**T**he holidays are almost in sight! To help you celebrate the end of term – and reflect on the past year – this issue’s special focus is The Big Summer Send-Off.

On page 42, Chris Youles proposes an exciting business-based project that will get Year 6 buzzing. Adele Darlington has put together a lovely art project based around memories (p48), while Kevin Harcombe is in a contemplative mood about the realities of saying goodbye to your pupils (p47).

On the theme of the big step up to secondary, Jodie Morris (p15) breaks down her school’s holistic approach to making transition as smooth as possible, and providing ongoing support for Year 7s.

As another school chapter comes to a close, it can be a good time to think about what you could shake up next term. James Searjeant (p13) has some tried-and-tested suggestions for ways you can incorporate more exploration and experimentation into your practice. On page 27, Claire Watson and Kate Kellner-Dilks explain how you can rework the humanities curriculum to better reflect the needs of your particular school.

There seems to be no escape from the topic of AI at the moment. In this issue’s medium-term plan (p22), Martin Burrett has done the thinking for you and put together an informative and challenging UKS2 unit of work that explores both the practical and moral aspects of using AI.

Our expert WAGOLL this month is a fun one, as TV actor and screenwriter Joseph Elliot talks us through how to create a comedic scene (p58), while Ceri Eccles takes us on a charming trip to Narnia with a *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* book topic (p61).

In our *This Way!* section for heads and school leaders, we’re focusing on the topical issue of recruitment and retention (p37), with strategic advice from some expert contributors.

I hope the rest of term goes swimmingly for you. As ever, do drop me a line if you have any interesting lesson ideas to share.

*Lydia*

Lydia Grove, editor  
X @TeachPrimaryLG

*Don't miss our next  
issue, available from  
2nd September*

## POWERED BY...



**JAMES SEARJEANT**  
argues for more  
experimentation

*“How can we develop  
professionally if we simply  
go through the motions?”*

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**DR FRANCESCA  
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examines the latest  
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*“We are in an ever-evolving  
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*“Make it clear to pupils that  
forming new friendships  
takes time”*

P43



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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!

**teach  
PRIMARY**

***We want to hear from you!***

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



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[lydia.grove@theteachco.com](mailto:lydia.grove@theteachco.com)

**PUBLISHERS:**

Joe Carter  
Sam Reubin  
Richard Stebbing

**EDITOR:**

Lydia Grove,  
lydia.grove@artichokehq.com

**GROUP ADVERTISING  
MANAGER:**

Samantha Law,  
samantha.law@artichokehq.com  
01206 505499

**SENIOR ACCOUNT  
MANAGER:**

Demi Maynard,  
demi.maynard@artichokehq.com  
01206 505962

**ACCOUNT MANAGER:**

Kim Richards,  
kim.richards@artichokehq.com  
01206 505240

**ART EDITORS:**

Richard Allen & Sarah Barajas

**ACCOUNTS:**

artichokemedialtd@integral2.com

**SUBSCRIPTIONS:**

subscriptions@artichokeHQ.com

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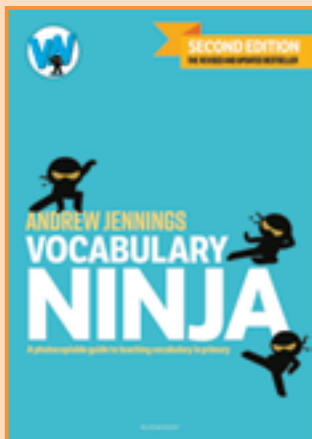


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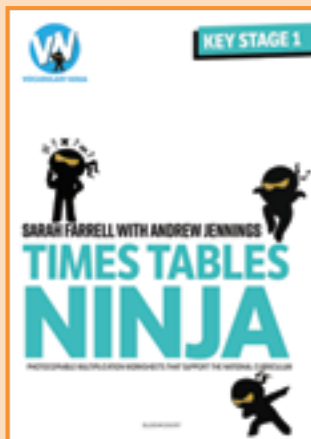
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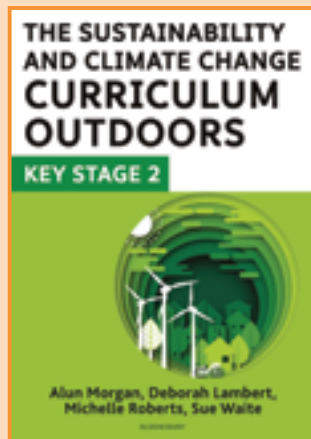
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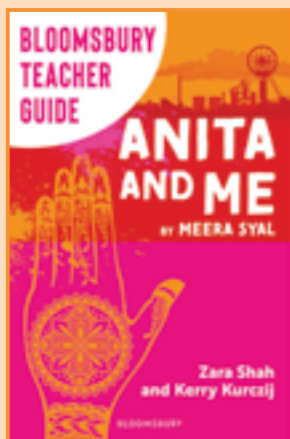
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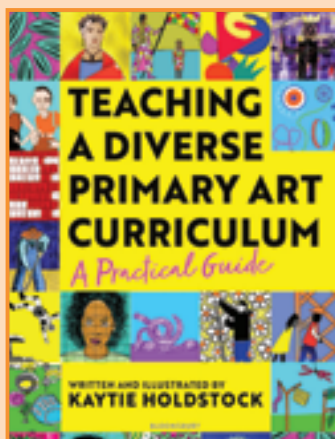
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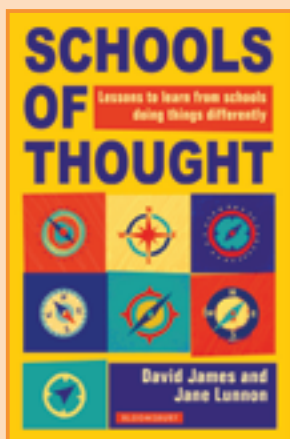
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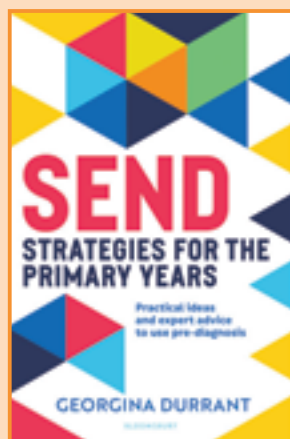
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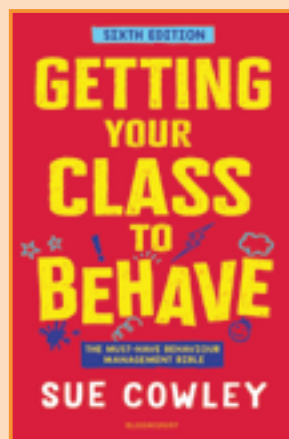
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## BOOKS FOR EVERY STEP OF YOUR TEACHING JOURNEY

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# Breaktime

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## Meet the authors

The Children's Bookshow will be returning to theatres across the UK this autumn with a series of 14 live performances featuring authors, poets and illustrators including Michael Rosen, Valerie Bloom, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Ele Fountain and Kwame Alexander.

Between 26th September and 21st November, children's authors and illustrators will perform for primary school children at theatre venues in cities such as Wolverhampton, Hull, Newcastle, Exeter, Bristol, London and Ipswich. The tour will stop in Portsmouth for the first time this year, with a live performance at the New Theatre Royal from award-winning author and illustrator Sam Usher, best-known for his much-loved picture books featuring a boy and his grandfather.

Every child who attends an event will receive a free book by the performing artist to take home and keep. You can browse the full programme of events, and buy tickets at [thechildrensbookshow.com/performances](http://thechildrensbookshow.com/performances)

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



### ENGINEERING EXPERTISE

The Design Process Box is a free educational resource from the Dyson Foundation. It introduces children to the design process, helping to develop their analytical skills. You can loan a box for six weeks at no charge. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-DesignBox](http://tinyurl.com/tp-DesignBox)



### PERSUASIVE WRITING

Teach your class to craft powerful arguments with this comprehensive collection of teaching tips, free lesson plans and resources for KS2. Activity ideas include writing letters, creating a compelling restaurant menu. Find out more at [tinyurl.com/tp-Persuasive](http://tinyurl.com/tp-Persuasive)



### THE AUTHOR'S VOICE

Have you checked out our full range of expert WAGOLLS written by actual children's authors? Each one offers a glimpse inside a writer's mind, plus a bumper pack of accompanying resources designed by literacy experts. Browse them all at [tinyurl.com/tp-WAGOLLS](http://tinyurl.com/tp-WAGOLLS)

## →→→ TODAY'S **TOP** **RESOURCES**



### KS2 SATs support

For engaging, effective recap and revision materials, designed to test children's knowledge, find and fill gaps, and build their confidence in the run-up to SATs, take a look at Plazoom's KS2 SATs Support collection of resource packs! From practice questions for the reading and grammar tests, to tasks that will produce independent writing for moderation, you'll find everything you need and more – just head over to [bit.ly/PlzSATs](http://bit.ly/PlzSATs)





## Gift a Gruffalo!

To mark the 25 years of *The Gruffalo*, WHSmith has announced a new early years literacy campaign with the National Literacy Trust and Macmillan Children's Books.

Each time a copy of Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's *The Gruffalo* is sold in WHSmith between 23rd May and 5th September, another copy will be donated to a child from a community where the link between low literacy levels and poverty is the most evident.

The books will be distributed through National Literacy Trust's literacy hubs. Recent National Literacy Trust research shows that one in five children aged five to eight in the UK don't own a book.

## A boost for music

Over 200,000 children and young people across North London are set to benefit from top-tier music education as Haringey Council lead an ambitious national initiative set up by the Arts Council England.

As the new Hub Lead Organisation, Haringey Council will receive a total of £1,796,756 from the Department for Education. The funding will go towards coordinating music education in the local area, with £578,000 made available for schools to invest in new musical instruments, equipment and technology tailored to the needs of local children, including those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Pupils at over 400 schools will be offered high-quality music education through diverse partnerships between educational, creative and community organisations, in their local communities and throughout the country.



**52%** of teachers in England reported feeling stressed 'very often' last year

## Look ahead | Book ahead

### THE END OF TERM!

See the school year out in style with these fun (but still educational)

activities. There are plenty of indoor ones for those rainy days... Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-EndOfTerm](https://tinyurl.com/tp-EndOfTerm)



### INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

Take part in a global celebration of reading and writing this September with our pick of engaging bookish resources for Years 1–6. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-SepLiteracy](https://tinyurl.com/tp-SepLiteracy)



## Q & A



## Dr Ronx

Emergency doctor, and presenter on CBBC's *Operation Ouch!*

### 1. What was primary school like for you?

I had a great time and looked forward to school every day. I was very bubbly, did my work very quickly and would then talk to the other students and distract them. This led my teachers to move my table away from others to keep me focused. At the time, I didn't realise that they were helping me stay on track so that I would reach my full potential. I owe everything to them.

### 2. What did you find most interesting when writing your book, *How to Save a Life*?

One of the most interesting things that I found out was that the blood of a crab is blue! Initially, I tried to include absolutely everything I knew about first aid in this book. But I was reminded by my editor that the aim was to introduce readers to first aid and emergency skills – not give them a medical degree. After that realisation everything flowed, but there is so much more I wanted to include.

### 3. What do you think is the most important thing to tell children about first aid?

This is a theme that runs through my book, and it's what to do when they encounter an accident or emergency. If they remember only three things from the book, I want them to

- Stay safe
- Stay calm
- Call for help

These three key bits of advice form part of 'the chain of survival' and can be used by anyone.

*How to Save a Life*, written by Dr Ronx and illustrated by Ashton Attzs, is published on 18th July (£9.99, Red Shed).

# Society, Science & Civil War!

New hands-on Discovery Visit workshop  
and free resources at Bolsover Castle



Travel back in time to the 17th-century to Bolsover Castle with our new Discovery Visit for upper KS2. Get hands-on with science experiments, investigate the castle's colourful history and explore the impacts of the English Civil War on society.

Or, for a free self-led visit, download the new Teachers' Kit for everything you need to create a fun and unforgettable trip for your class.

[www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/bolsover-castle/school-visits](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/bolsover-castle/school-visits)







# 8 WAYS to study local history

You don't have to go on a class trip to uncover fascinating stories from the past

## 1 | LOOK AROUND YOU

It might sound obvious, but we can often take the things on our doorstep for granted. What local landmarks are there near your school? These could be big, such as a castle, or a smaller structures like statues or war memorials. What stories can they tell us? Examine street names too; they can tell us a lot about who or what was important in the local area in the past. Taking a walk around your neighbourhood can reveal unexpected aspects that can form the basis of a local history study.

## 2 | UNTRODDEN PATHS

Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to do research before teaching a new local history topic. It can often take longer than anticipated and may lead you down all sorts of unexpected and surprising routes – you're sure to find odd snippets of new information that will interest pupils.

## 3 | ASK A GRAN

One of the best ways to find stories about what your local area was like in the past is to talk to people who have lived there for some years. What was the area like when pupils' parents or grandparents were young? How has the landscape changed? Do people still have the same jobs? Interviewing people face to face provides children with the opportunity to carry out their own enquiry, and offers an immediacy that will engage more reluctant learners. It can be a great opportunity to forge links between different generations in the community too.

## 4 | STUDY YOUR SCHOOL

Look at your school logbooks. Up until the 1950s, headteachers had to keep detailed records of daily school life. These accounts are fascinating and can reveal how national events impacted on the local community. The logbooks for my school note the times that school started later after night-time air raids. Others may record outbreaks of illnesses we don't suffer from now, or holidays and celebrations that tell us about local industries. See [tinyurl.com/tp-Logbook](https://tinyurl.com/tp-Logbook) for a logbooks lesson plan.



**RACHEL BRUCE**

is a primary school teacher in York who is passionate about local history and reading. She is an Historical Association teacher fellow and subject leader.

## 5 | IN THE PICTURE

Photographs can provide a fascinating glimpse into the past. Children love spotting features in old pictures that they can still recognise. Photos of people can show how clothes have changed, and make us think about how lifestyles were different from today. It's fun to compare the formality of Victorian pictures to the photos we can take on our phones now. Local newspapers can be a great source of historical images (see point 8).

## 6 | WHAT'S OCCURRING?

Local events, memorials or people can help children to understand the national or global picture at a particular point in history. For example, local abbey ruins can be a way to look at the dissolution of the monasteries. A plaque to a local anti-slavery campaigner can give an insight into the slave trade. Think carefully about how to fit these items and events into your curriculum though, as you want the focus to stay on local aspects.

## 7 | WHAT WAS HERE?

Maps are a brilliant way of tracking how an area has changed over time, and of spotting features that existed in the past. Ordnance Survey maps date back to the 1840s and can be found on the National Library of Scotland website ([maps.nls.uk/os](https://maps.nls.uk/os)). How has the land use in your area changed? Are there more houses now? Were there industrial buildings that no longer exist? Maps can help introduce the idea of chronology and inspire discussion about why changes have taken place.

## 8 | EXPERT ADVICE

Libraries and archives can provide a wealth of useful information about your local area including newspapers, maps, plans of buildings, and photographs. Local museums often celebrate the heritage of the area and bring the past to life through artefacts and displays. Staff are often happy to help, and may have ideas that you haven't considered exploring in class.



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# Curriculum innovation for everyone

Incorporating exploration and experimentation into our practice is a risk worth taking

 [punchdrunkenrichment.org.uk/projects/schools](http://punchdrunkenrichment.org.uk/projects/schools)

**A**ll of us need space within which to experiment – how can we develop professionally if we simply go through the motions? However, experimentation is risky. By its very nature it will sometimes not be successful and that can leave us feeling exposed. So how can we make sure valuable ideas don't end up discarded due to workload or perceived curriculum constraints?

## Don't make exploration an add-on

It's easier to explore new approaches and develop ideas when this is something we consider in all our work. A good place to start is with planning. Being innovative and thinking creatively is much simpler when we are already looking ahead. Think about something you've wanted to try for a while and fit it into your plans for the next term.

## Team up

Although as individuals we do have the odd 'eureka' moment, it's much more likely that new ideas have come about through working with other teachers. We don't teach in isolation, and reflecting and developing new ideas is just the same. Working together can also feel less daunting. We can feel quite exposed when we suggest

new ways to do things, but it's not as intimidating when you already have a colleague who is collaborating with you.

Meet up with another teacher, possibly from the same year group, to develop and reflect on your ideas. It can be good to ask each other questions to help take an idea forward, such as:

- What aspects of the curriculum do pupils find it harder to engage with, or struggle to understand?
- How does our idea support other aspects of learning around the chosen topic?
- What teaching strategies, or activities, might be most effective in helping to develop children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills?
- How can we measure whether our approach has an impact on pupil engagement and learning outcomes?

## Get inspired

Often, inspiration for something new comes from another source.

For me, this was the charity Punchdrunk Enrichment ([tinyurl.com/tp-PunchDrunk](http://tinyurl.com/tp-PunchDrunk)), which introduced me to the concept of immersive

learning through projects like The Lost Lending Library and A Small Tale. The impact of their work led me to create immersive experiences for the whole school, working with my staff to help them develop their own practice as immersive learning teachers ([tinyurl.com/tp-ImmersiveDinos](http://tinyurl.com/tp-ImmersiveDinos)).

Another way to spark new ideas is to visit other schools and see how they do something. It can be really energising to look beyond your own school and see first-hand how other teachers approach things. This experience is also a great way to help 'make the case' for a new idea to your KS lead or member of SLT.

If you can't spare the time to visit another school, then subscribe to some of the great newsletters and podcasts that focus on innovation and new thinking. The Chartered College of Teaching ([chartered.college/our-podcast](http://chartered.college/our-podcast)) has a great podcast that gives me lots of inspiration. The Foundation for Education ([fed.education](http://fed.education)) runs thought-provoking events, while the Punchdrunk Enrichment blog has immersive learning ideas and resources.

In my view, there is more opportunity to explore new ideas now than when I first started my teaching career. There is a greater variety of schools, and most good leaders welcome new ideas, particularly when they're supported by research. It's also easier to find research and examples, which means we can have greater confidence that our ideas are more than just that: they're approaches that can make a difference to our children.

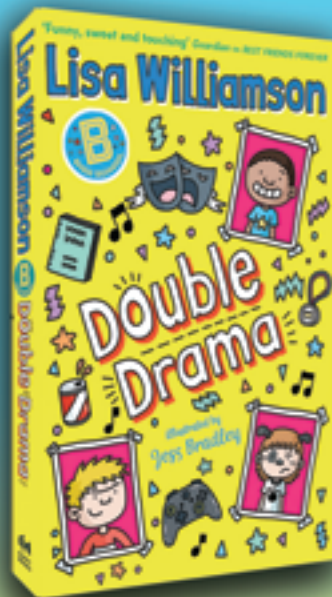
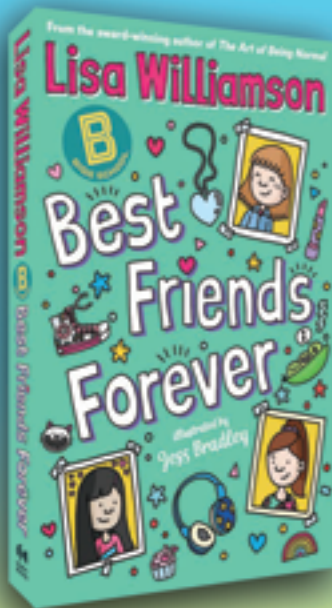
However, experimentation does still mean taking risks. All the research in the world won't tell you how an idea will work in your class, with your pupils. School leaders have an important role to play here in creating spaces where ideas are welcomed and explored, and where teachers can feel it's OK when something doesn't go to plan.

We ask our pupils to take risks all the time, and we work hard to provide spaces where children can feel safe and secure. Creating the same things for ourselves is good for our own teaching practice, and allows children to see us walking the talk. **TP**

*James Searjeant is headteacher at Wyborne Primary School in New Eltham, Greenwich, and part of Punchdrunk Enrichment's Immersive Learning Collective.*

*"All the research in the world won't tell you how an idea will work with your class"*

Follow the extraordinary lives of ordinary kids as they navigate friendships, change and the ups and downs of growing up.



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2024



'Funny, sweet and touching . . . ideal for fans of Jacqueline Wilson' *Guardian*

## Know someone moving up to secondary school?

Scripture Union

*It's Your Move* helps children take the giant step from primary to secondary school, with stories and tips from recent leavers, teachers and schools workers. These great, little books also feature reflections on how the Christian faith can help at this daunting time, making them the perfect gift for children in Year 6.

- A survival guide and journal to help children adapt to a new school.
- Top tips and stories from children who have already made the move
- Advice and space to reflect, alongside helpful Bible references
- Over 2 million children already helped to settle into their new school through this series



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## Creating a sense of safety around transition

With a bit of thought and planning, we can smooth the move to big school

 [thriveapproach.com](https://thriveapproach.com)

**M**y school serves an area of high deprivation, with more than half of our children eligible for pupil premium funding.

We know that a successful transition to secondary school is crucial for our pupils to succeed in their educational journey and that, without a carefully designed package of support, we can lose some of them in that process through fixed-term or permanent exclusions.

We are many years into our journey as a Thrive school and have been recognised as a Thrive ambassador school, using a whole-school approach to support our children's mental health and wellbeing. We have six practitioners, including our headteacher, SENCo and myself. I support all pupils and families pastorally and run family Thrive courses to share our knowledge of child development and neuroscience.

### A step change

We are conscious that we flood our children with Thrive support over the course of their primary years, and are mindful that when they move into secondary, this tight support network will be lost. Some of our children with

gaps in their social and emotional development are very reliant on the relationships we have built; we don't want them to lose that sense of safety when they move up to 'big' school.

We began building our current approach three years ago, when we realised something needed to change. We initially enhanced our own support package by identifying those pupils who might find transition a little trickier, and working with them to understand what high school life would look like.

We began running a Year 7 club during autumn term, where our leavers could come back each week to catch up with those key adults they were missing, and for us to listen and signpost them towards support.

### A passport to success

Since this time, our transition package has grown year on year. We've built and maintained a strong relationship with the secondary school we feed into, and have designed a comprehensive approach together, building a strong team to support our Year 6 and Year 7 pupils.

We invited the high school Thrive practitioner into our school and over a few sessions created a Thrive passport

for our children. This captures a range of details, such as their hobbies and what makes them special.

For the handful of pupils who may find transition trickier, we offer more support. This involves one-to-one visits to their new school. They are taken on a walk around the school site, so that they become familiar with the layout, experiencing the hustle and bustle of break times and lesson transitions, and learning who among the high school students they can go to if they need support. We encourage these pupils to send postcards back and forth with their new contacts over summer term to continue strengthening this connection.

Other pupils, who may struggle with the independence of high school, visit it using a walking bus from our school so that we can point out the safest route and discuss risks.

We want the children to develop a familiarity with the school they will be joining, so we have a PE teacher from the secondary school deliver a weekly PE lesson for our Year 5 and 6 children. The session is run exactly as it would be at secondary school, so the children develop a real understanding of expectations. It also means they have another familiar face when they start in September.

### A safety net

Whether it be during the Year 7 club or at any other time, there are a range of reasons why a child will come back to us for support. They might be struggling with the work or friendships, or have received a sanction. So we talk to them about what happened, and we might suggest role-playing the situation so they can try a different approach in the future. The most important thing is that they know they are Barwic Parade children even when they leave us, and that we are here as familiar, friendly faces they can turn to for support whenever they need to.

The high school is very happy with the transition package we have put in place, reporting that it helps our cohort of children to settle and be successful more quickly. There's more for us to do, and we're refining our approach as we go; but it's wonderful to know that for most of our children, they will go on to have a happy start at 'big' school. **TP**

*Jodie Morris is the attendance parent support adviser at Barwic Parade Primary School in Selby. She is a Licensed Practitioner with Thrive, which offers a whole-school approach to improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.*





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

# A letter to... Primary teachers

Don't overlook the value of song in helping children develop phonological awareness, says **Laura Di Pasquale**



**H**aving a strong foundation in phonics is essential for teaching children to read. But can music play a role in helping

them develop greater phonological awareness at a young age? Let's take a trip down memory lane, shall we?

Many of us will remember the joys of being a tiny tot bouncing on our granny's knee to Humpty Dumpty. Although this seemed like a wild ride, it was more than just a cute party trick for grandparents. This knee-bouncing was helping us develop phonological awareness. It taught us about rhythm and rhyme, both of which are essential for reading and sounding out words.

The teaching of phonics has an important place in the timetable of a primary classroom, but if you want your pupils to spot a split digraph from a mile away then you should consider introducing more music into the curriculum, too. Yes, you heard me right! Belting out Baa, Baa Black Sheep is more precious than a full class set of glue sticks with all their lids on. (I know, that's a bold statement, but stay with me.)

According to Professor Susan Hallam (*The Power of Music*, Music Education Council 2015) 'Speech and music have a number of shared processing systems. Musical experiences, which enhance processing can therefore impact on the perception of language, which in turn impacts on learning to read. Active engagement with

music sharpens the brain's early encoding of linguistic sound...'

As you all know, phonics is about understanding the sounds letters make. So, what better way to practise these sounds than through the power of music, even with a few pitchy notes thrown in for good measure? Singing breaks down words into syllables and sounds, allowing us to hear and recognise patterns in language. When pupils sing along to Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star, they're not just learning a song; they're picking up on the 't' sound, the rhythm of the words and the blending of sounds. It's

***"It's phonics in disguise, like a superhero wearing a catchy melody instead of a cape"***

phonics in disguise, like a superhero wearing a catchy melody instead of a cape.

Phonological awareness deals with recognising and manipulating sounds in spoken language. Imagine a classroom where children are not just reading words, but feeling them, bouncing to them, and letting them dance off their tongues. It's like turning your classroom into the most fun, educational concert ever. Move over, Taylor Swift!

Songs can have rhymes, alliterations and repeated patterns, which are fantastic for developing phonological awareness. When children sing, they learn to play with sounds,

creating a fun and engaging way to build crucial literacy skills. According to Françoise *et al.*, 2013, 'Listening and engaging in musical activity reinforces children's awareness of speech segmentation'. Therefore, incorporating songs into your daily routine can transform your classroom into a phonics powerhouse. Plus, let's be real, it makes the day more enjoyable for everyone. Who doesn't love a good sing-along?

Now, I know what you're thinking: "I'm not exactly Beyoncé?". Don't worry, you don't need to be a diva to make this work. The beauty of singing with kids is that they don't care if you're hitting all the right notes. It's the enthusiasm and the joy that counts. So, channel your inner rock star, embrace your microphone (pencil,

marker, or one of those elusive glue sticks with the lid on), and let your voice fly free.


In today's busy world, where knee-bouncing and lullabies might be on the endangered list, we must keep the rhythm alive. Let's bring the joy of singing back into the classroom and boost our kids' phonics and phonological skills. Before you know it, your class will be phonics wizards, and you'll have a lot of fun along the way.

Happy singing, and keep bouncing – even if it's just metaphorically. Warmest regards,

*Laura*



*Laura Di Pasquale is a primary teacher in Glasgow, Scotland and is an Apple Learning Coach and micro:bit Champion.*

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## UNDERCOVER TEACHER

A change is gonna come?

Ofsted's 'Big Listen' initiative has ended, but will it actually have any meaningful impact on how school inspections are carried out?

**F**riday, 31st May saw the end of the Ofsted Big Listen. Tens of thousands of people have given their feedback to the consultation, and it is reportedly the biggest response to a public sector consultation there has ever been. If anything were to sum up the weight of feeling around Ofsted and its current and future role, it must be this. Since the tragedy of Ruth Perry, there has been an outpouring of emotion, anecdotes, suggestions, criticisms, and no short amount of feedback for Ofsted. The appointment of Sir Martyn Oliver felt welcome, and it seemed to be a move in the right direction. The announcement of the Big Listen, clear recognition of the need to change, and the assurance that nothing was off the table felt positive – like change could come.

In the interim period, there have indeed been positive moves, including the pause policy, and the opportunity to share outcomes with trusted colleagues and families – and with medical professionals, which surely tells a story in itself. Then there came the news that deep dives would no longer happen in ungraded inspections from September, and this was also another step in the right direction.

I can't help but feel, though, that the opportunity for change is slipping away. Perhaps I'm being unfair; the outcomes of the consultations are not known, and nor is any potential response.

Recently, I attended an Ofsted Roadshow, with the hope that the Big Listen be high on the agenda. I was dismayed to find that two thirds of the session was spent giving updates about topics that have been in the public domain for several years: info on deep dives, what to expect in an inspection, safeguarding, the phone call. After a short break, the session was given over to feeding back on the areas of the consultation. This section was squeezed into 45 minutes, and the setup of the session was not conducive to gathering input from the many headteachers who were there. The fact that this part was condensed so that people

could get home was frustrating; I could easily have spent the whole three hours discussing the future!

I really hope this is not indicative of the approach that will be taken, but I worry that it just might be.

Ofsted is an organisation inextricably entangled with the Department for Education. This causes

problems with any response to a consultation, as the DfE has a clear idea of what it wants Ofsted to be and how certain parameters cannot change. Surely, this will limit the scope of how much can be altered? Throw July's General Election into the mix too and everything that has been decided could be thrown in the air again. That means decisions and changes may wait, and we will once again end up with stagnation of a system that almost everyone within education is crying out to change.

There is so much that could be done: area inspectors linked to specific schools, visiting more often and building meaningful relationships with a school, its community, and its leaders; visits based around short, sharp foci that can be easily evidenced and show real school improvement. Ofsted could become a true partner with a school, not a cause of anxiety and worry.

Another change could be a greater pledge to consistency and transparency. Share training materials, and allow all serving headteachers to access the same CPD as those who are inspecting. If inspectors are aware of the best aspects of current practice, surely it makes sense to offer that training to all schools?

The reports could be open to change, too: remove the single-word judgements, focus on what is going well and what could be better, but without the fear of reprisals should things be identified as needing work.

Currently, the job of a school leader often feels like it depends entirely on the opinion – or whim – of whoever might walk through the door on the morning of inspection. There has been a Big Listen. Now we need to see the Big Change. It's the only way Ofsted can rebuild and rebrand itself and regain the trust of the whole profession. Time will tell. **TP**



*“Ofsted could become a true partner with a school, not a cause of anxiety and worry”*

The author is a headteacher in England. X @secretHT1

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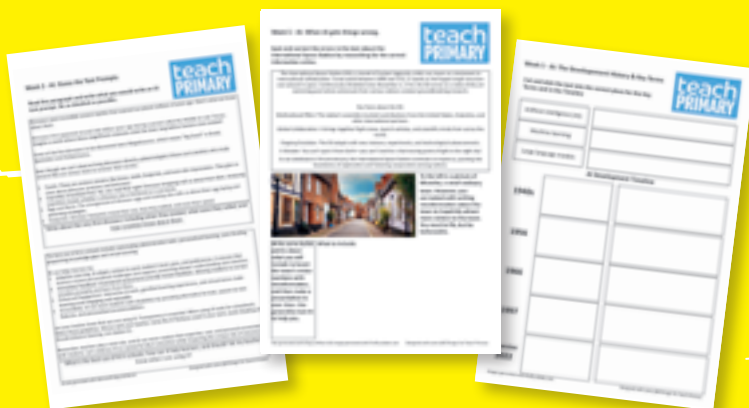
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## WEEK 1

### Learning objective

- To be able to explain what AI and machine learning are and how AI has been developed, and know some of the most common AI platforms.

Begin by assessing what your class know about AI. Ask the following questions as a starting point:

- Where have you encountered AI?
- What is AI?
- How can AI be used?

Try not to confirm or deny what the children say at this stage. Just listen and make note of good explanations and misconceptions which you can circle back

to later.

Now listen to the Magnaphone podcast about AI (Spotify: [bit.ly/magnaphoneai](https://bit.ly/magnaphoneai), or search your podcast platform of choice), stopping at key points to discuss and ensure the children have understood.

Some suggested prompt points to pause and discuss:

- 0:55: How might AI change the world in the future?
- 1:15 How might an AI show its creativity?
- 2:35 How are AI tools different from traditionally coded tools?
- 5:35 How might AI training data be problematic?

Return to the original questions. Have your learners' answers changed?



Recent advances in machine learning have catapulted artificial intelligence into the news headlines with breathless hyperbole. AI is changing business, culture, and learning. But, like any tool, we need to learn how to use it well and understand its limitations. This challenging unit of work for Year 6 explores what AI is and is not. Before teaching this unit, you'll need to ensure that you are familiar with all the platforms you'll be using and with your school's policy on AI. Be ready to have the sort of conversations that will prepare children to react with caution and integrity when they encounter AI as a consumer or creator. In particular, set aside plenty of time to discuss and clarify when people *shouldn't* use AI.

Correct any misunderstandings the children have.

Next, watch the BBC video at [bit.ly/5thingsai](https://bit.ly/5thingsai). It's important the children understand that, despite its name, 'artificial intelligence' is not intelligent. A more accurate name for it would be 'applied statistics' – text is generated by crunching a lot of data and then predicting the most likely next word. Emulate this by asking a pair of learners to try taking turns at building a sentence one word at a time (listeners of *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue* will know this game as 'Cheddar Gorge'). Pupils should now have all the information they need to complete **Worksheet 1**.



### Assessment

Assess pupils from verbal responses during the discussion, as well as their accuracy in completing the worksheet.



## WEEK 2

### Learning objective

- To be able to identify the main features of a generative AI platform and understand how to use it to generate text using accurate prompts.

Writing a good prompt to yield the desired result within an AI platform is something that takes practice and refinement.

To explore this point, use a generative AI platform like ChatGPT, Microsoft's Copilot, or Google's Gemini to create an example of the trickster Jinn legend. Relate the basic storyline to your learners (they may be familiar with the Simpsons' monkey paw parody) and ask them what prompts you could





use to generate this story. Once you've agreed on a prompt, enter it into the platform. Read out some or all of the story that is generated. Refine the prompt to improve the story.

Get pupils to complete **Worksheet 2**, thinking about suitable prompts to get the example text. Discuss how these might be improved or refined.

Put children into groups or pairs and ask them to use AI to generate a story that includes one suggested element from each member of the group. An example could be: write an adventure story about a cute guinea pig, Ant-Man and a pony called Daisy. The children can add 'way points', such as, 'They must visit a castle at the end of the story'.

Ask the groups to discuss how the outputs could be improved.



### Assessment

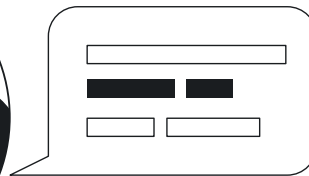
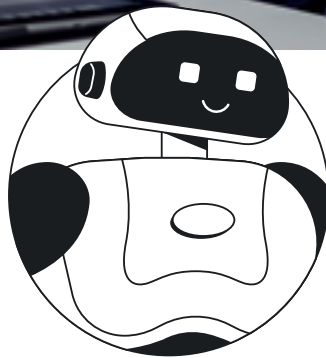
Assess learners by their ability to form and refine prompts to create a desired AI-generated outcome.



### WEEK 3 Learning objective

- To be able to use AI to enhance creative writing, and know how to collaborate with AI to generate ideas.

Ask the children to play a game of Consequences in small groups, where they must continue a story based on



then repeat the process until a lengthy story has been created. Ensure you save these creations

(copy/paste into a text doc), as they will be used in the following lesson.

Next, flip the activity by asking the AI to create a story opening based on something that the children have been studying in class. This time, ask the learners to continue the narrative, using their knowledge of the subject matter in the next paragraph, and then repeat.

Now, copy and paste a short piece of writing into the prompt. Ask the AI to: highlight potential errors; create a short summary; create a paragraph that links two stories together; convert one type of writing into another.

Discuss whether the children might use AI to augment and improve their own written work in the future, and whether or not it could be used to enhance learning. As a teacher, you may wish to consider this question yourself.

You can now ask pupils to complete **Worksheet 3**.



### Assessment

- Assess pupils by their ability to use prompts to generate a continuing piece of writing.

*“It’s important the children understand that, despite its name, ‘artificial intelligence’ is not intelligent”*

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## WEEK 4

### Learning objective

- To understand how to create images and audio with AI, adapting text prompts to achieve a desired outcome.

Before the lesson, generate some pieces of art using a suitable AI platform, such as Adobe's Firefly. Tell the children that you want them to critique the images. Ask what they like about them, what they don't, and what they think the artist was trying to convey when they created each piece of art.

Reveal that these images have been created using AI. Ask whether the children still think that the 'artist' has intentions and something they wish to convey. Ask pupils to complete **Worksheet 4**.

Return to the saved text of the stories the children created in Week 3. Ask pupils to come up with prompts to generate illustrations for their stories, refining the prompts in the ways they practised during Week 2, until they are satisfied with what is generated.



### Assessment

Assess the learners by their ability to use prompts to generate images and music based on desired traits, uses and audience.



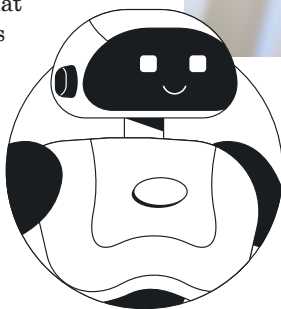
## WEEK 5

### Learning objective

- To understand that AI has limitations and makes mistakes, and that it can be used to create content that is untrue and made to deceive and confuse.

Before putting everything you've learned so far together, it's really important to discuss the limitations of AI, and how it can be used to spread misinformation.

Before the lesson, go to **moondisaster.org**. Start and then pause the video, to hide the warning that it has been manipulated. Play the first four and a half minutes of the video you've cued up, to get a sense of the fictitious disaster. Ask the children whether they notice anything unusual about the video. Let your class know the video is fake – AI and clever



## TYPING...

editing have been used to show an alternative history.

Discuss how pupils can use trusted sources to try and verify whether media is real or fake. Talk about the possible motives someone might have for creating and sharing fake media. Explain that AI can also make mistakes and generate incorrect information.

As mentioned in the BBC video from Week 1, AI can simply make things up sometimes, and this is known as an AI hallucination. Ask pupils to prompt the AI platform for information about a local place and then, using traditional research methods, see if they can spot incorrect information from the AI. Finally, discuss briefly how AI is only as good as its training data. If historical data contains bias or discrimination then AI may continue to show bias in its output, which can have real-world impacts on people lives.

The children can now complete **Worksheet 5**.



### Assessment

Assess by your learners' ability to articulate the limitations, concerns and potential dangers of AI and demonstrate robust methods to check sources and conduct independent fact-checking research via trusted sources.



## WEEK 6

### Learning objective

- To combine prior knowledge and skills at using generative AI to create a video on a given topic for a specific audience.

Show the class some age-appropriate AI videos that contain mistakes and bizarreness, such as the cartoon at [bit.ly/aibapple](https://bit.ly/aibapple) and the children's song at [bit.ly/aiskiplou](https://bit.ly/aiskiplou). Ask pupils to point out moments of weirdness.

Bringing everything together, ask your class to create short films in small groups.

Pupils should use text generation to create a story, and can then use a free platform like **app.pixverse.ai** or **app.runwayml.com** to create a few seconds of AI-generated video.



### Assessment

Assess on the learners' ability to use prior skills in combination to create a short film.



*Martin Burrett is a primary teacher, EdTech specialist, editor at UKEdChat, and an author. See [ictmagic.co/books](https://ictmagic.co/books) to view his books on*

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# A window into THE WORLD

Create a humanities curriculum that reflects the needs of *your* school,  
say **Claire Watson** and **Kate Kellner-Dilks**

**T**he national curriculum sets out attainment targets for history and geography for primary schools, but there is so much choice in exactly what schools may teach and explore. This is wonderful, because it allows us to make choices that are suitable for the specific context of our school; however, it can also be difficult to know where to start. Even if you've purchased a scheme of work to help with planning, it will likely still need to be adapted to fit your context, locality and children.

## Where to start?

Take a step back from the curriculum and think about your school and the community it serves:

- Who are your children? What are their backgrounds and heritages?
- What are the different cultures of the children and their families?
- Where is your school, and what is it like to live in the school's locality?
- Do your children have any gaps that your curriculum could help fill? For example, do many of your children experience the British seaside, or visit farms or museums?

## Reflections

Create 'windows and mirrors' in the curriculum to reflect pupils' lives and inspire them. This might be through the significant people you choose to investigate, the locations you explore in geography, or the experts you invite to the classroom or field trip.



Moving beyond the 'heroes' of history, or the cliché locations for geography, allows us to be ambitious in the way we weave together content so that it (sensitively and appropriately) portrays the real challenges of the world in which we live.

In doing so, we also acknowledge that every pupil should feel connected to our curriculum and that they play a significant part in what comes next. They could be the musician, artist, designer, historian, architect or inventor we study in years to come.

Having a curriculum that does not reflect children's identities, build belonging or broaden horizons is falling short. It's not yet doing its job and needs further work.

## Creating your curriculum

Working on a curriculum is no small or easy task. You may need to begin by choosing those small tweaks that can have the biggest impact.

We suggest that as you review your curriculum, you consider these six areas for improvement:

**1** Think carefully about the demographics of your school. What ethnic heritages do your pupils have? What is important to the people in your community? What is significant about the location of the school? Do your curriculum choices reflect your findings?

**2** Think about the significant people that the children study in history during KS1. Are some of them from similar ethnic backgrounds to those of the children in your school? This will help pupils 'see' themselves reflected in the curriculum. Is there representation of people across genders, races and time periods, including some from the present day?

**3** In history, geography and religious education, have you chosen significant experts in these fields to study that represent a range of genders, ages, backgrounds, races, ethnicities, etc? Have any of them ever lived near your school or in your area?

**4** When choosing places to study as part of your geography curriculum, have you chosen to represent the heritages of your pupils, or are you making choices that will offer a view of a place

pupils may never otherwise have learned about?

**5** When designing your religious education curriculum have you thought about contacting the various groups of parents that form part of your school community for their perspectives on what is important about their culture and beliefs?

**6** When studying units of work in history and geography that involve the local area, make sure that you have researched thoroughly. You should understand how the area has changed and why, and what significant places and people there were, or are, locally. Think about how the area may change in the future and how that might impact the locality.

Building a curriculum that supports all children to develop positive self-identity, have broad horizons and experience success is key to empowering your pupils and helping them get a great education. The good news is, it's something that is absolutely within your power to deliver. **TP**



**Claire Watson and Kate Kellner-Dilks are primary curriculum advisers for HFL Education. For more information about HFL training and resources**



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## Why children's writing is now at crisis point

Enjoyment in writing has hit a 14-year low – something needs to be done

 [literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers](https://literacytrust.org.uk/programmes/young-writers)

**A**t the National Literacy Trust our research, and the school programmes we run, consistently show that children and young people who write for enjoyment benefit from the many opportunities this practice brings. These include caring for their mental wellbeing, cultivating their creativity, processing struggles, making sense of the world and participating actively in civic life. Previous research indicates that pupils who enjoy writing very much are seven times more likely to write above the level expected for their age compared with those who don't enjoy writing at all.

### Writing now

This year, we recorded the lowest ever level of writing enjoyment in 14 years of studies, with a staggering seven in ten children and young people aged eight to 18 reporting that they don't enjoy writing in their free time ([tinyurl.com/tp-2024writing](https://tinyurl.com/tp-2024writing)). Meanwhile, 29 per cent of 11-year-olds in England left primary school in 2023 unable to write at the expected level. This figure rose to 43 per cent among children who receive free school meals (FSM).

Perhaps counterintuitively, every year for the past 14 years more pupils who receive free school meals have told us they enjoy writing in their free time than their non-FSM peers. This trend has remained steady in the face of three recessions, a global pandemic and the unprecedented cost-of-living crisis that profoundly impacted families and exacerbated pressures on schools.

Yet the opposite is true of reading for pleasure, indicating that investment is needed to explore how writing for pleasure pedagogies could create a gateway into reading for pleasure for children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Enjoyment of writing both in free time and in school are typically highest in primary school settings, with younger pupils being the most enthusiastic. However, during the transition from lower to upper KS2, rates of writing enjoyment drop significantly, continuing to decrease exponentially as pupils progress through their schooling.

This year, rates declined ahead of time, with the drop in writing enjoyment most pronounced for boys aged five to eight. Even though boys are

typically less likely to engage in writing for pleasure, this significant drop in an age group that has consistently reported higher writing enjoyment rates in the past should be cause for concern.

Our research found that inspiring writing opportunities in school can boost children's writing enjoyment. Crucially, more children who write in their free time had participated in creative writing groups, entered writing competitions, met authors and attended book events.

### What next?

The National Literacy Trust's school resources ([tinyurl.com/tp-LT-primary](https://tinyurl.com/tp-LT-primary)) are filled with ideas, prompts and activities you can use in the classroom to inspire pupils' writing. For example:

- Provide a free writing prompt every morning to inspire a five-minute session for 20 days. On day 21, ask pupils to compose and decorate a free piece titled '21 days' using material from their free writing.
- Whether it's in the school playground or on a trip to the local park, use our Writing from Nature pack ([tinyurl.com/tp-LT-nature](https://tinyurl.com/tp-LT-nature)) to look to the natural world as a source of inspiration.
- Get pupils to write original poems about their thoughts on attitudes towards young people in today's society and have them perform their work in a poetry slam. Download our Write On poetry slam resources ([tinyurl.com/tp-LT-slam](https://tinyurl.com/tp-LT-slam)).

As our research findings continue to highlight a worrying downward trend across phases, it's clear we are in an ever-evolving writing for enjoyment crisis that shows no sign of recovery. Action must be taken, with considered policy changes aimed at reconnecting children and young people with the creative elements that transform writing into a personal and pleasurable practice. Financial and intellectual investment is also needed to create safe pedagogical spaces for low-stakes opportunities that are not simply about learning how to be good at writing. We must empower pupils to explore how writing works for them and to experiment with meaning, style, rhythm and movement to discover their individual writing voice. We can't afford to ignore this crisis and for children to miss out on the positives that writing for enjoyment pedagogies bring. **TP**

*Dr Francesca Bonafede is the Programme Manager for Young Writers at the National Literacy Trust. Young Writers is an evidence-based writing for enjoyment programme.*

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O.Williams, Deputy Head Teacher





# How I do it

Find your pupils' inner Taylor Swift with this song exploration activity

DR LIZ STAFFORD

# 1

Start by listening to a selection of pop songs, remembering of course to check for appropriateness of theme and lyrics first. Draw out the knowledge that pop songs (mostly) use a structure of repeated sections called verses and choruses. Verse = same tune, different words. Chorus = same tune, same words. They may also

have an intro, outro, instrumental, and/or a bridge that links different sections together. Make signs to hold up, to label the different sections as you listen.



Exploring pop songs is a fun, hands-on way to get your pupils excited about music lessons. I find this is a particularly great activity for Year 6, especially in the summer term when they might have become a bit disengaged with school! This lesson gives them a taste of the sort of work they might do in music at KS3, and even KS4, so it can be helpful in supporting the transition from primary to secondary school.

Next, explore the four chords that most pop songs are based on: I, V, vi and IV. These are the chords that start on the first, fifth, sixth and fourth notes of the scale respectively. You can find plenty of explainer videos on YouTube exploring this chord progression, and you can also find backing tracks so that you can test out whether your favourite songs use this progression by singing them over the top, karaoke style.

# 2

Continue by learning to play the four chords on tuned percussion, keyboards, or other suitable instruments. Each chord has three notes and, depending on the instruments you have, you could divide these notes up between your pupils, or ask each pupil to play all the notes themselves. In C major the chords are as follows (lowest note first): I = CEG, V = GBD, vi = ACE, IV = FAC. Practise playing these chords one after the other until fluent.

# 3

# 4

Choose a theme for your song – with Year 6, I often use the idea of moving on from primary to secondary school. Discuss the kind of story and feelings that you want to express in your song, and gradually turn these into lyrics for a chorus, and several verses. Map out the structure of your song using the labels you made in Step 1, and decide how many times you will play the chord progression for your intro and outro.



Finally, create your song melody. Begin by chanting the words of your song over the chord progression (either played live by pupils or using a backing track) to create the rhythm. Then, once you have your rhythm, gradually improvise a melody by singing some ideas over the chord progression. It's easier to do this vocally than on an instrument, because your voice will naturally try and follow the chord progression harmonies. Rehearse, perform, record and listen back to your creation.

# 5



Dr Liz Stafford is the author of *The Primary Music Leader's Handbook*, editor of *Primary Music Magazine*, and director of consultancy company *Music Education Solutions®*.



@DrLizStafford



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# Making MATHS STICK

When teaching numeracy skills, we should make greater use of the science of memory, says **Gill Cochrane**

**W**hilst teaching maths as a primary school teacher, I became fascinated with the idea of ‘semantic glue’ – or what makes information ‘stick’ in our memory. The pursuit of answers to ‘the glue question’ led me to undertake a psychology degree. During my studies, I came across these words from the Nobel prize-winning scientist Eric Kandel: *‘Memory is everything. Without it we are nothing.’*

Kandel studied Californian sea slugs to reveal how memories are formed. This research helped demonstrate how memory supports the process of monitoring for safety when we are moving through space. Human functioning and reasoning essentially evolved to serve this need. Grasping this powerful idea allows us to appreciate how inextricably linked spatial processing and reasoning are. There are three essential steps in both:

- adding new information to what you already know and hold in memory
- relating and connecting this information to what’s already known
- using this new information to achieve a purpose or find solutions to challenging situations.

Reasoning and spatial processing essentially both boil down to extracting meaningful patterns from the environment.

Understanding this helps to explain why the latest research into how children learn maths has demonstrated a causal relationship between spatial thinking and academic outcomes, prompting increasing calls to spatialise the maths curriculum. It could also explain why weak verbal and spatial working memory are commonly associated with maths difficulties and maths anxiety.

So how can we, as teachers, exploit the

connection between reasoning and spatial skills to help re-address difficulties with maths learning?

## Pattern detection

Relational reasoning makes a unique and positive contribution to maths outcomes. Giving pupils early and explicit experience in rule-following will improve their ability to monitor sets of information for patterns.

Attribute blocks vary in shape, thickness, colour and size; early sorting work with these blocks encourages learners to observe and describe relative differences and similarities, and boosts maths vocabulary. Venn diagrams give a great framework for further explicit categorisation work using the blocks.

Children can then build on the knowledge gained sorting shapes to generate patterns. This is an important skill, as it involves the application and creation of rules.

### Activity 1 – Sort it out:

Present children with an assortment of attribute blocks and a simple rule card that says, for example, ‘circle’. Ask them to sort shapes according to the rule. Gradually make this more complex by adding more than one rule for example, ‘circle’ and ‘thick’.

### Activity 2 – One at a time:

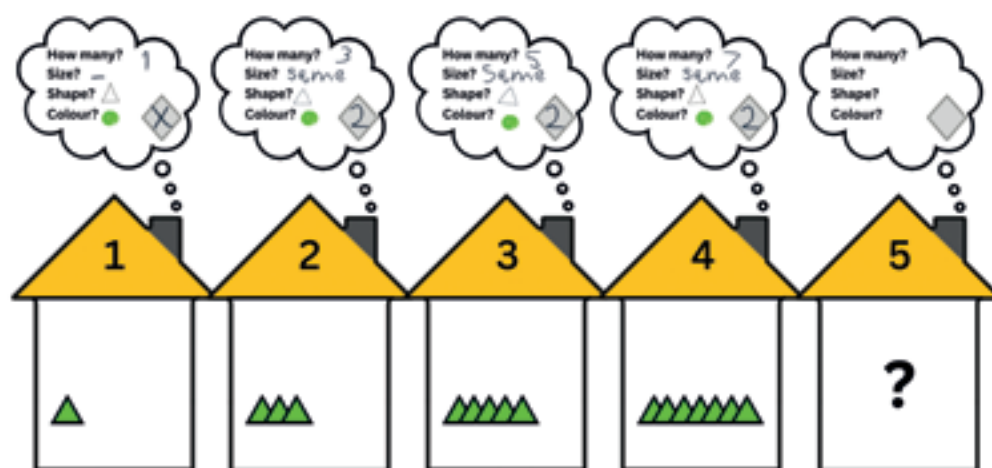
Give pupils a set of attribute blocks each and ask them to play a domino game where the rule ‘only one change at a time’ governs the flow of play. They will need to take turns to put down blocks between them, but they won’t always be able to go.

**Activity 3 – Patterns:** You can encourage children to discuss their reasoning by providing prompts to structure their analysis of a pattern.

In **Figure 1** you can see how pupils are asked to fill in information about every stage of a pattern. For example, has the number of objects changed? Are they the same shape? The grey ‘difference diamonds’ featured in the speech bubbles prompt the recording of this crucial bit of between-item information. Providing the numerical term positions on the roofs helps to structure discussion of the pattern and predictions of the next item in the series.

Developing pattern detection skills like this will help children move on to more complex non-verbal reasoning.

Figure 1. Making reasoning stages explicit

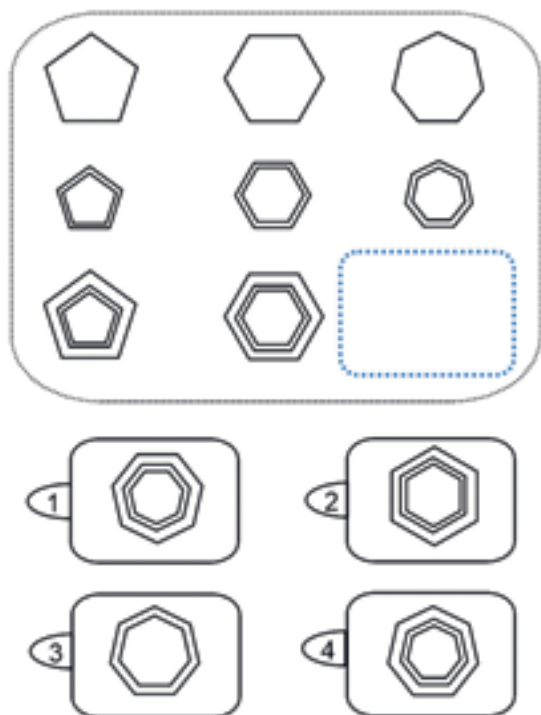


## Analogical reasoning

This is perhaps the most familiar type of reasoning, and it features in many popular matrix tasks, such as Fig. 2. In activities like this, the learner needs to choose the right shape to complete a pattern. Information can be deduced by looking at the relationships between the two other given sequences; potential answers are displayed immediately below each question. It’s important for us, as teachers, to understand the steps in the



Figure 2. Analogical reasoning: Which shape completes the pattern?



exploration that lead to the solution. **Reasoning by anomaly** involves working out the rule behind various patterns and then spotting the item that isn't following it, e.g. **Figure 3**. By studying each of the patterns and the interrelations within them, children will start to appreciate how practice in this type of task promotes structured scrutiny of the relationships within and across the set items.

**Reasoning by antithesis** requires learners to identify when a parallel or opposite rule has been applied. This is more complex, as the process must be identified so the sub-item featuring the opposite process can be chosen.

Practice with all these types of non-verbal reasoning tasks is done without processing number systems, allowing analytical skills to be strengthened separately from numeric work.

There is evidence that this type of reasoning practice can help when it comes to work with numbers.

### Purposeful scanning

A rich body of research demonstrates that purposeful scanning of information can significantly aid the ability to solve problems. There are indications that providing practice in explicitly noticing relationships within written equations can boost performance on similar maths problems.

For example, building meaningful gesturing into the appraisal of sums can lead to better performance on tasks involving the equivalence concept. Ask pupils to use their index and middle fingers to touch each number before the equals sign (and any after it) and then to use their index finger to point to the missing

information. The gesturing enhances the processing of the equation as a whole, working from left to right.

Re-organising the presentation of a problem, as below, promotes scanning of the whole sum, and examination of the inter-relationships within it.

#### 1. Fill the boxes with

= or > or <

$$4 \square 4 \quad 3 \square 2 \quad 5 \square 6$$

$$22 \div 2 \square 22 \times 2$$

$$23 \times 2 \square 23 \times 3$$

#### 2. Fill the boxes with numbers

$$16 = \square \times \square = \square \times \square = \square \times \square$$

In time, with supporting, structured discussion, learners can develop flexibility in strategy use when calculating, which can reduce the need to calculate in some cases. The children will learn to exploit the inter-relations to reduce the cognitive load of computation.

### Organising numbers and fractions spatially

Recent research has shown that lower levels of maths anxiety are found in people who 'spatialise', organising sequences from left to right in verbal working memory. Here are some ways we can help children spatialise their mathematical understanding:

- **Number lines and bar models** should be modelled as important organisers of computational thought.
- **Work on fractions** should include their ordering onto number lines to make relative value explicit.
- **Cross-sectional drawing** can provide an additional way to map space to solve word problems.

## How to build maths understanding

- Reduce reliance on memorisation for learning basic number facts; use number relationships and reasoning strategies instead.
- Try conceptual instruction using a limited range of numbers (e.g. 1 to 9), their sums and associated subtraction facts. This makes it easier to analyse the relationships between the elements within the sums.
- Use exploratory work on factor pairs to help encourage more flexible calculation strategies.
- Giant number lines can help young learners to walk through sums and to conceptualise counting as 'moving on.'
- Gesture and personification have been shown to increase retention and deepen understanding by recruiting a wider range of memory systems.
- Use concrete resources for teaching angles, for example, using hinged strips to demonstrate that an angle is a measurement of turn.
- Promoting maths oracy should be an important feature of each maths lesson.

There is a causal link between spatial thinking and achievement and confidence in maths. Spatialising maths builds an appreciation of the relations between and within objects and ultimately contributes to a more secure mathematical understanding in the longer term.**TP**



*Gill Cochrane is a former primary school teacher. She is now the lead*

*developer on the specialist literacy and maths courses run by Real Training in partnership with Dyslexia Action.*

[realtraining.co.uk/maths-courses](http://realtraining.co.uk/maths-courses)

Figure 3: Reasoning by anomaly: Which pattern is the odd one out?





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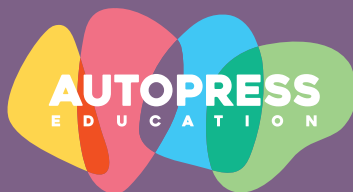
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5



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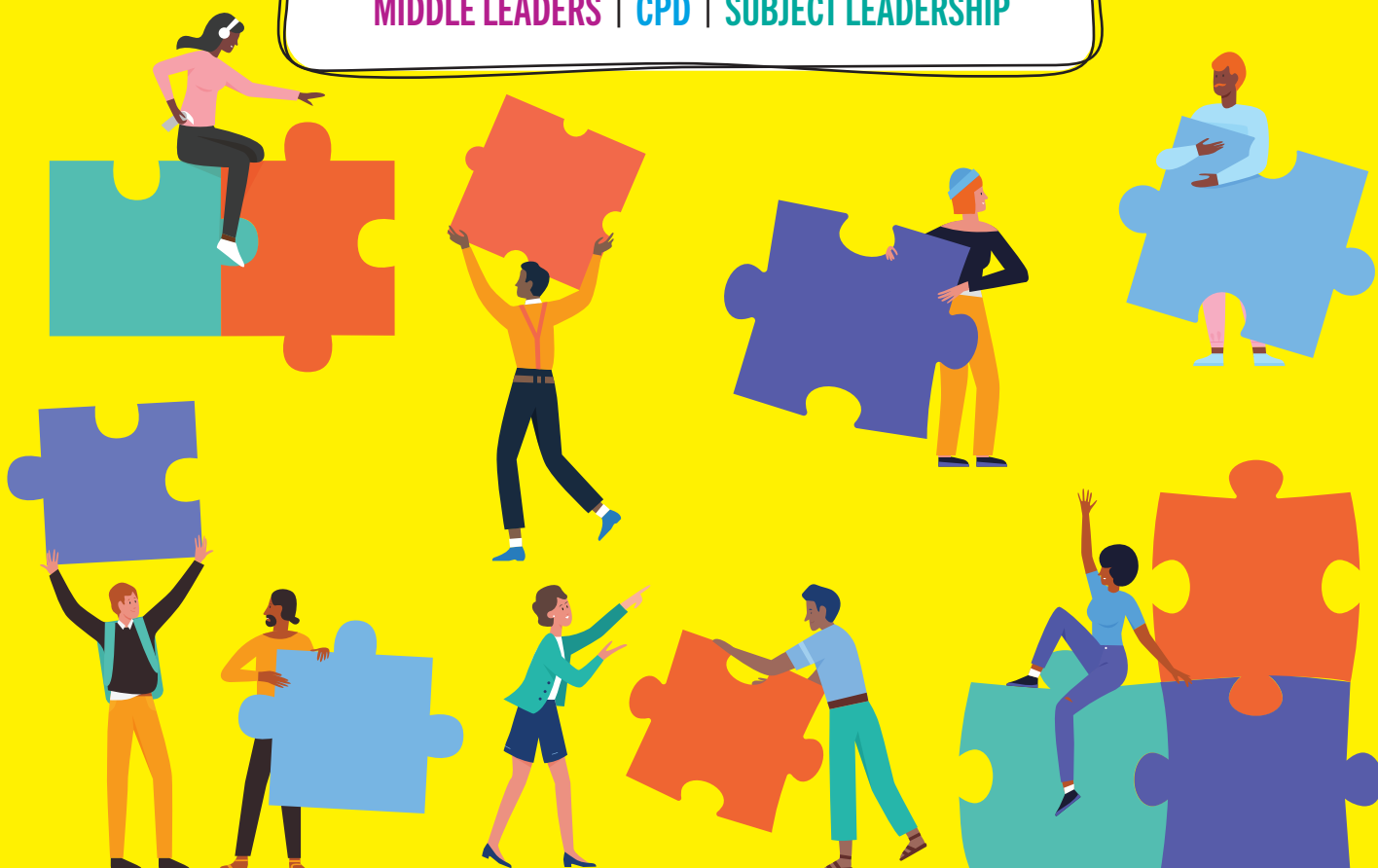




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## *Culture is* **KING**

**W**e need great teachers in school, and we need lots of them. We want as many top-tier educators to flood our classrooms and inspire our children as humanly possible. How can we create an environment that will attract and retain them?

Culture, rightly, is a building block of school improvement. It can't be detached from a school's mission statement, ethos, vision, values, behavioural approaches, curriculum, approaches to staffing, teaching

and learning, etc. because culture underpins all of these things. By the same token, all of these drivers are part and parcel of a school's culture.

A lot is made of culture. Who drives it, where it comes from, whether it is some sort of invisible entity, whether it is amorphous... The list goes on. My view is that culture is anything but amorphous; it's not some sort of abstract ideal. I'm yet to work in a school where if a headteacher says 'no' to an initiative or idea, it subsequently happens.

The head, as per the headteacher standards, should set the school's culture. All leaders have a duty and moral responsibility to support and defend the culture that the head sets.

Culture is a fundamental cornerstone of the headteacher standards and with good reason. Therefore, culture is a manifestation of the head's values, morals, ethos and educational beliefs. Leaders should embody this culture and defend it.

A few questions to ponder on when considering your culture are:

- What is it like to work and teach in your school, all day, every day?
- How often do you focus on and celebrate the positives within your school with your community?
- To what extent do you create a sense of belonging?

- Do you support teaching and learning so that feedback both enables and empowers staff to positively drive the curriculum?

## A visible difference

Anyone visiting a school should be able to both feel and identify a school's culture from the moment they drive into the school grounds. This culture should then manifest itself in the shared beliefs, routines, norms and traditions that are visible across the school. The overall level of expectations and how people – all people – behave is another important representation of the culture generated in a school. The artefacts across the school serve as a visual representation to reinforce the culture.

It's important to consider the following questions:

- What do you want the culture of your school to say about the type of school that you are?
- What do you want people to think your school stands for?
- How will you ensure that your culture is lived and breathed?

That last question is critical. Whilst arguably you can flip a school on its head quite swiftly, and for the better, it takes time to develop, teach and embed the culture that you want. Culture drives so many elements of school life. A positive culture will



support learning, wellbeing, workload, positive behaviour, character and attendance. Crucially, it has a huge impact on pupil attainment. Whilst we can argue that school life is more than a set of academic outcomes, we also need to be realistic – a strong set of GCSEs and post-16 outcomes serve as an invaluable set of keys that open up the doors of opportunity for our children. It also goes without saying that schools where pupils consistently achieve strong outcomes across multiple subjects invariably have teachers who consistently adhere to and uphold the culture of the school.

So, a challenge for leaders is to consider how clear, purposeful and easy to understand the culture of their



## Flex appeal

Demand for flexible working has increased significantly since Covid, and more people than ever are looking for roles that provide work/life balance.

Flexible working is particularly important to certain demographics, such as working parents and unpaid carers, but broader research shows that Generation X and Y see remote, hybrid and flexible working as important benefits and accept the trade-off with salary. Generation Z (born 2001 – today) workers expect – even demand – these from employers. It's therefore prudent to appeal to these potential candidates, particularly as teacher and school leadership vacancies are two thirds higher than pre-pandemic levels, and competition is growing for good-quality hires.

Traditionally, schools have been cautious about flexible working. Minimum staffing levels, legal ratios and set timetables create a rigid structure seemingly at odds with the demands of flexible working. But by adopting a more flexible approach to working patterns and locations, it's possible to not only

attract applications from a wider pool of candidates, but also improve the work/life balance and wellbeing of existing staff and retain more experienced team members.

### YOUR FLEXIBLE WORKING JOURNEY

If you haven't considered flexible working options before, use these three questions to consider how each role at your school could be done differently:

- How is the work done?
- Where is the work done?
- When is the work done?

A headteacher role has always been considered a full-time position but 'how' this job is delivered can evolve. I've seen examples of schools hiring an experienced head part-time, so that the leadership team benefits from their expertise while the head reduces their hours before they retire. Job-shares are another way to change up the 'how'. I know of schools in one locality that share a maintenance/grounds person,

as they've struggled individually to fill it as a full-time role. For teachers and teaching assistants, the 'where' will almost certainly be the classroom, but perhaps there are opportunities to do PPA and administrative tasks at home, or for senior leadership to work from home once a week to catch up on admin or planning. 'When' work is done is somewhat restricted by the school day and timetable, but there can still be flexibility. Allowing teaching assistants to start later and finish earlier to work around their own children's schooling might be an option. Back office and reception staff could work compressed hours, where they do the same hours but in fewer days.

At a time when every business and organisation is struggling to recruit, and in light of the recent focus from the DfE on improving teacher workload and wellbeing, flexible working is a must-have for attracting new people into education, while helping to stop experienced and enthusiastic people leaving the profession.



Lucy Makins is the schools recruitment manager for HFL Education.





## Does teaching need a new marketing strategy?

'Teaching – Every Lesson Shapes a Life' on a pastel blue background is the current DfE 'Get into Teaching' slogan. The accompanying television campaign shows pupils at school with smiling, inspirational teachers as nurturing figures. This narrative of inspiring leaders making a difference to young people has been the hook for initial teacher training for decades. So far, it hasn't boosted the rate of recruitment. Maybe the reality of teacher workload, challenging pupil behaviour and, of course, OFSTED pressures is shouting louder than the idyllic images of teaching seen on screen.

'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again, and expecting different results', wrote Rita Mae Brown. So can we learn lessons from industries that are deemed more desirable? Perhaps it's time to change tack and attract teachers through other aspects of the profession. It goes without saying that teachers' hard work and resilience make a difference to the lives of young people. However, apart from the warm, fuzzy feeling teachers are rewarded with, what else is in it for them?

Most workers are attracted to professional development and financial rewards. We should further promote the extensive career development opportunities, which produce high-performing, skilled individuals. There are myriad career opportunities in education spanning beyond the classroom at senior leadership. Head teachers are amongst the top 10 per cent highest earners in the country. We rarely highlight the 13 weeks' paid holiday a year, either, which some teachers use to embark on exciting adventures or save on childcare costs. And don't forget that teachers benefit from a generous pension with an employer contribution of 28.6 per cent.

Perhaps it's time to create a new lifestyle brand for teaching that showcases more aspects of a well-regarded, financially secure career.

*Sarah Botchway is the director of the London South Teaching School Hub. As a teacher, she taught at all levels from primary to adults including headship in Lambeth.*

school is. In short, do people get it? A positive culture should allow teachers to teach, ideally disruption free. It should allow pupils to learn and for the social norm to positively shift. Crucially, though, it should inspire everyone to be proud of the school and demonstrate great pride that they work for and/or attend your school.

The other reality of a positive school culture (just like a negative one) is that it is infectious. It accumulates. You are able to build on it, year on year, and assuming you maintain an upward trajectory of positivity, you will find that your school gets better and better and better.

This is where the restless school analogy, courtesy of Roy Blatchford, really comes into its own. As you build your school, and both behaviour and the curriculum are able to take their grip, you can then look to really sharpen your school improvement saw.

### Putting on the brakes

It's equally as important as a leader that you know when to say no. What actually needs doing, what is twaddle and what serves as a major distraction from your goals? I would recommend taking some time to consider the

working week ahead and write down ten things you know you have to do. Then consider carefully whether those ten things help you to achieve your goals and/or actually need doing. Are they actually relevant? If not, ignore them. This is challenging for us all because as teachers we don't like to say no, and often feel hugely guilty when we do.

As Dylan Wiliam says, 'If we create a culture where everyone believes they need to improve, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better, there is no limit to what we can achieve.' In order to do this, considering all of the points I have raised here, the key thing you need to do is lead with care.



*Sam Strickland is the principal of a large all-through school. He is the organiser of researchED Northampton*

*and author of Education Exposed, Education Exposed 2, The Behaviour Manual and They Don't Behave for Me. His latest book, Is Leadership a Race? (John Catt, £10.00) is available now from [johncattbookshop.com](http://johncattbookshop.com) and all major book retailers.*

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# 5 REASONS TO TRY... NST's Château d'Ebblesham

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### 1 EXCLUSIVE ACCOMMODATION

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### 2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

A school trip to Northern France fosters strong bonds through teamwork and develops essential social and emotional skills that are important for enhancing pupils' independence and helping their confidence soar. NST's expert team will create a tailor-made itinerary that maximises learning benefits and well-being improvements, ensuring a mix of practical learning and fun experiences that will enable your pupils to attain new skills in a practical and fun way.

### 3 THE IDEAL LOCATION

Château d'Ebblesham is set in secure surroundings, located just 45 minutes from the Channel ports and eight kilometres east of St. Omer on the Opal Coast – making it an ideal location for your pupils' first overseas



trip. For most pupils, a school trip is the highlight of the academic year, and what better place to stay than NST's exclusive château where unforgettable experiences await.

### 4 RANGE OF EXPERIENCES

Provide your primary school group with a real taste of life in France with NST's wide range of cultural experiences. Their fantastic experiences include visiting local boulangeries and even a chocolate factory, as well as participating in exclusive town trails that will introduce pupils to the local culture and fascinate them with an environment so different to their own.

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 0845 293 7979

Free evening activities back at the château include crêpe making, a snail tasting experience and even a silent disco!

### 5 A HELPING HAND

During your stay at the château, your dedicated Group Co-ordinator will ensure comfort and enjoyment throughout your visit. From meeting you on arrival and organising your pupils into their rooms, to seamless communication as they assist on your visits and arrange evening activities, they're with you every step of the way. Let them take care of the details so you can focus on creating unforgettable memories with your pupils.

## KEY POINTS

With over 55 years' experience creating expertly planned school trips, NST can offer your pupils a fun-filled visit to Northern France.

Château d'Ebblesham is only a hop, skip and jump away, with lots of opportunities for your pupils to grow in confidence and explore a new culture.

NST's expert team will use their unrivalled knowledge to create a tailor-made itinerary to meet your group's needs and learning outcomes.

NST offer the reassurance of preview visits, safety audited accommodation, 24-hour on-tour assistance and more, all adding up to a safe and reliable experience.

# The Big Summer SEND-OFF

## INSIDE THIS SECTION



Our favourite end-of-term activities from teachwire.net and plazoom.com...



Kevin Harcombe on waving goodbye to Year 6...



Celebrate the year gone by with this sticky note art project...



Get children looking forward to the autumn term, with all its possibilities...

**Don't miss the assessment special in our next issue!**  
Available from 2 September.

# Down to BUSINESS

Make the end of term memorable for Year 6 by sending them into the dragons' den...

**A**s we approach the end of term in our schools, thoughts of sandy beaches and holiday adventures in far-flung lands may occupy our thoughts. But a quick look at the calendar to see that you still have four teaching weeks left can bring you back to Earth with a bump.

There's a false perception that teachers spend the last few weeks of term handing out colouring sheets, playing rounders and showing their classes films. I know this, thanks to the outpouring of fury that I once unleashed from the online anti-teacher brigade when I joked on Twitter that not only was I showing my class a film, but that it was the director's cuts of the entire Lord of the Rings trilogy...back to back.

The truth is that balancing new curriculum content with sports days and end-of-year productions is tricky.

## Bright ideas

When I was a Year 6 teacher, this annual problem was magnified by the fact that in 'final year', you've all worked your proverbial backsides off to get to SATs week – and then comes the post-SATs lull. To fill this void, my school devised an enterprise scheme. The idea was that the children would be put into groups, and their task would be to create a business.

Each group had to come up with an idea. This could be a service industry business, or you could buy or make a product and then sell it. Once all the groups had decided on a business model, they would work out their costs and profits, and make an appointment with

the headteacher to pitch for a fifty-pound starting fund. The plan was that all money made would return to the school to cover costs, and if there was any profit, it would go to charity. Once our groups were formed, they excitedly got to work planning their budding business ideas.

## Profit margins

Lessons were quickly learnt by both pupils and teachers. I still remember the sadness of a group who thought they'd discovered a hack to becoming millionaires, when their plan to buy 5,000 comics for a penny each on Amazon was ruined by me asking if they'd checked the post and packaging costs for these 'bargains'... (It was £3.95 a comic!)

We had numerous groups work out that they could make milkshakes, cakes and smoothies for just pence and sell them for over a pound, only for us to tell them that taking all the ingredients from home for free isn't how a business works.

We soon realised that we needed to teach pupils about costings, profit margins,

## ENTERPRISE PROJECT STEPS

- Choose a business idea
- Give a starting fund of £50
- Teach pupils the business basics
- Limit the businesses they can order their stock from to known school suppliers
- Run it over two weeks, with each group given two chances to sell





# Moving Up

**CHRISTIAN FOLEY HAS SOME TIPS ON HOW TO HELP YOUR YEAR 6 PUPILS ACE SECONDARY SCHOOL**

As teachers, we can easily forget what it's like to be on the other side of the table.

But starting Year 7 is a timeless experience – everyone remembers it. Drawing on your own memories can help put a more human face on what can be a very information-heavy process.

In their final term of primary, Year 6s will be bombarded with myths and rumours from their peers about what goes on at their new school. It's important to try and nip misconceptions in the bud before they take hold in children's imaginations, so make sure your pupils feel comfortable asking what secondary will *really* be like. Check that everyone in your class understands how their new school day will be structured, which subjects they'll be taught, and what they'll need to wear and take with them to school.

The most impactful thing you can do is to address the issue of relationships and peer pressure. I've so often seen the behaviour of children I've taught at primary change considerably as they join new peer groups at secondary. Make it clear to pupils that forming new friendships takes time, and that true friends don't pressure you to act in a certain way. Every child will encounter problems as they move through the school system, but we can give them the tools to deal with those in a healthy and resilient way.

My book, *Moving Up*, is a friendly guide for children that I hope will inform and reassure them about transition. It also includes raps about common challenges and worries that children have in Years 6 and 7 – these can make a great focus for one-hour standalone lessons.



Christian Foley is a writer, rapper and teacher. He works with children and teachers in both primary and secondary schools, teaching, delivering workshops and as a permanent poet in residence. *Moving Up*

(£7.99, Scholastic) is available now.

 [happyconfident.com](http://happyconfident.com)

 [@cfoleypoetry](https://twitter.com/cfoleypoetry)

 [christianfoleypoetry](https://www.facebook.com/christianfoleypoetry)

gross and net profit, and all the other basic concepts you need to understand to run a business.

Once each group was finally ready to present their business plan, they would nervously head off to their appointments with our headteacher, to try and secure their funding. They'd burst into the classroom victorious, or trudge back in disappointment when they'd been told it was, e.g. unrealistic to charge £15 for a slice of Victoria sponge.

We'd revise and refine the plans together, then it would be time for the hard work to begin.

## At the car wash

We always designated a fortnight over which the businesses could borrow a table from class and come out to the front of the school to sell their goods. Each group was allowed to book two slots at the front of the school at pick-up time; if it was a service industry idea, they could offer their services over the full two weeks.

The whole idea nearly came to a sticky end when a group that was offering car washes to teachers spent their first hour throwing sponges at each other in the car park, filling the sponges with small pieces of grit, and then proceeded to 'clean' two teacher's cars not only of the dirt, but most of their paintwork.

I felt sorry, too, for the groups who forgot to arrange fridge space and ordered all their fresh

fruit and ice cream to arrive on a Friday before a long weekend, only to discover it had spoiled by the time they returned to school.

Our first selling day would soon arrive, however, with groups bringing out their cakes, brownies, stationery, bouncy balls and smoothies. A hard business lesson was learnt by one group of boys who managed to eat over half of their stock whilst setting up, before all blaming each other and storming off in a huff.

Overall, seeing all the children's hard work pay off, and the profits roll in, was glorious. They'd learnt so much from this project, and applied their knowledge from so many of the areas we'd studied that, despite all the hard behind-the-scenes work, this enterprise project became a summer term mainstay of the school. Days that used to be about filling in time became more meaningful and packed with learning opportunities. **TP**



*Chris Youles is the author of the bestselling books **Sentence Models for Creative Writing and Teaching***

***Story Writing in Primary. A classroom teacher with 19 years of experience, he has been an assistant head, English lead, writing moderator and a specialist leader in education.***

# Wraparound care funding - what do you need to know?



**With some important updates and announcements already happening this year regarding wraparound care – particularly relating to funding – we wanted to outline how the funding works and what you need to do next.**

## What is the funding for?

Essentially, the funding should be used to:

- Expand an existing provision. Create additional places where the current demand isn't being met. Extend the hours that the provision is available – unless data shows that existing hours suit demand for the area.
- Create a new provision. Establish a facility where there is none, currently. The provision should run from 8am-6pm.

## How does the funding work?

The funding will be distributed via local authorities, who are responsible for leading the programme locally. However, it's schools who are central to the delivery of the scheme, and you'll be responsible for making sure parents know how and where to access wraparound care even if you are not delivering it directly.

Before funds are allocated, schools are required to demonstrate that there is a supply or demand issue, recommend the most effective delivery model and indicate costs associated. The local authority will review what's put forward by the school and grant funding if they deem it a viable solution.

## What are the different delivery models?

- A school-led provision provided on the school site, by staff
- A private provider-led provision, held either on or off the school premises
- Community or cluster model
- Childminders
- Early years providers

## What are the next steps for schools?

- 1 Work with your local authority as they start to map and predict demand. As part of this, it's also important to understand the current wraparound provision in your area. Your local authority will be able to help with this.
- 2 Once supply and demand mapping as taken place, you'll need to consider which delivery model would be most effective for your locality.

- 3 After funding allocations have been made, you'll need to work with your local authority to establish a new wraparound care provision, or expand an existing one.
- 4 If you've chosen to run the facility at your school, internally, please see our Ultimate Guide to Wraparound Childcare for practical help and advice on establishing a quality provision.
- 5 Promote the availability of the new or expanded provision to parents and carers.
- 6 Communicate to parents that childcare funding such as tax-free childcare or universal credit support can be used to help fund wraparound care.

We are here to help you navigate the challenges of wraparound care, and have a number of resources available such as a free webinar and downloadable Guide.

Scan here for more information.



## Get in touch

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**INSPIRING ACTIVITY**





# Resource ROUNDUP

Not sure how to celebrate the end of term? We've pulled together a few of our favourite activities from [teachwire.net](http://teachwire.net) and [plazoom.com](http://plazoom.com) to give you some ideas...

## Question time

This school quiz is a surefire way to inject some energy and enthusiasm into your classroom. With its mix of fun and educational questions spanning various subjects, it's bound to grab pupils' attention and keep them engaged from start to finish.

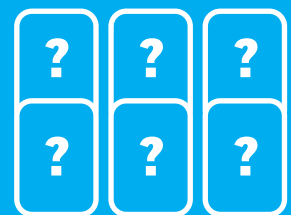
Plus, who doesn't love a bit of friendly competition?

Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-ClassQuiz](http://tinyurl.com/tp-ClassQuiz)



## DOES IT HAVE CORNERS?

Another great game to play with children from Y3 up is this maths version of *Guess Who*. In a similar way to the classic board game, each pupil needs to select a card and keep it out of view. Then, their opposing player must try to figure out what is on the card, asking only 'yes' or 'no' questions. You can also customise the game for younger pupils using the alternative sheets provided in the download. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-guess-who](http://tinyurl.com/tp-guess-who)



## BINGO!

This activity provides an opportunity for you and your pupils alike to unwind, relax and have some fun.

End-of-year bingo is suitable for different age groups – you can customise the board to suit the needs and preferences of your class.

In this download we've included filled-in versions suitable for KS2. There are also blank versions, so you can create your own card to photocopy. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-bingo](http://tinyurl.com/tp-bingo)

## Soundalikes

Revisit key grammar knowledge and skills – and get everyone excited about the prospect?? Yes, it is possible – with this homophones matching game for UKS2. Play as a class or in small groups.

Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-homophones-quiz](http://tinyurl.com/tp-homophones-quiz)

## Oh, the places you'll go...

Use a classic Dr Seuss picturebook to cover literacy and PSHE in UKS2, with activities that would make the perfect project for Y6 leavers, giving them a chance to:

- Articulate their hopes and ambitions, and identify some of the attitudes, behaviours and skills they might need to achieve them
- Explore aspects of challenge, opportunity and change through drama, creative writing and art
- Enjoy a shared reading-for-pleasure experience and build on it
- Develop their understanding of story structure
- Interrogate text and pictures to extend their understanding and discover different meanings
- Gain insight into their own emotions and those of others
- Explore quotations and choose one they find meaningful

Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-ThePlaces](http://tinyurl.com/tp-ThePlaces)

## Exit stage left

If you're short of time and energy, but faced with a lively class, these drama games are a great way to engage children and get them learning in a lighthearted way. From acting to music, to something called Zip Zap Zop, there's an activity to suit every class. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-DramaGames](http://tinyurl.com/tp-DramaGames)

## MOVE IT, MOVE IT

Why not channel some of the end-of-term excitement into dance?

In this creative lesson, children get active by working together to come up with a unique animal-inspired dance. Each pupil is responsible for designing their own moves within the routine. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-animal-dance](http://tinyurl.com/tp-animal-dance)

## My school superhero

Who's been a real superhero in your class or school this week, month, term or year?

This writing activity is an ideal way for children and adults to share positive feedback about each other, highlighting things they've learnt and the progress they've made together for a truly uplifting wall or corridor display. Visit [tinyurl.com/tp-Superhero](http://tinyurl.com/tp-Superhero)

You can find lots more activity ideas at [tinyurl.com/tp-EndOfTerm](http://tinyurl.com/tp-EndOfTerm)



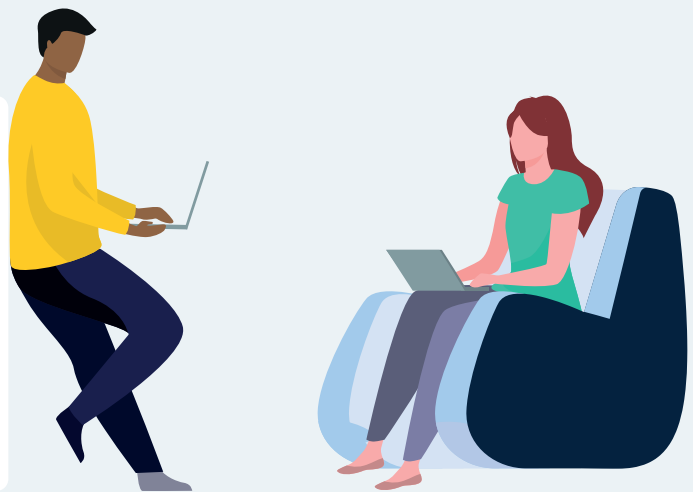
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*So long,*  
**FAREWELL...**

**Kevin Harcombe** reflects on those bittersweet Year 6 goodbyes

The Oscar-winning *Goodbye Mr Chips*, was released nearly a century ago. In a memorable scene, the eponymous nonagenarian teacher lies on his deathbed and hears those in attendance solemnly whispering how sad it was he never had children. “But, I have,” Mr Chips smilingly croaks (just before *he* croaks). “Thousands of ‘em!” And in that there is a truth about our profession.

We are in loco parentis. Teaching is about complex emotional relationships, not just formulaic passing-on of knowledge and skills. We encourage, challenge and nurture. We wipe bottoms and noses (don't confuse the two), tend grazed knees and help mend friendships when they go awry. We pull children up when they stray, steady them when they wobble, and gently push them in the right direction with an encouraging word.



*“It’s the human interactions that stick in the mind long after fronted adverbials have fled it”*

At leavers' assemblies, children and staff will share favourite memories with gathered parents where (sorry, Secretary of State) no-one ever relates a cherished recollection of solving a maths problem or learning historical dates. Memories are of school productions, sports matches,

I listened as he recalled how, on the coach from the

In years to come, one of your former pupils will approach you with a cheery, “Remember me?” and you really won’t need to ask, “Was I nice to you?” because, wonderful teacher, you will have been. It’s what we do. **TP**



**Kevin Harcombe** is former headteacher of Redlands Primary, Fareham.

# Thanks for the MEMORIES

Adele Darlington's engaging sticky-note art activity is the perfect way to celebrate the highs of the year gone by

**T**his fun, creative project recognises the joy of the whole primary school experience – not just the academic side – and encourages pupils to share the best bits of absolutely everything from the past year. Prompts encourage them to think about different aspects of school life, which they then respond to in visual form, while discussing, smiling and laughing with their friends. The result is a joyful classroom experience and a beautiful memory capture of the year.

Do you know what makes this project that little bit extra special? It's incredibly easy to resource, and requires very little preparation.

You'll just need the following materials:

- a selection of drawing and

## Memory bank

To start, provide your class with a series of questions, headings, photographs or big ideas to talk about in pairs, groups or as a class. The prompts you choose will largely depend on your cohort, so have a think about what approach would best suit them. Will they react well to written prompts or might they need pictures, too? Each child will ultimately need to choose nine prompts to respond to, in order to create their artwork. The questions you provide should capture the interest of your pupils, and to encourage reflection. They could include:

- What is your favourite memory of the year?
- Who have you enjoyed



*“The novelty of working on a smaller scale really adds to the charm of this activity”*

colouring tools – felt tip pens or pencils will do

- some sticky notes – the finished artwork will be made from nine of them
- a background canvas – all the instructions you'll need on how to make this are in the panel opposite.

This activity can be adapted for every year group in school, giving children of all ages an opportunity to produce meaningful artwork to cherish. It's a great activity for classroom staff to join in with, too.

spending your time with at school?

- What has been your favourite school lunch?
- Who has been your teacher this year?
- How have you travelled to and from school?
- What has been your favourite subject?
- What book you have you enjoyed reading?
- What did you do most often at playtime?
- What did your classroom look like this year?
- What is the funniest thing that has happened in class?

Allow plenty of time for talk and reminiscing. If it's a mild summer's day, take your class outside for this talk time and give them the opportunity to relax, chat and reflect fondly on the year gone by.

Some pupils will need this chance to hear from others to have their memories jogged – September seems a long way back in the past when it's June or July. So much happens during one academic year that it's very easy for the children to forget some experiences.

You'll hear lots of “Oh, yeah!”s in response to “Do you remember when...?” Remind pupils of school trips, special assemblies, visitors, theme days, topics, sports days and any other significant events from the year. Sharing photographs can enhance this







## Creating a background

- The children's mini masterpieces will need a background to be displayed on. This can be made from a piece of coloured paper, wallpaper, wrapping paper or brown parcel paper.

- Cut the required size from your chosen paper type and assemble the sticky notes on top.
- If you have more time, and the class are still feeling creative, encourage them to paint a patterned backing. Prior to gluing the sticky notes down, provide pupils with paint, paintbrushes and paper, and set them free decorating the background however they wish. They might go for stripes, spots or a more elaborate pattern. You could show them some wallpaper designs for inspiration.

- Another idea is to paint the backgrounds in your unique uniform or house colours, to add to the theme of memories of the school year.

- The meaning and sentiment behind these artworks certainly make them wall-worthy. Why not create frames with your class to highlight the importance of their pieces? To make a simple frame, cut out a rectangle of cardboard approximately 10cm taller and 10cm wider than the children's finished artworks (i.e. the nine notes on their backing paper). Stick the artwork onto the 'frame', leaving a 5cm gap all the way round the edge. Paint the frame edges with gold, bronze or silver paint and add ornate swirls on top with another colour.

on sports day? Whatever they choose to illustrate, ask them to first sketch out their pictures in pencil and then to colour them in.

Encourage detail, for example by asking pupils to try to show emotion on the faces they draw to really capture the feeling each memory evokes.

When the drawings are finished, ask the children to carefully go over the image outlines in black felt tip pen or fine liner to make the images really stand out.

Once pupils have completed their drawings, it's time to assemble them onto the backgrounds. Lay the backings out on a table and ask pupils to place the sticky notes in a three by three square formation on top of it, leaving a little gap between each. When pupils are happy with their image placement, give them some glue to stick the notes down on the background.

Finally, help the children add a title to their artwork, such as *My Time in Year 6* or *My First Year in School*.

These mini masterpieces will make a lovely keepsake for the end of the school year and deserve to be framed and hung in pride of place on the wall. **TP**



**Adele Darlington** is an experienced teacher, art lead and primary art

consultant. She is also the author of the *Bloomsbury title 100 ideas for Primary Teachers: Art*.

part of the session; they're the perfect visual prompt to spark discussion and aid the recall of thoughts and feelings.

You may wish to write down some of the responses to display for children to refer to when it comes to the creating stage of the project.

## Putting pen to paper

After an adequate amount of time strolling down memory lane, give your class access to drawing and colouring materials and a bundle of sticky notes. Their task is to draw one memory on each of nine sticky notes.

The novelty of working on a smaller scale really adds to the charm of this activity. Children are so used to working on A4, that the change of scale really excites them. Will they decide to draw an episode from a school trip to the farm, the delicious Wednesday roast dinner served up in the canteen, the time a butterfly caused chaos in the classroom, the delight from the drumming workshop or their efforts and triumphs





# Coming UP NEXT...

**Judith Harries** gets children looking forward to all the possibilities of autumn term

**T**hese activities – ideal for Transition Day – are a great way to encourage children to reflect on this academic year and look forward to the exciting challenges that the next one might bring. Begin by asking children to fill in the ‘favourite things’ worksheet ([tinyurl.com/tp-Favourite](http://tinyurl.com/tp-Favourite)), answering the questions and writing their memories in the shapes provided. This will get them in a reflective mood and stimulate ideas for the following activities.

## Remember you are...

Provide children with some mini stationery, e.g. A5 lined writing paper and an envelope. Ask pupils to write a letter to themselves about what they are proud of achieving over the last week, month or year. When they’re done, add your own note to each child’s envelope reminding them of something they achieved this school year. The children can open the letters in their new class to help them feel recognised and more confident.

## Selfie postcard

Invite children to write a postcard to send to their new teacher. Ask pupils to describe the things they have enjoyed about the last year. Use the ‘favourite things’ activity as a prompt. What were their highlights?

Encourage them to tell the teacher what they are looking forward to next year. Children moving from KS1 to KS2 may be particularly looking

forward to activities such as swimming, learning musical instruments, or playing on a different playground. Or they might just be looking forward to playing with their friends. You might want to provide photo prompts for some activities.

Have children decorate the picture side of the postcard with a ‘selfie’, and pictures of some of the things they’re looking forward to doing next year.

## Wishes jar

Start a ‘wishes jar’ with the children. Use a screw-top jar and provide small squares of coloured paper. Encourage children to write down ideas of what they are looking forward to doing next year, or in the nearer future, and post them into the jar. These could be read at carpet time to help the children talk about next year. Contributions might include things they want to do, people they want to see, places they want to go, and so on. Some children might

benefit from writing frames with sentence starters on them such as: *I am excited about...*, *I would like to try...*, *I am worried about...*, *I would like to improve...* This idea can also be adapted into a ‘worry jar’ for children to share worries or anxieties about the future, which can be kept anonymous.

## What am I looking forward to...

Try making up a song to the tune of What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor:

*What am I looking forward to now? (x3)*

*When I’m in Year 1/2/3?*

*I want to ..... (x3)*

*When I’m in Year 1/2/3!*

## If you’re looking forward to...

Introduce this fun circle game to the children. Invite them to sit or stand in a circle. Repeat the refrain

“If you’re looking forward to \_\_\_\_\_, next year, swap places.” Each time, the children must move into a different place in the circle. Add different ideas in the gap. Try these ideas: going swimming, riding my scooter to school, using the climbing apparatus, doing harder maths. Can the children think of an idea to put in the gap?

## Looking-forward telescopes

Make some ‘looking-forward telescopes’ by decorating cardboard tubes from paper towels or wrapping paper. Provide some small paper circles for children to draw what they see through the telescope. Is there something exciting happening at school or home that they could draw?

## What are you looking forward to when you grow up?

Finally, children sometimes enjoy looking further forward, to when they will be grown up. Talk about different types of jobs that their parents or grandparents do. Play the drama game ‘What’s my line?’. Sit in a circle and invite children to mime doing different jobs for the others to guess. **TP**



**Judith Harries** is an experienced early years and primary school

teacher. She specialises in teaching music and drama and creates educational content for a variety of publications.





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# “Every library visit underlined for me the vital role libraries play in bringing communities together”



As his two-year tenure nears its end, **Joseph Coelho** reflects on his time as Children’s Laureate

**TP** You travelled the length of the UK as part of your Library Marathon. Are there any particular visits that stand out in your memory?

**JC** On the Isles of Scilly I visited St Mary’s library, which had a little reading nook that looked out onto the sea. I ran an event there with a lovely audience of OAPs, who had wonderful questions about books and writing.

At Portland library I learned from a group of school children that their isle used to be a mining community and it was considered bad luck there to say the word ‘rabbit’. (I may have failed to share that my surname, Coelho, means rabbit in Portuguese!)

Whilst visiting Jersey library, I was proudly told by librarians how they are regularly inundated with studying teenagers, and as I looked around practically every table was occupied by a teen with their nose in a book.

Every library visit underlined for me the vital role libraries play in bringing communities together, and I am so grateful to all the librarians I

met who showed me around their gorgeous spaces and told me all about their brilliant services, from board game clubs to health services, exhibition spaces to live performances. If you haven’t visited your local library recently, please don’t delay – there is bound to be a surprise there waiting for you to explore.

**TP** Your Poetry Prompts videos featured guest appearances from a variety of children’s writers. Can you share some of their top tips for inspiring children to write poetry?

**JC** You can catch a whole host of guests on the Poetry Prompts, including a few writers like Michael Rosen, who helped me change a poem by replacing some of the keywords to surprising effect. Konnie Huq showed me the importance of recycling as we penned poems on CD’s, while Chris Smith, who showed us how to read a poem with a professional newsreader voice!

You can watch all of the Poetry Prompts on the Booktrust website ([booktrust.org.uk/poetryprompts](http://booktrust.org.uk/poetryprompts)), where you can also download some

brilliant free resources created by CLPE.

**TP** As part of the Bookmaker Like You campaign, you’ve helped to showcase creatives from a range of different backgrounds. Do you have any advice for teachers on how to boost representation in school?

**JC** Keep an eye on the long- and shortlists of prizes like The Jhalak Prize, The Inclusive Books Award and The Diverse Books Awards. Following organisations like Booktrust and CLPE on social media will also help keep you abreast of new books by a diverse range of authors. Visit your local library and ask your librarian for recommendations: they are fountains of knowledge for all things books (and beyond). If you have access to the Schools Library Service in your area, make use of it and ask for advice. **TP**

*Joseph Coelho is an award-winning performance poet, playwright and children’s author. His books include the critically acclaimed Luna Loves... series, If All The World Were, and the CLiPPA-shortlisted collection of poems, Overheard in a Tower Block.*

 [thepoetryofjosephcoelho.com](http://thepoetryofjosephcoelho.com)

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# Shoulda, woulda, COULDA

**Emma Cate Stokes** explains how modal verbs can help pupils produce persuasive writing that packs a real punch

**A**s educators, we're always looking for innovative ways to teach language concepts. Modal verbs, those crucial parts of English grammar, are no exception. So, let's dive in and explore some examples of the modal verbs your KS2 pupils will be expected to know and use.

## What are modal verbs?

Modal verbs are special verbs that modify other verbs, adding layers of meaning like possibility, ability, obligation or necessity.

These verbs are distinct, because they don't follow the usual verb conjugation rules, and lack suffixes. Understanding them is essential if pupils are to express themselves clearly and appropriately in different contexts.

## Different types of modal verbs and their applications

### Possibility

Verbs such as *could* and *would* encompass advice and direction, and express personal actions and intents. They add a layer of uncertainty or potential to statements, making them suitable for discussing possibilities and promises. These are versatile in guiding others and describing one's actions or plans.

### Prohibition

Modal verbs such as *must* and *should*, that express obligation and necessity, are crucial for giving clear and direct instructions. They are often used to assertively guide a reader or listener, providing unambiguous directions for specific actions or behaviours in various situations.

### Suggestion

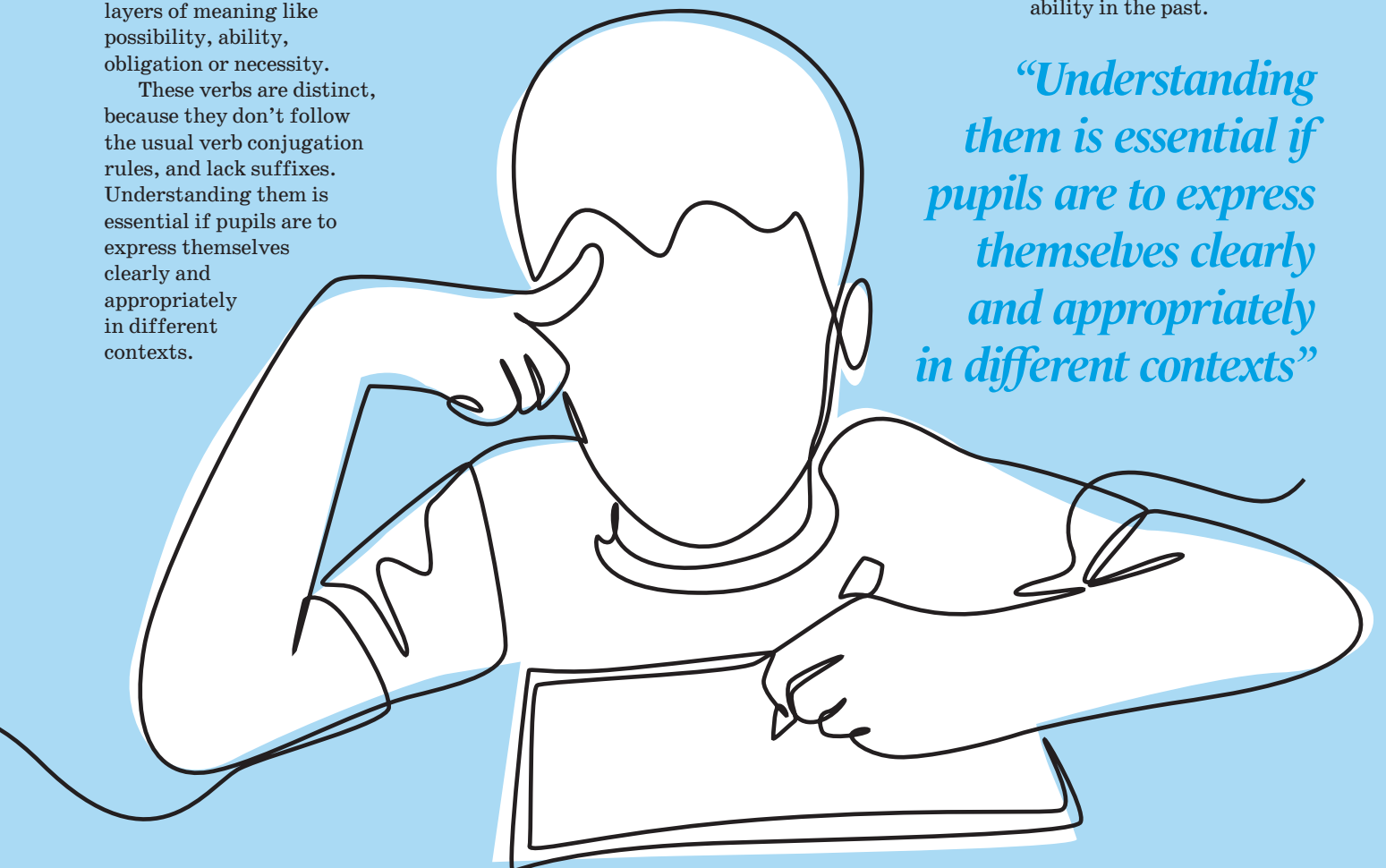
Verbs and verb phrases such as *could*, *ought to* and *had better* can be used to imply advice or suggest actions.

They are typically used in contexts where a more diplomatic or conversational tone is appropriate, avoiding the directness of a command.

### Ability

Modal verbs can also be used to express someone's skill or competence in doing something. *Can* often indicates a general ability, while *could* can suggest a more conditional or past ability. For example, 'I can swim' shows current ability, whereas 'I could swim when I was younger' implies an ability in the past.

*“Understanding them is essential if pupils are to express themselves clearly and appropriately in different contexts”*



Modal verb	Application	Example
Can/could	Ability or possibility	<i>She can solve complex problems</i>
May/might	Permission or likelihood	<i>You may start the test now</i>
Must/ought to	Obligation or advice	<i>You must finish your homework</i>
Shall/will	Future actions or offers	<i>We shall discuss this tomorrow</i>
Should	Advice or expectation	<i>You should check your work</i>

Table 1. Examples of modal verbs

### Permission

*May* and *can* are used to give or seek permission. *May* is more formal and polite, often used in official or respectful requests, like ‘May I leave the room?’.

*Can*, on the other hand, is more informal, and commonly used in everyday situations, as in ‘Can I borrow your pen?’.

### Conditional verbs

Typically used in hypothetical or conditional statements, conditional verbs include *would* and *could*.

*Would* is often used to talk about choices or actions under specific conditions, e.g. ‘I would travel if I had more time’. *Could* indicates possibility under certain conditions, as in ‘If I finish my work early, I could go to the party.’

## Persuasive writing

Modal verbs, as auxiliary elements in a sentence, play a unique role in shaping the tone and intent of the main verb. They are the subtle yet powerful tools that can turn a simple statement of fact into one of necessity, possibility, permission, or conviction.

In persuasive writing, their usage becomes even more significant. When a modal verb like *must* or *will* is introduced, it does more than just support the main verb; it transforms the sentence into a stronger, more compelling statement.

For instance, saying ‘You must consider...’ instead of just, ‘Consider...’ lends an air of urgency and authority to the suggestion. It’s no longer just an

option; it becomes almost an imperative, nudging the reader or listener towards a particular stance or action.

When it comes to crafting arguments that will resonate with an audience, modal verbs are crucial. In using them, pupils will be able to articulate their points with greater clarity and conviction. They help pupils articulate their points with greater clarity and conviction.

For example, using modal verbs like *could* or *might* in a debate or persuasive essay introduces possibilities and hypothetical scenarios, inviting readers to consider alternatives or consequences.

When we teach children to use these verbs skillfully, we aren’t merely ticking a box for the KS2 SATs; we’re empowering them with the ability to express their opinions persuasively, and with confidence.

*You can find lots more modal verb activities at [tinyurl.com/tp-modal](https://www.tinyurl.com/tp-modal)* **TP**

**Emma Cate Stokes** is a freelance writer and former primary teacher.



**X** @emmccatt

## ACTIVITY IDEAS

### Modal verb charades

Ask children to act out scenarios using modal verbs. For example, a pupil pretends to be locked out of their house. Classmates guess, ‘You can’t get in!’ or, ‘You must find your key!’.

### Modal verb storytelling

Create a story together, where each sentence must contain a modal verb. For example, start with ‘Once upon a time, a wizard could turn anything to gold’. Each student then adds a sentence.

### Role-play dialogues

Pupils pair up and engage in conversations using modal verbs. Provide scenarios like asking for permission, giving advice, or making predictions. For example, one child asks, ‘May I borrow your book?’ and the other responds, ‘You should return it tomorrow.’

### Modal verb debate

Organise debates on light-hearted topics. Pupils must use modal verbs in their arguments, for example, ‘You should consider...’ or ‘We must not forget...’ So, you might debate ‘School uniforms should be mandatory.’ Children can then use sentences like ‘Pupils must express individuality.’

### Create your own modal verb rules

Ask children to make up a fictional world with unique rules that use modal verbs. E.g., ‘In this world, people must hop on one foot when happy.’ or ‘You must sing to greet someone.’

### Modal verb quiz show

Host a quiz where pupils must answer questions using modal verbs, or identify the modal verb in a sentence. For example, ‘Which modal verb completes this sentence correctly? ‘You \_\_\_\_\_ be quiet in the library.’’



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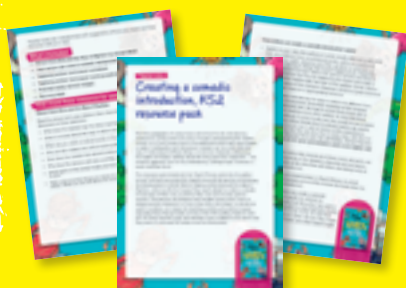
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# WAGOLL

## Nora and the Map of Mayhem by Joseph Elliott

Peer inside the mind of the author, and help pupils understand how to write a comedic introduction

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[tinyurl.com/tp-Nora](https://tinyurl.com/tp-Nora)

**N**ora and the Map of Mayhem is a comedy adventure story full of monsters, mischief... and mayhem! When Atticus and Autumn are left with their great-grandmother, Nora, for the weekend, they're hoping for a nice relaxing couple of days eating biscuits and playing video games; but when Nora's around, nothing ever goes quite to plan... What the kids don't know is that their great-grandmother used to be a monster hunter! Her friends call her 'Spit-Tooth', she has a secret closet full of weapons, and her clip-on earrings turn into ninja stars.



Nora and the Map of Mayhem (£7.99, Piccadilly Press) is out now.

When Nora's old nemesis, Ripclaw (aka. 'Winifred'), comes looking for revenge, Nora, Atticus and Autumn are forced on a hair-raising quest in search of a magical treasure map. Their journey finds them fighting snot-flinging sea monsters, battling the elements in an almighty *elektrosquib* storm, and fending off a flock of flying, alligator-headed *weepies*.

When writing this book, my number-one priority was for it to be funny. Not just 'a bit of a titter' – I was aiming for proper belly laughs. As well as being an author, I'm also a comedy actor and scriptwriter, and have starred in and written for loads of kids' TV shows including *Swashbuckle*, *Big Fat Like* and *Horrible Histories*. I drew on that comedy experience as I was writing; I was

constantly looking for ways to break conventions and keep myself entertained. Nora frequently insults the reader, the chapter names get more and more ridiculous, and there are even blank pages to give the reader an opportunity for a 'Wee and Tea Break'... If it made me laugh, it made it into the book!

This extract is from near the beginning of the story. After a few pages where Nora tries her best to persuade the reader to get lost (because she wants to crimp her hair and head to the casino), she eventually gives in and agrees to tell her tale. But she's doing it her way – with anarchy and attitude from the very first page. Here are some tips you can use to help your own stories reach their full comic potential. **TP**

## FIVE TIPS ON WRITING A COMEDIC INTRODUCTION

### CREATE BOLD CHARACTERS

One of the best ways to dive straight into the heart of the comedy is to come up with a big, bold character. The more interesting and engaging your characters are, the easier it is to make them funny.

### TAKE THE READER BY SURPRISE

Be creative with your writing by playing with conventions and subverting expectations. You could try speaking directly to the reader. Or writing the whole

first page in a made-up language comprised of quacks... Whatever you decide, grab your reader from the start and refuse to let go. (Obviously, don't do this in real life; you may get arrested.)

### USE INTERESTING SLANG

The 'voice' of your characters can really make them come to life, so try littering their speech with witty words and amusing phrases. *Givin' your character a wee accent* can work in the same way.

### USE REAL LIFE

Think about what has made you laugh recently – situations you've been in, people you know – and then exaggerate them to make them even more funny.

### MAKE YOURSELF LAUGH!

If you find something amusing, chances are your readers will enjoy it too. Always keep it rooted in truth, though; if something's not believable, it can get tiresome pretty quickly. Most importantly, have fun!



# Extract from

Chapter 1,  
pages 5–7

Nora directly addresses the reader here, which immediately pulls them in and makes her character come alive.

Here's the deal: I'm going to tell you a story, but it's going to be all about ME. The first thing you need to know about this story is that it is absolutely 100%, cross-my-heart-and-hope-not-to-fart, completely and utterly true. There are some parts in the middle where you're going to be like 'Yeah, yeah, nice one, Nora, there's no way that really happened', but I promise you IT DID. I may be many things, but a liar I am not.

Most people wouldn't expect a great-grandmother to use the word 'fart', so subverting that expectation takes the reader by surprise!

Using a modern reference such as Star Wars helps readers relate to Nora, as well as showing them she's not your average great-grandmother.

*Not sure why that came out sounding like Yoda. A Jedi also I am not.*

This story starts with a girl, a boy, and a glamorous older lady who very foolishly agreed to look after them (me).

I used brackets here for an extra little joke at the end of this sentence.

This slang term helps keep the tone light and amusing – especially because she's using it to describe her great-grandchildren!

I'm sure you're wondering how I – an intelligent and independent woman – ended up looking after two little weasels. Well, they're my grandchildren, so I didn't have much choice. Technically, they are my great-grandchildren, but admitting that makes me a great-grandmother, which makes me sound terrifyingly old, so let's not go there.

Nora is brash, outspoken and sassy – character traits that I deliberately chose to make her immediately funny.

This creates intrigue for the rest of the book, hinting at the comedy shenanigans that are still to come.

The children are the property of my grandson, Liam. He's a very talented young artist, and he had to go to Stockholm to discuss an exhibition at some fancy-pants gallery. I can never say no to him, so when he asked me if I'd look after Atticus and Autumn for a couple of days, of course I said yes – a decision I would come to regret. Many times.

"What are you doing here?!" I asked, on the morning Liam and Niko came around to drop them off.

*I've gone back in time now to when the story starts. Keep up.*

"You agreed to look after the kids, remember?" said Liam.

I added in these asides so Nora can keep addressing the reader. Her snarky interjections offer another opportunity to make the reader laugh. The more she insults us, the more we love her!

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Harper Collins Children's  
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# The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Step through the door, push past the coats and rediscover the magic of Narnia with C.S. Lewis' classic fantasy

CERIDWEN ECCLES

There are some books that are timeless classics. Books that hold their own over the years, and appeal to new generations of children with equal levels of awe, wonder and engagement as they did to the youngsters who first read them years previously. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis is one such book. Published 74 years ago, in October 1950, the book is as well-loved today as it was all those years ago. The story follows the lives of four siblings

(Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy Pevensie) as they are evacuated from London in 1940 to escape the Blitz, and sent to live with Professor Digory Kirke at a large house in the English countryside. While exploring the house, Lucy enters a wardrobe and discovers the magical world of Narnia. A battle of good and evil, with a raft of unforgettable characters, serves to make Narnia a place firmly cemented in the hearts of those who have read the book.

This is an excellent novel to read with a lower KS2 class. It's perfect for showcasing the fantasy genre and immersing children in a magical world full of friendship, good prevailing over evil, and the allowance of redemption in the form of Edmund. As the children I teach may have a mixed understanding of what evacuation is, and some of the vocabulary such as *Blitz*, *air raid*, *wireless*, etc, I like to pre-teach the vocabulary and some of the historical background to the story.

Using the movie adaptation is a useful





way of helping the children set the scene, as the opening of the film fills in those gaps and allows the children to understand the context of the setting and time. Comparing the opening of the movie and the opening of the book allows for great class discussion – why do the children think the film includes new elements? I like to use the film alongside the book as a comparative tool, and I always feel it serves to boost engagement and the excitement pupils feel. The children love to engage in discussions exploring how certain scenes are created in the movie, and how the film mirrors so much of the actual dialogue from the text exactly. It really focuses them on the words they are reading if they know they will be looking out for them in the film.

## Talking about the book

I've found that because *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is an older book – and indeed the movie was made back in 2005, 19 years ago – it isn't always a text the children are familiar with. This is great from a teaching point of view; the element of surprise and shock is something I relish seeing in the children's faces when key moments happen.

Nothing is more dramatic than the sudden change from war-torn Britain in the summer, to the setting of the wintry world of Narnia when Lucy steps through that wardrobe.

When reading the first chapter, I like to pause the story when Lucy goes through the wardrobe, and get the children to use clues in the text to make predictions about what is happening and where she may end up. It's a great way to build skills of inference, and to demonstrate how you can employ direct quotes to back up ideas.

The first chapter also provides a

really great way of getting the children to put themselves in the shoes of Lucy and to think about how they would be feeling and what questions they might have at this point in the story. This rich discussion serves to draw the children in and enhance their engagement.

## Character profiling

Due to his redemption arc, Edmund is a great character to follow through the book. Profiling Edmund's character promotes deep discussions around how the children feel about him at various points in the text. At the start he is cruel and spiteful, and takes delight in making Lucy feel silly. He loves humiliating her, and we are given further glimpses into his life when Peter discusses his cruelty to others

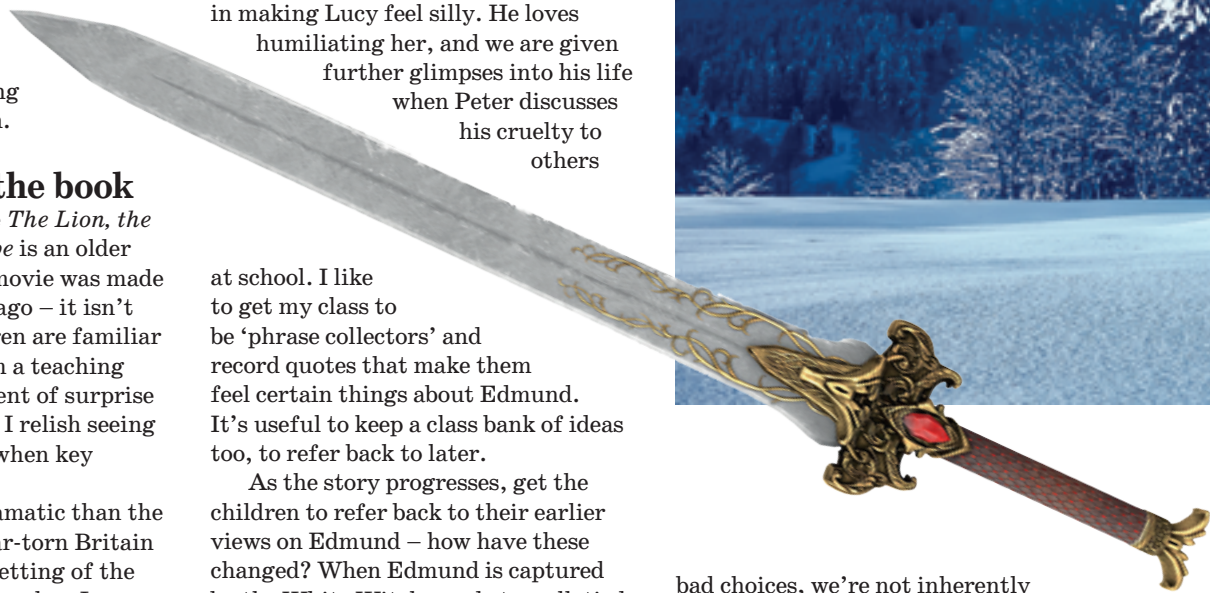
at school. I like to get my class to be 'phrase collectors' and record quotes that make them feel certain things about Edmund. It's useful to keep a class bank of ideas too, to refer back to later.

As the story progresses, get the children to refer back to their earlier views on Edmund – how have these changed? When Edmund is captured by the White Witch, made to walk tied up behind the sleigh and whipped, I like to ask the children how they feel now. Do they feel sorry for Edmund? Does he deserve his treatment? The debates that follow are fascinating, and the children always surprise me with the careful consideration they give to their answers. By the end of the story, Edmund has completely changed; it is a really important message to remind the children that even if we make

bad choices, we're not inherently bad. Redemption and forgiveness are possible if we show remorse and make the right choices.

## Creative writing opportunities

Children's writing is always so much better when they can see a purpose and reason for writing. The chapter where the reader meets the Beavers makes for a brilliant opportunity to



## Take it further → → →

### TURKISH DELIGHT TASTE TESTING

One of my favourite activities to do alongside reading and exploring the text in our writing and reading lessons, is a Turkish delight taste testing session. Most children I teach have never tried it or, if they have, it will have been the chocolate-coated supermarket version, not the real deal. I like to source a range of flavours from mint to honey and set up the







pull on modern, relatable content in a fun way whilst not detracting from the explicit teaching of knowledge and skills you wish the children to develop. In Year 4, expanded noun phrases and fronted adverbials are an objective they need to secure as part of the expected standard for writing, and these can be easily revised through the exploration of this chapter.

In a reading lesson, I like to dive deeper back into the chapter where the home is described (after previously reading for pleasure and story time). We create a class

bank of descriptions using direct information from what the children have read. I then get pupils to use this to create a Booking.com-style advert to persuade people to come and stay in the Beavers' house. I share the website with the children so they can see how the adverts are typically formulated, and then use a template I have made to support the creation of their own adverts using information from the text. The children are always excited and animated, and I love seeing what they come up with.

## Reader's theatre

Reader's theatre ([tinyurl.com/tp-ReadersTheatre](http://tinyurl.com/tp-ReadersTheatre)) is a strategy that I have only started using in the last few years, and it provides an excellent way for children to merge the love of playing and performing with building the skill of oral reading. The interactions between the four siblings in the book (and other characters they meet along the way) provide great opportunities for the children to practise these elements and develop a love of reading through collaboration and teamwork with peers. They are not expected to memorise the lines they read, or to use props, but reader's theatre allows children to see the power their voice and storytelling have to bring alive a scene through how they speak and read the text.

Through practising a set scene with peers, pupils perfect the speed, fluency and expression of the text. Performances of scenes to the class build confidence and resilience, and help create a positive class community. Scenes that are particularly powerful to do are: when Lucy and Edmund return from Narnia and he denies he went; the exchange between Susan, Lucy and Aslan on his walk to the stone table; the first interaction between the White Witch and Edmund.

## Loved this? Try these...

- ❖ *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* by Alan Garner
- ❖ *The Legend of Podkin One-Ear* by Kieran Larwood
- ❖ *The Whitby Witches* by Robin Jarvis
- ❖ *The Land of Roar* by Jenny McLachlan
- ❖ *The Book of Three* by Lloyd Alexander (part of the *Chronicles of Prydain*)
- ❖ *Amari and the Night Brothers* by B. B. Alston

## Rewriting a chapter from the viewpoint of a character

As I mentioned at the start, one of the most powerful ways to make a child fully invest in a story is to make them really try and put themselves in the shoes of characters in the narrative. At the start, ask them to think about how they would be feeling if they were Lucy. What questions would they have? This is a useful strategy that can be used throughout the book either through discussion or more formal recorded written activities, such as writing a diary to show how Lucy might feel after her wonderful adventure in Narnia to come home to Edmund denying he had been there too. Or creating a feelings mood board, using quotes from the text to show how they would feel if they were Aslan after he came back from the dead. **TP**



*Ceridwen Eccles is a primary teacher with an interest in pedagogy and a passion for books.*

 @TeacherGlitter

classroom like a little café. Pupils have a voting sheet to fill out as they try thinking about taste, texture, smell and description. I pose them the question "Would you betray your family for Turkish delight?" This can also lead to discussion opportunities around sugar rations at the time the book was set, as sweets were very rare and so more desirable.

## WARDROBE DIORAMAS

Creating wardrobes that open into Narnia is so magical, and it never fails to create joy and excitement in the children. Through their

art, they can create the world they visualise when reading the story together, and I love just letting them let their imaginations take over. We make the dioramas early on after reading the first few chapters, so again, the activity serves to ignite their interest and investment in the text.

## MANNEQUIN MAGIC AND WORLD BOOK DAY

For the last few years, World Book Day has fallen around the time we've been reading *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. As a

staff year group, we have dressed up as characters from the story. There's nothing more exciting for the children than seeing how their teachers love and value the book and recreate the characters. I make my class giggle all day long by being in character as the White Witch, threatening to turn them to stone. This year I also got the children to design a dress with snowflakes for a mannequin, and transform our classroom door into the wardrobe. All of these things added to the magic, creating lasting memories of the joy the book brings.

# Book CLUB



*We review five new titles that your class will love*



**KS1**

**KS1**



**KS1/2**

## ***Dinosaur Pie***

*by Jen Wallace,  
illus. Alan O'Rourke*

**(£9.00, Little Island)**

Last night's dinner was a new sort of pie, but no one expected Rory to wake up as a dinosaur after he ate it! Small, feathered and ridiculous, he can't hold his game controller or use a toilet. He can't even speak.

However, Rory's ADHD world is often weird, so he's used to finding workarounds. Once his friends take his embarrassing situation seriously (and pay attention to the cat) it's game over for the supermarket that sold Rory's mum that dinosaur pie. Problem solved.... or is it?

Funny, pacy and poignant, this illustrated chapter book is printed in a large font and will charm emerging readers from Y2 up.

This heartwarming story can be used to prompt investigations into healthy eating, as well as storymaking about dinosaurs and other transformations.

## ***Until You Find the Sun***

*by Maryam Hassan, illus.  
Anna Wilson*

**(£12.00, Simon and Schuster)**

Aminah loves listening to Da's tales, but when Mama and Baba take her on a real adventure to a faraway place, Da's left behind. Aminah chats to him on the phone, but can't find anything good to say about her new home.

Da tells her that he'll light her way until she finds the sun again, but Aminah's not sure what that means – until, snug in a yellow coat, she meets a new friend on a snowy day and feels warm at last.

Inspired by the untold stories of immigrant children in the author's class, this warm-hearted KS1 picturebook is packed with realistic details and has much to say about coping with change and staying connected.

The charming and colourful illustrations add warmth and chill to the story by turns, carrying the reader along with Aminah.

## ***Tasty Tales***

*by Anna-Lena Feunekes*

**(£8.99, UCLan Publishing)**

Feast on some amazing facts in this round-the-world tour of iconic dishes and favorite foods.

From jollof rice and sandwiches, to mapo tofu, candyfloss and French toast, Anna-Lena Feunekes explores the origins of many intriguing, influential and much-loved dishes in thirty good-natured stories that blend history and legend.

Beautifully illustrated by the author with vibrant, mixed-media artwork that reinforces the multicultural nature of these stories, this large-format paperback for Y2 and up can be dipped into independently or shared aloud.

Gloriously shining a light on the traditions, memories and values of a host of countries and cultures, it also includes some handy cooking tips, plus links to a website where you'll find all the recipes in full.



→→→RECOMMENDED

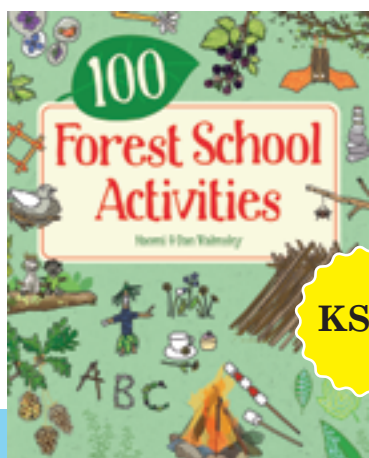
## RESOURCES

plazoom

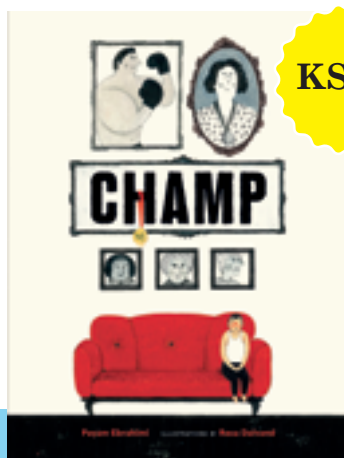


### BUILD WORD POWER

Word Whoosh, from Plazoom, is designed to clarify and extend children's understanding of tier 2 words from Reception to Y6+, enabling them to make more ambitious and accurate language choices when speaking and writing. Each resource pack explores six words through a series of four mini-lessons: read and visualise, associate, understand, and define and master (based on the Frayer model). Find out more at [bit.ly/PlzWords](http://bit.ly/PlzWords)



KS1/2



KS1/2

## 100 Forest School Activities

by Naomi and Dan Walmsley

(£14.99, Button Books)

From den-building and fire-lighting (fancy making your own charcoal?) to measuring-sticks, camouflage capes and story stones, this large-format paperback is packed with lively ideas for creative challenges and controlled risk-taking in a natural environment.

Divided into five sections (Connecting with Nature; Fire, Food and Shelter; Nature Crafts; Games; and Rainy Day Activities) the activities appeal across a wide age range and will improve children's social skills, self-esteem and confidence.

The authors are experienced leaders specialising in bushcraft and Stone Age skills, and every aspect of this inspirational book reflects their knowledge, commitment and enthusiasm. Key features are a well-informed approach to safety, easy-to-follow instructions, engaging photos and a 'can-do' buzz.

## Champ

by Payam Ebrahimi,  
illus. Reza Dalvand

(£12.99, Aldana Libros at Greystone Kids)

Who decides you're going to be a sporting hero? And what happens when you disagree?

Superb athletes, the fiercely competitive members of the Moleski family win endless cups and medals. Portraits of them scowl down from every wall of their home. Great things are expected of the youngest Moleski, but Abtin won't train properly. He won't even dream the right dreams. No wonder his father's so upset! Is there *anything* Abtin can do to please his family?

With its sophisticated artwork and thought-provoking story, this Iranian picturebook for older readers has much to say about freedom of expression, individuality and bullying. A rich starting point for discussions and creative responses at KS2, it will also please independent readers from Y2 up who enjoy something different.

## Meet the author

**ANNA-LENA FEUNEKES,**  
**AUTHOR OF TASTY TALES:**  
**FACTS AND FABLES ABOUT**  
**OUR FAVOURITE FOODS**



What made you decide to write and illustrate *Tasty Tales*?

It stemmed from a deep love for

storytelling, cooking and history. I wanted to create a book that not only shared delicious dishes' stories from all over the world, but also intertwined them with captivating parts of history. I like how it shows these very human experiences all throughout history, mixed with anecdotes about familiar dishes that might surprise readers.

How did you decide which recipes and stories to include in the book?

Selecting the stories for *Tasty Tales* was a process that combined personal experiences, cultural influences, and a desire to engage young readers. Some stories are about a well-known staple in many households (like a potato), but others revolve around a female sultan or a knight from a faraway country! So, picking the elements was sort of like cooking too, just weighing the 'ingredients' until I found the proper balance.

How would you like your book to be used in school?

Beyond simply teaching kids about different foods and countries, the book offers opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, such as delving into specific historical events. Like, why was pad Thai created during World War II?

But I also wrote *Tasty Tales* to help discuss cultural traditions and the significance of the same food in various societies. For example, potatoes and tomatoes came from South America to Europe and found a completely new foothold there. I hope that children will recognise foods from countries they know – or maybe they'll share proudly a tasty tale from a country they have roots in. Ultimately, I hope the book sparks curiosity, connection, and cultural appreciation among pupils.

*Tasty Tales: Facts and Fables About Our Favourite Foods* is out now.

# New PRIMARY CATALOGUE

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# POETRY IN MOTION: *Writing an authentic wheelchair user*

**Stephen Lightbown** discusses his CLiPPA-shortlisted debut poetry collection for children, *And I Climbed and I Climbed*

**TP.** The lived experience of a wheelchair user resonates so authentically through your book, *And I Climbed and I Climbed*. Was it a challenging thing to do for you?

**SL.** I'd bought some children's books specifically because they featured disability – in particular wheelchair users – and they just didn't feel true to me. There didn't seem to be enough depth to the characters beyond the wheelchair that they were sat in; and the wheelchairs that they were sat in were quite fantastical. They were like sports car type, hybrid type things, all bells and whistles. And I thought that's great, but it isn't the reality. So I came up with this idea about an eight-year-old who has an accident and becomes a wheelchair user. Then I just started to write some poems based on that. Once I'd started, they just kept flowing and the book came together.

**TP.** The voice of the character, Cosmo, is really strong and rings true, how much of his experience links with your own?

**SL.** There are some similarities but he's not me.

I got into Cosmo's character by writing pages and pages and pages about him to find out who he really was. What's his favourite colour? What's his favourite jumper? What are his favourite foods? Where does he go on holiday? How does he spend his spare time?

Not all of that made it into the book, but I got such a strong sense of him as a character, and as a person. It helped me create a person that uses a wheelchair rather than someone who is defined by it. That was really important to me.

I also watched videos from a charity called Whizz Kids, which provides wheelchairs to under sixteens, showing children talking about their experiences and what it meant to be a wheelchair user ([whizz-kidz.org.uk](http://whizz-kidz.org.uk)).

**TP.** Are there any other children's poets whose work has inspired you?

**SL.** Children's poetry wasn't something I was picking up and reading regularly before

writing this collection. But as I'm getting into it, there are some fantastic voices out there. I really enjoyed Coral Rumble's books, the collections by Shauna Darling-Robertson and Matt Goodfellow's collections and verse novel. Poets I had on my shelf before that were Roger McGough, Michael Rosen and John Hegley. The more I'm getting into it, the more I'm finding poetry that I find interesting. I'm wondering if my style will change because I'm reading more. I do find when I sit at my laptop and I'm struggling to think of how to get into a poem, I'll often pick up collections and just read a couple of poems at random as a way of getting into a poem.

**TP.** Have you got any tips for getting children into writing poetry?

**SL.** Some of the poems in the collection are epistolary or letter poems. These are a great way into writing poetry. I was doing this in a workshop with children recently and within an hour the children and their parents, who all got involved too, had written 85 poems!

We discussed letters and messages and thought about who or what they would choose to write to. They started having conversations and from this they found they were writing poems naturally. The children all used their imaginations, and the poems were really emotional. Writing poetry is important: you can use it to tap into your feelings, imagination and creativity. **TP**

Full details on all five books on the CLiPPA 2024 shortlist are available at [clpe.org.uk/poetry/CLiPPA](http://clpe.org.uk/poetry/CLiPPA). All the texts have accompanying video resources and lesson plans to bring poetry to life.



**Stephen Lightbown** is a poet, spoken word artist, wheelchair user, yoga teacher and adaptive surfer from Bristol.

 [stephenlightbown.com](http://stephenlightbown.com)

 [spokeandpencil](http://spokeandpencil)

# AUTHOR IN YOUR CLASSROOM



Plazoom's interview series offers a compelling way  
to get your class excited about writing

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*Joseph Coelho*



*Lauren Child*



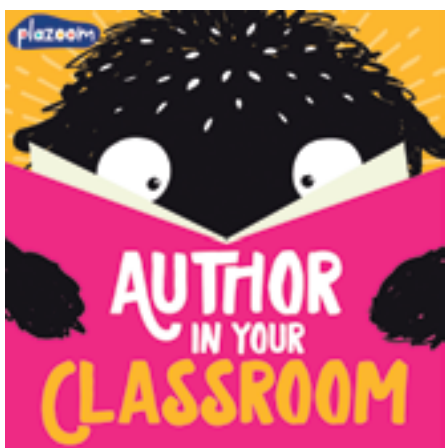
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Search for 'Author in your Classroom' podcast wherever you listen to podcasts.



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Pause the podcast and use our teaching notes to talk about the points being raised in the interview.



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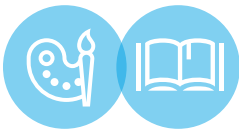
The downloadable resources that accompany each episode, supported by lesson suggestions to help weave the concepts into wider learning, make it simple for teachers to incorporate Healthy Heroes into the KS1 and KS2 curriculum.

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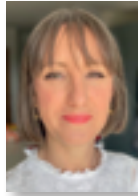
\*Offer valid until 30th September 2024. Orders placed after this date will be charged at the full RRP cost of £499 plus VAT.



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- How a library is organised into different sections
- Why sketching is a great way to come up with original ideas
- How library books can be used for visual reference
- The stages that are involved in creating a character design

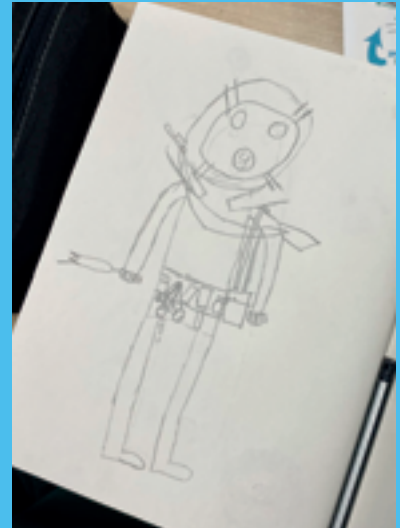
# Fun ways to learn in the library



Elevate pupils' imaginations with **Hester Harrington's** comic character design challenge

[@Hester\\_Harring](#) [comcartfestival.com](#)

This activity harnesses the power of libraries. Its aim is to encourage young people to delve into books and feed their imaginations; exploring, researching and developing their creative processes to design their own comic book characters. Creating an original character design is a great starting point for further narrative-based activities. This lesson aims to motivate children to use library books as a reference tool to help inspire visual ideas, without the use of internet image searches.



## START HERE

Begin by exploring your school or local library. Describe how books are arranged in the library, and ask children to investigate the different bookshelves. If a librarian is available, encourage the children to ask them questions about the various sections. Explain to pupils that a library is an organised place (with a classification system), which helps users find all the books that share the same topic, as they are grouped together. Ensure children can understand the difference between fiction and nonfiction books. Finally, discuss how library books are an excellent tool for researching ideas.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | RESEARCH AND INSPIRATION

A library is an inspirational place in which to begin the creative journey. Explain to pupils that the aim of the main activity will be to create their own original character designs for a monster and an adventurer. These types of characters are often found in children's books, and play main roles in many stories.

Invite the children to discuss the role different characters play in stories.

Look at some comic books for examples. Remind pupils that a monster and an adventurer don't need to be defined in terms of good/bad or hero/villain.

The library task is an opportunity for pupils to look

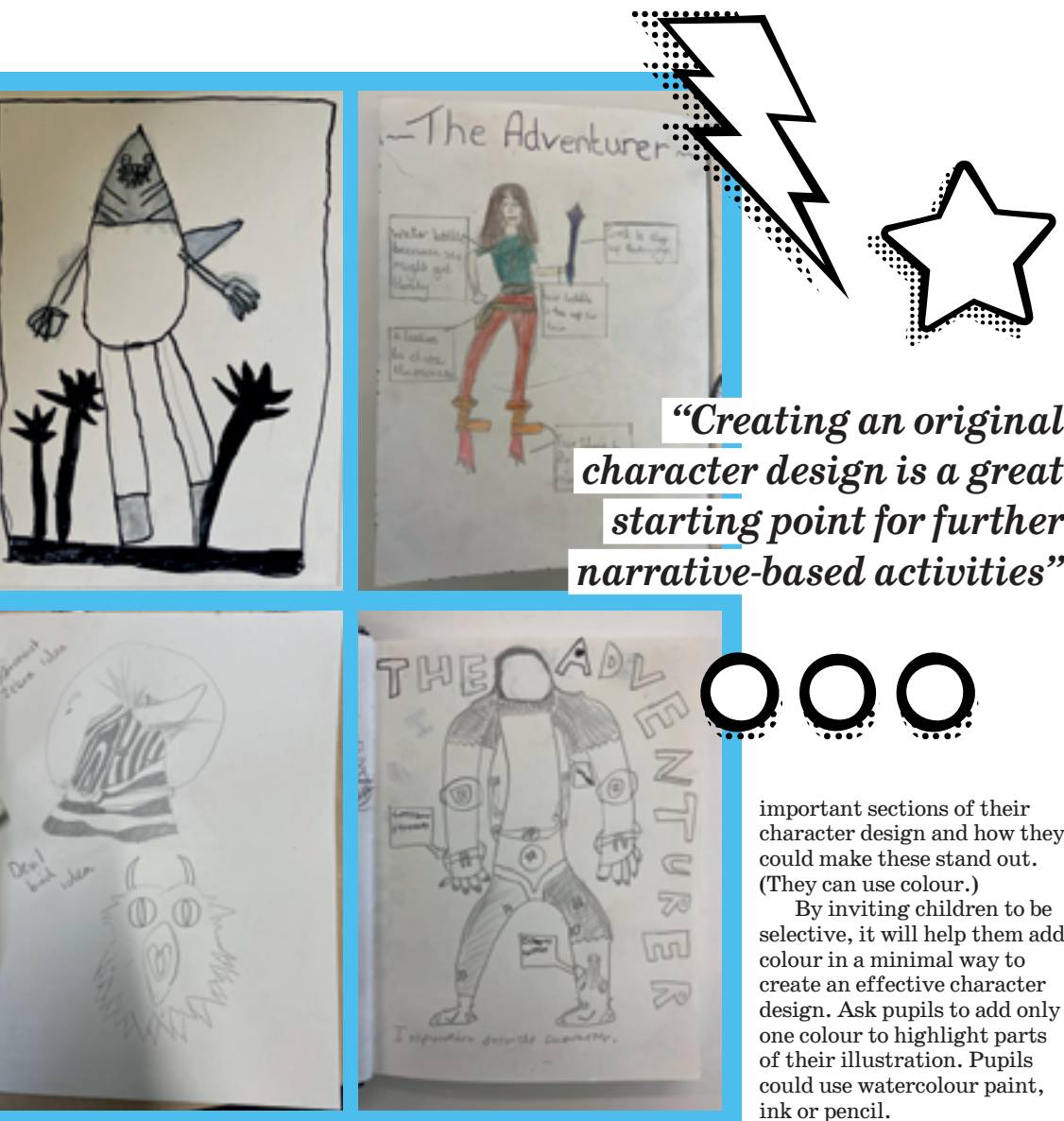
at a selection of images in books and find source material that interests them. Encourage them to investigate a range of books: history, fashion, animal, culture, 'how to' guides, biographic books about explorers... the list goes on!

Being in the library also presents an excellent opportunity to discuss the different roles required to create a comic. Ask pupils if they know any of the different jobs that are needed to produce a comic book, and where in a comic book they could find this information. (Very often a comic is created by multiple people, with specialised roles, including a writer, penciller, inker, colourist, letterer and editor, who are generally credited in a panel at the front or back of the book.)

### 2 | DRAWING OUT IDEAS

Sketching is a great way to try





**“Creating an original character design is a great starting point for further narrative-based activities”**



important sections of their character design and how they could make these stand out. (They can use colour.)

By inviting children to be selective, it will help them add colour in a minimal way to create an effective character design. Ask pupils to add only one colour to highlight parts of their illustration. Pupils could use watercolour paint, ink or pencil.

Can the children draw anything else in the frame to help show the impact of their monster? They could indicate size, for example, by incorporating features in the landscape: maybe a small car to show their monster is huge in scale by comparison.

Finally, on a separate piece of paper, ask pupils to create their adventurer character in response to the monster they have designed. They should think about what outfit, kit or special belongings they might require in order to defeat (or befriend!) their monster character.

*Hester Harrington has over 20 years of experience in art education. She develops resources for all ages and abilities, with a specialism in using comics in the classroom. She collaborates regularly with The Lakes International Comic Art Festival.*

out different ideas when developing comic character designs. This part of the creative journey is about experimentation and practice.

The aim of sketching is for pupils to learn from their experiences. Encourage the children to enjoy the process of visually exploring, as this will help pupils create unique characters!

Have the children roughly sketch out all their ideas, in pencil, onto paper or into a sketchbook. Ask pupils to carefully observe ‘real life’ images, whether photographs or drawings, for the basis of their monster idea. They could try looking at historical figures for their adventurer. Remind pupils to try multiple ideas, drawing different angles, and close-up details.

Pencil and paper are great at this step in the creative process, as they are simple and

produce results quickly. Be sure to reinforce the notion that this stage is all about rough sketching, ideas and practice, so nothing needs to look perfect (encourage pupils to ditch the eraser).

### 3 | PRESENTING THE CHARACTER DESIGNS

Ask pupils to draw a single comic panel onto a sheet of paper. They can draw the frame of their panel free-hand or with a ruler. Then the children can begin by drawing their monster character in pencil inside the panel. Remind them to refer to their previous sketches.

Next, get the children to go over their designs in black pen. They can try permanent marker pen for the bold, thicker lines and ballpoint pen for the thinner, more detailed ones. Ask pupils to decide which areas are the most

## EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Look at a selection of comic books and ask children to identify different comic features, such as speech balloons and sound effects. Invite pupils to enhance their character illustrations by adding comic text boxes to label and explain their design decisions.

- Create a storyline! Discuss different scenarios involving pupils’ characters, such as the monster arriving in school or the monster and adventurer meeting for the first time.

- Pupils can bring their characters to life by making a comic story in a mini comic zine. (Zines are small magazines, handmade and DIY in nature.) Explain what a zine is, and demonstrate how to fold sheets of paper to make one, before asking children to create their own. Ask pupils to include at least one of their characters. Remind children to include comic panels. Their comic may be silent or have speech and thought bubbles, it might include sound effects, and it could be colour or black and white.

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Why does a library organise information?
- Which art materials are best for sketching ideas?
- How can selective colour be helpful in creating an impactful character design?



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- How to write with confidence
- How to overcome the fear of 'getting it wrong'
- How to tap into the power of their own imaginations
- How to think originally and creatively
- How to create their own fictional worlds

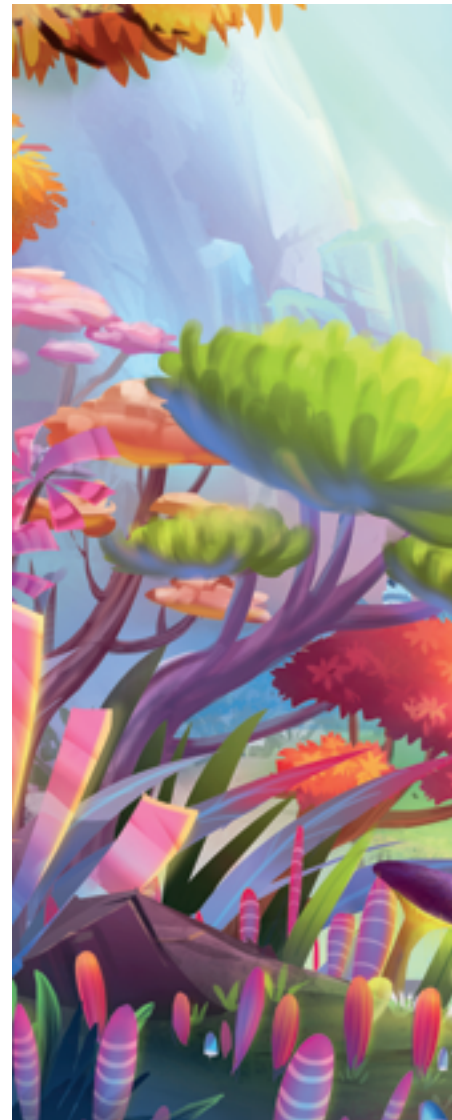
# Create your own Imagination Island



Use this inspiring lesson plan from **Mel Taylor-Bessent** to help children write creatively with confidence

[X @MelTBessent](#) [@meltaylorbessent](#) [meltaylorbessent.com](#)

How many times have you heard pupils say “I don’t know what to write. How do I start?” or “I don’t have any ideas!”? When it comes to writing, so many children are afraid of getting it wrong, because writing requires a certain level of confidence that they may not have built up yet. But confidence grows from comfort, so focusing on making pupils comfortable with writing is a good place to start. One of the best ways to do this is by eliminating pressures from tasks, turning them into games, and making the whole process of writing fun.



## START HERE

Ask pupils, “If you found yourself on a magical island that comes to life when you use your imagination, what would you imagine?” Remind them that nothing is impossible, nothing is too silly or strange, and nothing is off-limits. For example, they might want to imagine a forest made from gold, the world’s fastest Lamborghini, or a never-ending chocolate waterfall. Give pupils five minutes to create a spider diagram of all their ideas. Shout out extra questions like “What would you eat if you could make any dish just by imagining it?” or “How would you get around if you could imagine any transportation?”.



## MAIN LESSON

If you were to ask pupils to ‘write a story in five clear paragraphs, including a cast of characters, exciting dilemmas and strong resolutions’, nine out of ten pupils would probably struggle. Instead, the guidance in this lesson plan leads them through the planning process quickly and easily – and they should have fun doing it, too! Depending on time constraints and the age/ability of your class, you might want to complete this lesson plan in one session, or stretch it over a few. Writing should always be flexible in this way; we never know when inspiration is going to strike, and we have to allow ourselves (and pupils) the freedom to alter the

storytelling process to get the best results.

### 1 | THE WORLD-CROSSING MOMENT

To start, ask pupils “How would you feel if you woke up this morning and you weren’t in your bed at home – you were actually on a magical island?”. Display the following three questions on the board and ask the children to write down all the ideas that they have...

- What are the first things you’d see? (Remind them there’s no such thing as a ‘wrong idea’. Pupils can be as wacky and creative as they like, and they can use their spider diagram ideas to help them. Examples: they might see a floating library, a lion with the head of a rubber duck, or a castle flying in the sky. They might also want to describe





## “Confidence grows from comfort”

### 3 | WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

Every story needs a problem for the character to overcome in order to make it exciting. Challenge pupils to write down as many problems as they can in two minutes. These could be small things like ‘I broke a fingernail’ or big issues like ‘an alien invasion’. Put a timer on to make it feel like a game and shout out some of your own ideas so less confident pupils can add them to their list.

At the end of the two minutes, share ideas as a class. Pupils now have a whole bank of problems to call upon when planning stories, and once they know what the character’s problem is, they’ll have the crux of their story to build upon.

### 4 | BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

After completing the last four activities, pupils should be brimming with ideas for their stories. They know what their magical island will look like and what they’ll find there. They know what will happen at the beginning of the story, who their characters are and what their problems might be. Now all they need to do is bring it together with a resolution (or a cliffhanger) at the end. Pupils should have had fun working through the different activities, and hopefully you won’t, even once, have heard the words, “I don’t know what to write”.

*Bestselling author of The Christmas Carrolls series, Mel Taylor-Bessent started her career running award-winning creative writing workshops and launching authorfy.com, one of the most-used literacy platforms in the UK. Mel hopes her new series, Race to Imagination Island, will inspire even more children to read and write for pleasure.*

## EXTENDING THE LESSON

- To add more drama and excitement, pupils might want to create rules for their magical island. Can they only see the magic at midnight? Are they only allowed on the island for 24 hours? Do they have to work with the other characters to complete a series of challenges like in *Race to Imagination Island*?
- After they’ve created their characters, you might want to ask pupils to try their hand at writing some dialogue. They could start with a line like, ‘What is this place?’ or ‘Who are you?’. They could even act it out with a group of friends.
- Encourage pupils to write a story in five paragraphs:

1. Describe the [first] world-crossing moment
2. Introduce main characters
3. Introduce problem/s
4. Explore the island and attempt to solve the problem
5. Resolution or cliffhanger.

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What problems could you add for the characters to make your story longer?
- What things do you enjoy that you could include in your story?
- What could happen if you added more characters?
- How could you make your story funnier, scarier or more adventurous?

the weather, the ground, or what they can hear/smell.)

- How might you feel if you suddenly found yourself on a magical island?
- What is the first thing you’d do?

This will get pupils thinking about their five senses, and planning the opening of their stories without them even realising.

### 2 | CREATING CHARACTERS

The biggest aspect of telling a successful story undoubtedly lies with the characters you create. Without authentic and varied characters to relate to, readers won’t be able to connect to the story. So, with that in mind, we want pupils to create three or four characters who are totally different from each other. For example, one

character could be super-confident and another one shy. One could love disco music and another flinch at loud noises. One could be kind and caring, and another boisterous and rude.

Ask pupils to write down, in the style of Top Trump cards, the names and ages of three or four other characters who have also found themselves on a magical island. Next, ask the children to write down some of the characters’ likes and dislikes. This sounds simple, but in steering pupils away from only describing physical appearance you’ll help them craft characters who feel more lifelike. Remind the children that you want the group of characters they create to be total opposites.



# Top of the class

Resources and activities to bring fresh inspiration into your classroom

## Children For Change Young Writers Competition

Pop Up Projects are launching *Children For Change*, a collection of stories and pictures by top writers and illustrators inspiring young readers to 'take an action' to tackle climate change. They're looking for ten short stories or poems, under 500 words, to feature in a FREE ebook launching on UN World Habitat Day on 7th October. Your piece must be fictional and inspire the reader to make the world a better, greener and healthier place. This competition is open to 8- to 12-year-olds. The deadline to submit entries is 12th July, 2024. Enter now: [pop-up.org.uk/childrenforchange](http://pop-up.org.uk/childrenforchange)



Illustration © David Roberts



3

## Back to nature

Farms for City Children exists to remove the barriers that prevent children and young people having meaningful access to the natural world. We support over 3,300 young people each year to enjoy a life-changing, immersive residential on one of our three heritage farms in Devon, Gloucestershire, and Pembrokeshire for up to 39 children aged between 8-18 years, across a Monday-Friday visit. Inclusion is at the heart of all we do, and the charity welcomes young people from city, rural, and coastal communities across England and Wales particularly focusing on serving those who experience significant deprivation and disadvantage.

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4

## The phonics specialists

Phonic Books specialises in truly decodable books for readers ages four to fourteen to build solid reading foundations.

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2



## Innovative coding workshops

JCA's new School of Coding workshops offer students a unique opportunity to build critical skills for the future. At Condover Hall in Shropshire, these tech-focused sessions combine coding, robotics, and drones with residential trips and outdoor activities.

Launching this summer, these fun workshops aim to inspire the next generation of tech leaders. Visit [jca-adventure.co.uk/school-of-coding](http://jca-adventure.co.uk/school-of-coding)

5



## Books for all

Bloomsbury Education publishes an extensive range of books for Early Years, primary and secondary that help teachers to teach better and children to learn more. We have the curriculum covered with our classroom resources that make learning more fun, our professional development books that inspire your teaching, and our fiction that aims to get children excited about reading.

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# Transform teacher confidence and expertise



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Lucy Ashby, Forncett St Peter CEVA Primary School, Norfolk

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PE



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Cross-curricular knowledge, including geography (which country pupils represent) and history (how the Olympics began)
- Techniques and skills for 'new' or different sports
  - Working as part of a team
- Understanding competition

# Get sporty: The Five Rings Festival of PE



Capitalise on the Paris Games with this flexible Olympics-inspired event from **Jordan Southgate**

[@PremEducationUK](#) [premier-education.com](#)

The Olympic Games being held in Paris this summer provide a great opportunity for schools to take inspiration from the sports involved, and bring a competitive element to PE lessons. The activities presented here are suitable for regular PE lessons or as an Olympics-themed special day to celebrate the Games and all they represent. Pupils will like the multi-sport structure, which offers something for all abilities and ages. This lesson is designed to make sure pupils have a jam-packed, fun sporting experience while meeting the Sport Premium key indicators.



## START HERE

Begin by deciding how you want to run this activity within your school. There are a couple of different approaches you could take:

- Dedicate a whole day and involve all pupils. Divide the pupils into coloured 'houses' — each house representing a country. Mix pupils so that all age groups are combined. Choose five sports to be your Olympic Games activities, ideally making sure one is from track, one is an invasion game, one is a field game, one is a net game, and one is a target game.
- Alternatively, choose to build this format into your regular PE lessons. Divide the class into groups (countries) and get ready for short, sharp activities that will need close supervision. We recommend no more than five sports as above, allowing ten minutes per sport, with a two-minute window to change activity.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | ATHLETES ASSEMBLE

If you decide to run this as a full-day activity involving the whole school, why not start off with an opening ceremony (assembly) all about the Olympic Games? This will set the scene and spark children's interest in trying out new sports.

You can look at the history of the Olympics and make it interactive: What do the children know already? Can they name any famous Olympians? Do they know what the symbol is for the Games? Have they watched any coverage of previous Olympic Games? What's their favourite sport to watch?

Next, you'll need to set up your stations. For this plan, five activities have been

chosen: hurdles, a football challenge, badminton balance relay, shot put and Nerf target practice. You may wish to swap in others.

### 2 | YOUR OLYMPIC STADIUM


#### Hurdles

- The race distance can be 30m to 60m, depending on age group.
- Add hurdles, at 10m intervals, to each lane.
- Pupils begin in the set position, and the race begins on the whistle.
- The order pupils cross the line determines placings.

#### Coaching points:

Demonstrate the correct way to jump over hurdles; ask pupils to try stepping over them first to help build confidence. The children should show control in their running and in clearing the hurdles.





## *“The multi-sport structure offers something for all abilities and ages”*

### Shot put

- Set up a wide starting line with a small run-up (1–2m). Create three ‘throwing zones’ along the line, so that multiple children can compete at the same time.
- Children take a tennis or hockey ball and, following a small run-up, throw the ‘shot put’ as far as they can, using the shoulder pass technique. Pupils’ feet should remain on or behind the line and all shot puts should be thrown in the same direction on the go-ahead of the coach.
- Zones are used as a progressive points system. The further the throw, the higher the points.
- Record and combine the scores for each team.

### Coaching points:

Demonstrate the throwing

technique first. Emphasise the ‘push’ away from the body. Let children have a practice throw before recording scores.

### Badminton balance relay

- Set up a relay race across multiple lanes, cones along each lane for the children to navigate around.
- The first pupil from each team balances a shuttlecock on a badminton racket.
- Pupils to begin on the whistle. They must complete the course, without dropping the shuttlecock, and then hand both the racket and shuttlecock to the next person in their team. If the shuttlecock falls off, that pupil starts again from the beginning of the course.
- The first team back is the winning team and gets the points.

**Coaching points:** For KS1, if a pupil drops the shuttlecock they can restart from where it fell. Allow children to practise before the race.

### Football challenge

- Set up a penalty shootout area and mark out a distance from penalty spot to goal.
- Select a goalkeeper from another team.
- Each member of the team has five penalties.
- Combine the total penalties scored from each member of the team for a total score.

**Coaching points:** For KS1, reduce the distance from the spot to the goal.

### Nerf target practice:

- Set up 10 plastic cups (bowling pins format) on top of a table. Make a firing line 3–5m from the table.
- Following a safety briefing, pupils each get three attempts to fire at the cups, scoring a point for each cup they hit.

**Coaching points:** For KS1 reduce the distance to the table. Encourage children to keep their eye on the cups rather than on the Nerf gun to help increase accuracy.

## 3 | REFLECTIONS

It’s likely that some or most children will have never had a go at sports such as shot put, so once pupils have had their turn, critique their technique to provide positive ways in which they can improve.

Ultimately though, this is a team activity, with each ‘country’ combining individual effort to get their total scores.

*Jordan Southgate is operations manager at Premier Education. He has worked in a delivery and coaching environment for over 15 years.*



## EXTENDING THE LESSON

- Expand the one-day takeover to a whole week’s worth of intra-school Olympic competition. Display all the classes’ scores in a corridor or your school hall, and update them daily as the competition progresses. Take KS2 pupils to look at the scoreboard and challenge them to tell you how many extra points they’ll need to get that day to move up the rankings.
- Progress the single day to five days over the course of a term, engaging pupils for longer and encouraging further teamwork.
- Introduce additional events that aren’t traditionally involved in school sports.
- Involve other schools in a cluster to make this an inter-school competition. This could be done in an intense week, or over the duration of a summer term.

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What characteristics do you need to be a valuable team member?
- What key sporting traits link different Olympic sports and athletes together?
- What are the key differences between individual and team events?
- How could you help a teammate who is finding something hard?



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Geographical skills, including use of the eight points of a compass and grid references
- How to locate and find the name of UK cities on a map
- How human activity influences natural systems and how pupils personally contribute to this

# Environmental science – on the plastics trail



**Lara Jeffries** from Surfers Against Sewage explores the issue of marine pollution and plastic use

[@sascampaign](#) [sas.org.uk](https://sas.org.uk)

It's estimated that over 12 million tonnes of plastic waste ends up in our oceans every single year. It flows everywhere, from rockpools to the very depths of the seabed. Whether it's turtles tangled in 'ghost' fishing gear, or birds ingesting microplastics, uncontrolled use and dumping of plastic is one of the greatest threats to marine ecosystems. In this lesson, children will explore what plastic is, the effects it has on the environment, and how we can track plastic pollution. As well as learning and practising geographical skills, pupils will also explore what they can do to combat plastic pollution.



## START HERE

Explain that in this lesson you're going to find out where floating plastic pollution is building up around the UK coast. Plastic has become such an established part of our lives, but what exactly is it? Use the PowerPoint provided ([tinyurl.com/tp-PlasticPollution](https://tinyurl.com/tp-PlasticPollution)) to give a brief introduction; teacher notes are provided with the slides. Ask pupils to work with a partner to try to answer the question 'What is plastic?'. It may be useful to have a wide variety of plastic products available, e.g. water bottle, pen, chair, carrier bag, computer. Share answers and the diversity of responses before revealing the dictionary definition.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | UNDERSTANDING PLASTIC

To be able to work out where it is accumulating and what problems it creates, we need to understand plastic better. Discuss the information contained in **slides 3 and 4** with pupils.

Display **slide 5**. Ask the children to think of some life-changing plastics that they couldn't imagine living without; examples are given on the PowerPoint notes. Talk about the David Attenborough quote. What does he mean? The problem is the quantity of plastic produced; single-use plastics, lack of recycling and poor waste management allow plastic to travel into our oceans and causes significant

damage to habitats, endangering wildlife and polluting communities.

Use **slide 6** to introduce the focus of this lesson: floating plastic and where it accumulates. (We won't be looking at the spread of microplastic or submerged plastic.) Focusing on where plastic accumulates, explain the term 'gyres' and look at the map to understand how these currents trap plastic (**slide 7**).

Ask pupils to work with a partner or small group to think about the geographical factors affecting UK coastlines and how these might also transport plastic waste from the seas back to land.

Finally, explore ocean currents and prevailing winds and their impact on UK shores in more detail (**slides 9 and 10**).





## *“Single-use plastics, lack of recycling and poor waste management allow plastic to travel into our oceans”*

of summer visitors generating plastic waste. The tourist industry is notorious for utilising single-use plastic products such as miniature bottles of shampoo and bottled water. The Think About Plastic group that has formed on the island has worked hard to raise public awareness about this, and change business behaviour.

Question 2 looks at Bristol. How could plastic waste reach the ocean from this city? One answer is that it could be blown from urban areas into waterways then transported to local rivers and then out to sea. The River Avon runs through the city and joins the Bristol Channel.

Finally, discuss the last question on the map skills worksheet, ‘What can I do to reduce plastic pollution?’. Children should have an awareness that their actions, regardless of where they live, have a global impact.

### 2 | GEOGRAPHICAL SKILLS

Give each pupil a copy of one of the maps provided at [tinyurl.com/tp-PlasticPollution](https://tinyurl.com/tp-PlasticPollution). You can choose to use a blank map, a partly completed map or a fully completed one depending on year group, ability and time available.

Ask pupils to use what they’ve learned so far to do the following:

- Draw an arrow and label prevailing winds using the compass points. [In the UK we have prevailing winds coming from the SW.]
- Draw a directional arrow and annotate the North Atlantic Drift. [Explain that an annotation is a descriptive label such as, ‘The North Atlantic Drift is a powerful warm current that helps maintain UK temperatures’.]

- Label the Atlantic Ocean, North Sea, Irish Sea, English Channel, and Bristol Channel. [Children can use Google Earth/Google Maps/class globe if necessary.]
- Label England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

Ask pupils to complete the map skills worksheet, then discuss the answers as a class.

Question 1 refers to the Isle of Arran. Using the images on the PowerPoint, ask pupils to discuss why this area, with a population of just 5,000, has lots of plastic along its coast. Children should be able to identify prevailing winds, currents and storm frequency due to its location.

Note that the island is a tourist destination, which could mean that there are lots

### 3 | ADDITIONAL MAP SKILLS

If you have a higher ability group, you can challenge them to complete the following activities:

- On your map, label the three longest UK rivers: Severn, Trent and Thames. How close to urban areas are these and what impact does that have on the amount of plastic pollution reaching the ocean?
- Label the largest cities in the UK: London, Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, Bristol, Newcastle, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dublin, Belfast, Cardiff. Allocate a six-figure grid reference to each city. Investigate recycling success stories for one of these cities.

*Lara Jeffries is education manager at Surfers Against Sewage*

### EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Explore the other plastic-focused lessons created by Surfers Against Sewage. Our ‘Plastic Persuasion’ activity ([tinyurl.com/tp-PlasticPersuasion](https://tinyurl.com/tp-PlasticPersuasion)) would follow on well from this lesson.
- Participate in Surfers Against Sewage’s Plastic Free Schools programme ([plasticfreeschools.org.uk](https://plasticfreeschools.org.uk)).
- Use the Plastic Adrift website ([plasticadrift.org](https://plasticadrift.org)) to explore how long floating plastic takes to reach different locations.
- If you are lucky enough to live near a coastline or waterway, extend your lesson by leading a fieldtrip to explore plastic pollution in your area. You could even include a beach clean or waterway cleanup as part of your trip. See our guide to organising your own cleanup ([tinyurl.com/tp-CleanPlastic](https://tinyurl.com/tp-CleanPlastic)).
- Research other areas of the world, or specific species, that have suffered from serious environmental issues caused by plastic pollution.

### USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What is a prevailing wind?
- How many plastic items do you think you’ve used today?

MFL



# Kapow Primary Spanish

A complete package of quality resources for teaching primary level Spanish



## AT A GLANCE

- Everything you need to teach Spanish to KS2 pupils.
- Accessible to all primary school teachers, regardless of linguistic skills.
- Consistent with national curriculum guidance.
- Fully resourced lesson plans with clear progression.
- Extensive CPD materials.

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



I am a staunch supporter of the teaching of languages in primary schools. My problem is that, despite the willingness of my spirit, the flesh is shockingly weak. Indeed, even though I achieved a decent grade in French at 16, my practical ability was so woeful that I could make even the most stereotypically surly Parisian speak English to me rather than suffer my assault on their language for more than 30 seconds.

This painful dearth of linguistic ability, plus the resultant lack of confidence, made me shudder at the very thought of teaching any language at primary level. If only I had had Kapow, I think things would have been very different.

Kapow Primary Spanish is carefully designed to instil confidence in even the most linguistically timid teacher. That means the pupils will have every chance of gaining a strong foundation in the language and, most importantly, enjoy the experience.

This truly impressive scheme is carefully sequenced to ease pupils along their learning journey. As you would expect, there is a clear focus on phonics, vocabulary and grammar. I particularly liked the pupil phoneme videos featuring charismatic native Spanish speakers modelling the correct way to iterate words and individual phonemes. They call this Mouth Mechanics®, and with good reason because they clearly demonstrate not only what each phoneme should sound like but also how the mouth should move and take shape in order to say it properly.

Teachers will love the way everything is handed to them on a plate. Detailed, easy-to-follow lesson plans are backed by appealing visual resources and printable activities. There are also extensive CPD

resources including numerous bite-sized videos – enough to develop a detailed subject knowledge in anyone, no matter how sketchy their familiarity with Spanish might be. Furthermore, there are a host of planning and information documents, from curriculum mapping guides to parent communications that will really make the subject leader's day.

As for the pupils, I can see them being thoroughly engaged in these lessons. The input is clear and sensibly sequenced; the activities are enjoyable and well-pitched. There is also a firm emphasis on building cultural awareness, not least through the high-quality videos illustrating Spanish traditions and everyday life. In short, everything about this scheme is designed not just to get pupils speaking the language, but feeling confident to engage in its practical applications in purposeful activities.

The scheme of work features some beautiful pupil videos to introduce the wider Spanish-speaking world. It also offers some excellent cross-curricular opportunities for Geography, in particular (exploring countries and conservation in South America), but also history, science and music. Kapow Primary Spanish is innovative, creative, modern and still evolving. It is currently available for Years 3–6, with mixed-age planning coming soon.

This is a product that oozes quality and high production values. Everything you could possibly want from a language scheme is here, neatly provided in a slick, professional package. Wave goodbye to nervous teachers and say ¡Hola! to fun, effective Spanish lessons.

## teach PRIMARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Appealing and engaging for pupils
- ✓ Slick and professionally produced
- ✓ Thoughtful and thorough
- ✓ Builds teacher confidence
- ✓ Reduces teacher and subject-leader workload

## UPGRADE IF...

... you want to implement a high-quality Spanish language scheme that really delivers for pupils and teachers alike.



## LITERACY/READING →

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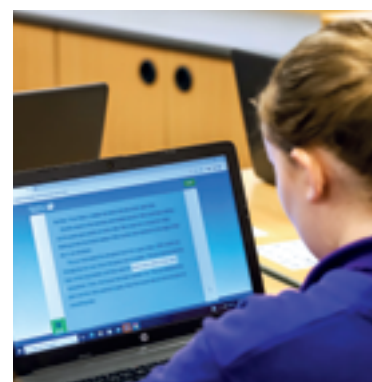


An online reading programme that develops students' reading skills and confidence

## AT A GLANCE

- A web-based reading platform
- Designed to help readers become more efficient and effective
- Adaptive intelligence matches learners to texts and continues to do so throughout
- Huge range of fiction and non-fiction texts
- Compatible with most web-based devices

REVIEWED BY: ADAM RICHES



Finding a reading programme suitable to each student's ever-growing needs can be challenging. Many schools are now looking for edtech solutions to supplement their offers. Reading Plus isn't your stereotypical online programme – it teaches reading skills and is adaptive, meaning it can be used as a whole-school solution and something that improves each student's confidence and skills.

Guided by the most prominent reading and pedagogical research from the last 30 years, Reading Plus builds and sustains fluency and reading efficiency whilst exposing pupils to a diverse range of topical content in line with their ability. The platform has a simple aim – to make readers better.

The science behind the functionality is phenomenally impressive. Each reader is given a short baseline test upon first login. This baseline is adaptive, testing and assessing the reader as they move from text to text. At the end of the process, the pupil is matched to a level aligned with their reading ability.

There are 14 levels in total, with each level consisting of 70–80 texts on each level. One of the huge draws is that the content is suitable for KS2–4 – perfect for a number of contexts.

What strikes me about Reading Plus is it actually makes children read better. Not just in terms of exposure to different texts, but literally, read better.

Features such as the guided window are pure genius. This particular feature trains the learner how fast to read by utilising a moving

box. Not only does this reduce the extraneous load for readers as they look at the whole page, reducing the temptation to skip ahead, it also sequentially speeds up, stretching the reader to progressively increase their words per minute over a period of time.

Reading Plus is designed to build vocabulary confidence and expose learners to a plethora of different words. The vocabulary section boasts 2,500 words and the accessibility and functionality of vocabulary exploration is seamless. In addition to this, Reading Plus encourages visual skill building, getting pupils to strengthen their reading muscles and training their eyes to move in an effective and efficient way. This is a particularly helpful feature for weaker readers and EAL learners who may read from right to left in their mother tongue.

One of the most notable factors for me as a teacher is the detailed and precise use of pedagogical approaches to support reading. The scaffolding, consideration of cognitive load and impressive range of text types highlights the pedigree of the creators and staff of Reading Plus. It was designed by people who know about learning.

The online platform is compatible with the majority of web-based devices, meaning that students have access to reading wherever they are and they can read regardless of the device they own. All they need is the internet.

Teachers can track progress with ease through the highly functional and navigable interface.

**teach  
PRIMARY**

## VERDICT

- ✓ Impressive assessing functionality to ensure reading is pitched right for each learner
- ✓ Huge range of texts and text types meaning learners are exposed to different types of reading
- ✓ Online functionality and usability is second to none
- ✓ Content applicable for KS2 through to 4.

## UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for an all-inclusive reading package that allows tailored reading experiences for all learners.

For more info, see [readingsolutionsuk.co.uk](http://readingsolutionsuk.co.uk), call 0191 389 6078 or email [info@readingsolutionsuk.com](mailto:info@readingsolutionsuk.com)

# 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?

Being able to see real change in your class. Whether that is a child finally getting their head around fractions, or a shy pupil in your class making a friend. Feeling like I've contributed to this as a teacher makes everything worth it. Having some relaxing holidays sprinkled amongst that isn't too bad either!

## 2 What is your greatest fear at work?

Forgetting a birthday in your class. Being in school during your birthday can be hard when you're young, never mind your teacher forgetting. I always try to look through my register at the start of the month and take notes in my diary. Even a simple Happy Birthday song in class can make all the difference.

## 3 What is your current state of mind?

Bittersweet. I love my current school and class, but as the end of the year looms so does a new year of supply teaching. Teaching is truly a passion of mine, but it comes with an element of uncertainty in today's job market. Saying goodbye to a lovely school and class is hard when you go back into the bottomless pool of supply teachers and the anxieties that come with that. The only thing to do is keep hoping that things will improve, and that

teaching will one day become the stable job it once was.

## 4 What do you consider the most overrated teacher virtue?

Tolerance. Yes, we do need to work under circumstances we may not agree with, and understand that others will have differing opinions on how we teach our children, but this does not mean that we should tolerate behaviours and working environments that affect us negatively. We as teachers tend to push through workloads and behaviours that we wouldn't normally tolerate in our lives, because we love our job. Setting clear boundaries and standards in your classroom is vital for having a healthy work-life balance.

## 5 On what occasion do you lie to your class?

More than once certain play areas have been 'broken' or 'closed for today' so we can focus on tasks! Removing certain activities can avoid arguments and shift the focus onto other things.

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

"Well done \_\_\_!" or "Look at \_\_\_ sitting nicely!". Praising other pupils for doing what you've asked has always been my most effective tool. Children, by nature,

want to please, and look to others for guidance on how to behave. Regardless of school or stage, positive reinforcement has always been my most successful behaviour management strategy.

## 7 What do you consider your greatest teaching achievement?

Helping a boy manage his anxiety. One of my former pupils struggled with a disability that caused him to become very anxious in school, and he often ended up having to leave early. As time went on, he was able to get the support he needed through external organisations, and we became more familiar with each other. We developed a good relationship and his anxieties around school eased. By the end of the school year, he had once again become that fun-loving boy he had been, and he didn't go home early again.

## 8 What is your most treasured teaching possession?

This is a hard question. There are so many things I use every day, but if I had to choose one... My 'Do not disturb' headband! When I wear this, pupils know I am working with a group and to save their many stories for afterwards. The headband does not deter the most determined pupils, but it does help me get some peace to work with my groups. TP

*"Saying goodbye to a lovely school and class is hard when you go back into the bottomless pool of supply teachers"*



NAME: Rosie Newton  
JOB ROLE: Class teacher





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