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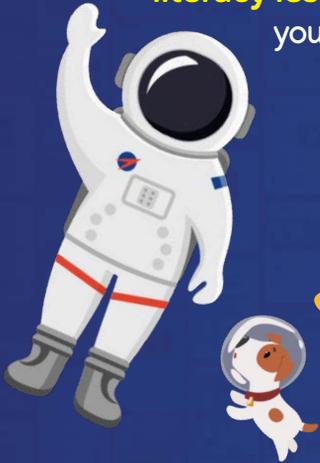
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# Hello!



**I**t's eerily quiet in my house as I write this – my toddler has just returned to nursery two days a week. She's oblivious to the pandemic of course, but, like many children heading back to the classroom, she's delighted to be playing with her pals again.

It's been a stressful time for teachers and school leaders as more children venture back into the classroom, although the announcement that not all pupils will be expected back before the summer will no doubt have come as a relief to many. On page 15 of this issue, headteacher Claire Holmes reflects on how her role has radically changed since March, while teacher Adam Boxer pens a letter to anyone criticising teachers for prioritising their own and their pupils' safety (p17).

Of course, the children who walked out the school gates back in spring may not be the same ones heading back to your classroom come September. Sadly, some will have witnessed abuse or relationship breakdowns, whereas others will have cherished being with their families and may find coming back a wrench. On page 23, Ben Ballin explores how to reconnect with children, while on page 32, SENCo Sara Alston argues that focusing on the curriculum when pupils return is potentially damaging.

We've also got plenty to take your mind *off* the virus. Show children how to 'hack' news websites and insert their own headlines (p74); make sure your science curriculum is deep dive ready (p64); and find out how a simple three-letter word can boost students' learning (p36).

I hope you have a safe and lovely summer,

*Elaine*

Elaine Bennett, Editor

@editorteach

*Don't miss our  
next issue, on sale  
28th August*

## POWERED BY...



**ADAM BOXER**

says teachers are desperate to get back to normal, but only when it's safe to do so

*“A friend told me they cried after seeing the media coverage teachers have received”*

p17



**NIKKI GAMBLE**

explains how to build depth into your curriculum by combining English and history

*“This group of pupils were beginning to think about the concept of subjectivity”*

p54



**DANNY NICHOLSON**

explores how to ensure your science curriculum is top-notch and deep dive ready

*“With a little advance preparation, the deep dive shouldn't be a scary affair”*

p64

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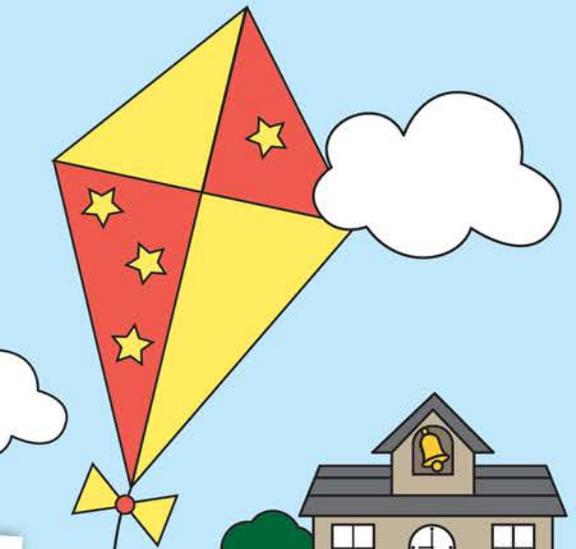
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**We're all ears!**

We want to make sure our magazine is a brilliant resource for teachers and are always striving to improve. That's why we host a reader feedback panel every issue to hear from real teachers about what they liked and what they would change. Got feedback? Contact us via the details in the yellow box below.

**We want to hear from you!**

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



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# 5 REASONS TO TRY... Compassionate Class

Use this programme from the RSPCA to encourage kindness and compassion towards animals



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

Compassionate Class is part of the RSPCA's 'Generation Kind' initiative, a set of programmes that aim to nurture and instil the values of kindness and compassion towards animals. In this way, we can create a future society that is truly kind to animals.

### 1 IT SUPPORTS THE CURRICULUM

Compassionate Class takes an interactive, discussion-based approach to develop emotional literacy and consider the welfare needs of animals. These PSHE Association accredited resources are designed to provide an exciting learning experience, as well as supporting schools in the delivery of SMSC for seven to 11-year-olds. Through a series of enquiry-led activities, children will consider what it means to be compassionate, understand the needs of different types of animals, and work collaboratively to develop empathy skills for their school lives and beyond.

### 2 USE OUR FREE RESOURCES

Deigned with flexibility in mind, the activities can be delivered across four to five hours of lesson time and include differentiation to ensure they are suitable for children of all abilities. Choose from sessions focusing on pets, animal heroes, wildlife or farm animals. Join the thousands of schools already using our free resources and begin planning your Compassionate Class journey ready for September. Start the year with an animal-themed bang! Teaching in Wales? All of our resources are also available in Welsh.

### 3 NEW RESOURCES FOR THE NEW YEAR

Underwater Worlds is the brand new discovery topic for



Compassionate Class 2020/21. Meet Kenny the crab and learn how plastic pollution in particular is affecting aquatic animals through our animation and supporting activities. Dive in to discover the needs of aquatic animals and better understand how human actions impact their habitats. Explore what we can do to live in harmony with these amazing aquatic creatures and recognise that although aquatic

#### Contact:

[compassionateclass@rspca.org.uk](mailto:compassionateclass@rspca.org.uk)

[rspca.org.uk/compassionateclass](https://rspca.org.uk/compassionateclass)



animals may look very different from land animals, they can be sentient too.

### 4 ENTER OUR COMPETITION

Compassionate Class culminates in a creative advocacy activity, which can be entered into an annual competition to find the RSPCA's most compassionate class. Each advocacy task challenges students to champion animal welfare in a creative and imaginative way, such as producing a film, artwork, poster, or presentation. The winning class gets a visit to an RSPCA animal centre, a year's subscription to Animal Action magazine and Compassionate Class stationery. Teachers are also invited to collect the award at the RSPCA's Honours Awards ceremony in London.

### 5 EDUCATING A KINDER GENERATION

The RSPCA is the oldest and largest animal welfare organisation in the world. We work 365 days a year rescuing all animals from abuse, neglect, and injury. But we never forget the most important word in our name: prevention. Our vision is a society where no animal suffers unnecessarily; where thoughtfulness, care and respect are shown towards all animals. That starts with young people. Through Compassionate Class, you can help inspire the next generation of animal lovers, creating a future that's kinder to animals.

## KEY POINTS

Compassionate Class is an innovative project from the RSPCA, encouraging children to develop compassion and empathy through the lens of animal welfare.

Each discovery activity starts with an exciting stimulus to encourage discussion and debate, exploring the importance of animal welfare in an imaginative way.

Join our Compassionate Class community. We're here to support you with delivering the programme and inspiring the next generation of animal lovers.

Knowing your pupils' abilities, you may feel some activities require further differentiation. Compassionate Class includes alternative resources to support children with SEND.

# Breaktime

News | Interviews | Ideas | Resources | Research



## Back together

Children's mental health charity Place2Be has put together a series of resources to help headteachers and school staff start to bring their schools back together following recent challenging times. The assembly and class activity ideas are intended as a universal resource for all children and have been split into four themes – self-efficacy, hope, gratitude and connectedness. Each resource draws on some of the factors that underpin wellbeing and positive psychology. Use them as a starting point to promote emotional resilience in your school. Find them at [tinyurl.com/tpplace2be](https://tinyurl.com/tpplace2be)

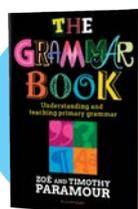
## 3 INSTANT LESSONS...

(You're welcome)



### SPACE BACON

Bang Goes the Theory presenter Dallas Campbell explores stories of amazing engineering in a series of short films. Topics include how astronauts eat bacon sandwiches in space and how you can make your own rocket. Watch at [stem.org.uk/home-learning](https://stem.org.uk/home-learning)



### EASY GRAMMAR

What is the subjunctive mood? When do you use a semi-colon? Are these questions that you are afraid to ask? Cue this book! Written by experienced teachers, The Grammar Book provides everything you need to teach grammar. [bloomsbury.com/education](https://bloomsbury.com/education)



### AUTHOR MASTERCLASS

Join author Lucy Courtenay and illustrator Sheena Dempsey, creators of Mermaid School, as they talk about writing about emotions and creating character connections. Download the scheme of work and watch videos at [authorfy.com/masterclasses](https://authorfy.com/masterclasses)

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**RESOURCES**



Make sure children's transition between year groups, key stages and schools is as smooth as possible with these free resources designed to boost confidence, build relationships and share expectations. There are special packs for Reception, Y1, Y2, KS2 and Y6 moving to Y7. Find them all at [plazoom.com/collections/back-to-school](https://plazoom.com/collections/back-to-school)

Q & A

# High expectations

A new study by Wang, Rubie-Davies and Meissel, published in Social Psychology of Education, has shown that regardless of pupils' actual achievement, teachers' expectations of children can make a difference because these may affect how they treat the class. Teachers who had a high level of expectation relative to actual achievement referred to pupils' prior knowledge and learning experiences more frequently, and gave more focus statements, telling children about the learning activities that would take place. They also provided more feedback to the whole class and were more likely to question further when children gave correct answers and encourage students to try again when they made mistakes.



**Radzi Chinyanganya**  
Sun-Maid Craft Club presenter and former Blue Peter star

*What was primary school like for you?*

I went to a number of primary schools – I was born in Oxford and grew up in Wolverhampton. I really enjoyed school – mainly break, lunchtime and PE! I was always pretty well behaved, except for the fact that I talked far too much.

*What's lockdown been like?*

Lockdown has been humbling for us all. I love being busy and going to the gym and that's all temporarily gone away. However, I'm living with my mum in Wolverhampton and she works for the NHS, so seeing people like her get well-deserved recognition has been brilliant.

*Why is it important for kids to stay creative during these strange times?*

One of the most important things kids have is their imagination. In this unprecedented time it's so important that children have a creative outlet. That's why I've come together with Sun-Maid to make the Sun-Maid Craft Club and give something back to young people. It will hopefully entertain them and inspire them to join along at home, as well as giving parents time for a well-earned cup of tea!

**FIND OUT MORE**

Sun-Maid California Raisins has launched its own craft club for kids. Watch Radzi leading four online classes at [sunmaid.co.uk](http://sunmaid.co.uk)

# Bereavement training



Winston's Wish – a charity that provides bereavement support to children – is offering free online bereavement training for teachers. The virtual course draws on the charity's many years of experience in supporting bereaved children and will help school staff to understand how grief affects a child and how they can help them to cope. The first session is an introduction to childhood bereavement, while the second focuses on some of the ways supporting adults can help. Find them at [winstonswish.org/bereavement-training-courses-schools](http://winstonswish.org/bereavement-training-courses-schools)

**40%** OF PARENTS SAY THEIR CHILDREN HAVE FELT LESS PRESSURE TO LOOK A CERTAIN WAY DURING LOCKDOWN\*

# Look ahead | Book ahead

**ROCK & ROALD**

13th September is Roald Dahl's birthday. Celebrate the beloved author with your class by throwing a party. [roalddahl.com](http://roalddahl.com)



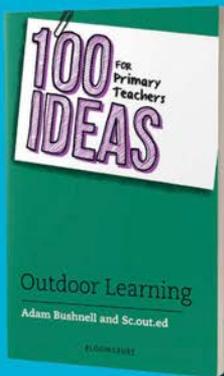
**CODE RED**

National Coding Week takes place in September. Download a school toolkit and get involved at [codingweek.org](http://codingweek.org)



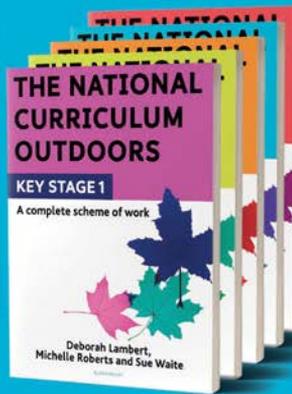
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# LEARNING OUTDOORS WITH BLOOMSBURY EDUCATION



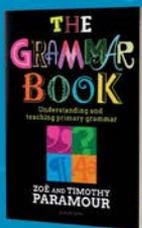
100 impactful, adaptable and creative ideas to get children engaged in learning outside. Covering the wider curriculum, this book gives teachers simple ways to take learning outside right away.

– Mike Watson, Primary teacher and outdoor learning consultant, @WatsEd

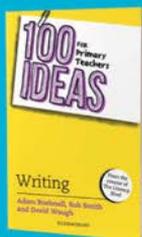


The National Curriculum Outdoors for KS1, Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 are packed full of photocopiable lesson plans for every curriculum subject, effectively linking National Curriculum objectives with motivating outdoor learning.

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Mrs Karen Gray, DHT, Kirklandneuk PS.



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Tara Finney, Teacher, Clacton CEVA Junior School

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# 6 WAYS to investigate food in the great outdoors

Head outside and try these pupil-led activities that allow children to take control of their own learning

## 1 | DIY POPCORN MAKER

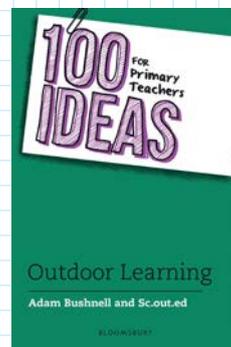
Create your own popcorn maker by putting kernels into a sieve and placing another sieve on top. Slide the handles into a metre-long metal pole. Wrap duct tape around the end of the pole to work as a handle. Each child can have a go at holding the popcorn maker. Ask pupils to pay particular attention to the sounds of the popcorn and the fire. They can then record these sounds – pop, crackle, crunch, etc – with clipboards and paper. Use these words to write onomatopoeic poems about the making of popcorn.

## 2 | FIVE SENSES CHOCOLATE TASTING

Give pupils two pieces of chocolate still joined together from the bar. Place them on the back of children's hands, rather than their palm, so they don't melt as fast. Write down adjectives to describe the chocolate. Snap the two pieces into singular pieces and describe the sound. Next, pupils can put one piece of chocolate in their mouths and move it around until it melts, all the while holding their noses tightly. When they release their noses, the overwhelming smell and taste come rushing in. Try the second piece in the same way and think of adjectives to add to the texture, smell and taste sections of your five sensory descriptions.

## 3 | BAKE BREAD ON STICKS

Mix together 300g of self-raising flour, 240ml of milk, half a teaspoon of salt and one teaspoon of sugar. Show children how to mix the bread dough with their fingers and knead it when the consistency is slighter softer than playdough. Tear off small pieces and roll into sausage shapes. Push these onto sticks, twisting the dough down the stick and pushing the ends in tightly to secure. Hold over the embers of a fire for 15 to 20 minutes. Once baked, carry out a taste test by marking out of ten for taste, texture, appearance and smell, adding up the scores and dividing by four to get an overall score out of ten.



These ideas have been adapted from 100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Outdoor Learning by Adam Bushnell and Sc.out.ed (£14.99, Bloomsbury)

## 4 | SOUP TASTE TEST

Making soup is a great way to encourage children to try new vegetables. Work in groups to peel and chop vegetables and herbs. Gather the peelings for compost. Bring a large pan of water to the boil on a fire and add all the ingredients to the pan, along with a vegetable stock cube or two. Place a lid on and simmer the soup for 20 to 30 minutes with occasional stirring. If you want to make pottage, add porridge oats for the last five minutes of cooking. Heat a bought tin of vegetable soup and undertake a blind taste test. Discuss which soup pupils prefer and why.

## 5 | BAKE CAKES IN ORANGES

Passing the bowl round the circle, beat together equal amounts of eggs, self-raising flour, caster sugar and soft margarine or butter. When the batter is smooth, give each child half an orange. Squeeze the juice into the batter mix and stir well. Scoop the flesh out of the orange with a spoon, leaving only the skin. Fill each orange skin two-thirds full with batter, cover with foil and place onto the cooling embers of a fire. Write the cooking method on clipboards while waiting for the cakes to bake. Test with a knife after 20 to 30 minutes.

## 6 | READY, STEADY, COOK

Gather pans with lids, a flat frying pan, a flask of boiling water, foil, chopping boards, vegetable peelers, plastic bowls, tin openers, graters, scissors and safety knives. After lighting a fire, show children ten ingredients – for example, potatoes, broccoli, carrots, chickpeas, dried apricots, passata, corn on the cob, butter, cheese and pasta. Explain that each group of four can only choose four ingredients. Following 20 minutes of preparation time, one group at a time can cook on the fire with supervision, while other pupils write up recipes, methods and descriptions of their dish.



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## Some children are going to be more behind their peers than ever, despite our best efforts

 @brainedcomedy  [brainedcomedy.com](http://brainedcomedy.com)

Somebody asked me the other day whether I thought the use of assessment was going to increase once all children were back in school come September. Try as I might, I couldn't get the question out of my head. After all, when all children have returned, schools are going to be in a bit of pickle in terms of trying to assess the status of children's learning. The reason for this is the lack of control we've had over pupils' learning during the time schools were closed (but not really closed).

And, before you start, now is not the time to discuss how you managed to set up your own YouTube channel, livestream all your lessons or whatever else you did to try and keep learning alive while the children were stuck at home. Controlling the teaching bit was always going to be easy. Controlling the learning? That's a different thing altogether. And, despite our best efforts, I think we are going to find that there are now more gaps in children's learning than ever before.

So better get testing, right? Well, hold your horses. We need to first understand the different types of gaps we'll be looking at. The first one isn't actually a gap at all; it's a void. However you approached 'distance learning' there will likely be specific curriculum content that you did not deliver. For whatever reason, you made the choice to ignore that part of the curriculum in favour of something else, thus creating a curriculum void. Now, you won't need to carry out a test in order to identify these voids because you should know what content you didn't teach. All you need do is decide whether delivering that missed learning is absolutely necessary, and if it is, adapt your curriculum.

The next gap is more of a lag, truth be told. This is where content was taught but because it was delivered remotely, the teaching was less effective than usual. No, I'm not critiquing your ability to teach remotely – I'm sure you were great! But you weren't teaching the children in your classroom. You couldn't pick up on all the usual cues that let you know the

children were following your input. And you can't be certain if that photo of their work they sent in was completed by them or by a bored parent. That is why it is more than likely that pupils' academic progress during lockdown was more likely to lag than excel.

It's like trying to get children to explain the plot of a film when they've only seen the trailer. They might be able to infer some of it but you really need to show them the whole movie in order for them to understand it fully. Your home learning was a movie trailer and now you need to show them the full picture. This doesn't require testing; you just need to plan for lag and the majority of children will be able to catch up.

What will be slightly harder to address will be the genuine gaps caused by children who did not access any learning while they were away from school. There will be a multitude of reasons why this may be the case. Homes without internet; families who had to share a single mobile device between siblings; parents who simply could not support their child's learning; children who refused to engage; families that went

off-grid. These children will return to school with significant gaps compared to their peers. Whatever the reason, these gaps will need to be carefully assessed so as to inform the provision the children receive once their schooling has resumed.

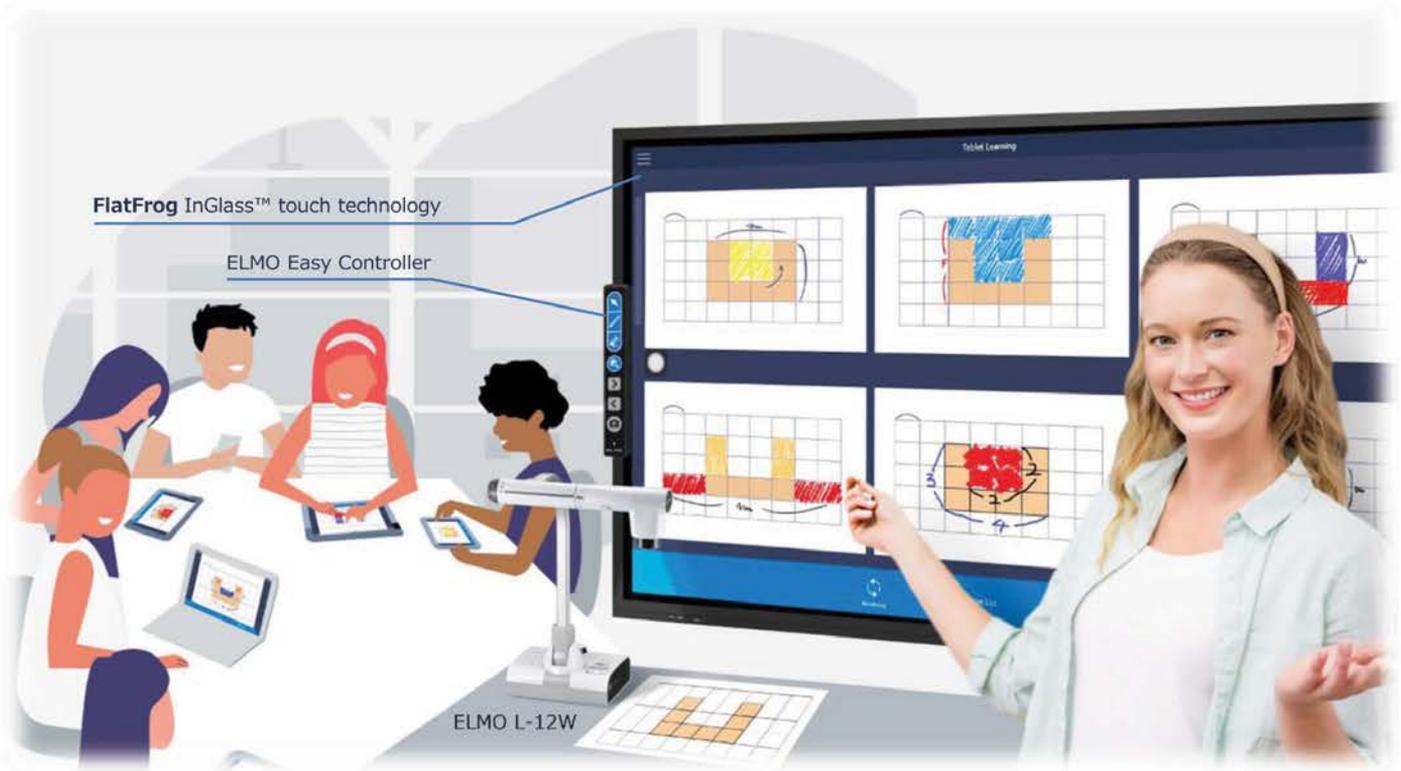
For some children, a mighty gulf will have opened up and they will be more behind their peers than ever. Those pupils who rely on daily intervention and therapies that were not possible to continue with during lockdown, despite your best efforts, will be the most disadvantaged. These children will be your priority and meeting their needs will be your greatest challenge. Will they require a test? I'm willing to bet that you already know who these children are and what they need. My advice: don't waste time testing things you already know the answer to. So when I think about the use of testing once lockdown is over, yes, it may have its uses, but only if you understand the gaps you're trying to close up first. **TP**

*“We need to first understand the different types of gaps we'll be looking at”*





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# THE ROLE OF HEADTEACHER HAS CHANGED

Gone are the SATs and phonics worries – now I lay awake at night anxious about keeping families and teachers safe

The week that Reception, Y1 and Y6 pupils returned to school was the hardest yet. The tensions around reopening safely and the need to follow government directive has certainly been one of the most challenging periods in my career. Nevertheless, we began the risk assessments, the reorganisation of classrooms, school site and resources, the disinfecting, the ‘bubbles’ and the attempt to communicate the ‘new normal’ to our families.

My previous role as headteacher of an infant and nursery school bears no resemblance to the one I do today. Gone are the worries of school development planning, assessment deadlines, the phonics test and SATs.

Instead, I wake in the night to ever-increasing anxiety about how to safeguard my staff, children and community. We passionately want to reopen our school; we know how much our children need it, but we don’t want to put our communities at risk. I predict that the weeks ahead will be emotionally and physically draining as we move forward and make sense of how to do this.

We have always been at the centre of our community and prided ourselves on our relationships with parents and carers and our ‘open door’ approach.

As we went into lockdown, I knew my team would be ready and dedicated

to caring for them in a new role. Supported by an energetic and brave family support worker and support staff who worked tirelessly in those early weeks, we set about our response.

Armed with newly-acquired mobile phones and email systems, we reached out to our vulnerable families. We spoke to the children and listened to parents. We delivered food parcels. We emptied the school kitchens, providing packed free school meals to those who needed them until our trust rapidly came on board with a voucher system to enable parents to get what they needed. We printed and delivered these to all those who needed us to. Many families needed food bank vouchers in addition, which we got out in emergency situations when parents were

suddenly without income.

Making these deliveries was our way of seeing the children; they waved to us, danced for us and parents shared their circumstances and fears, all from a safe distance. We signposted, listened, contacted other agencies and children’s teachers. I am grateful I lead a school where families are used to this ethos.

Relationships built upon trust now became evident. Teaching staff became video stars, delighting us with their recordings of the children’s favourite stories. We delivered home learning packs when technology could not be accessed. We gave Kindles, donated to our trust by Teach First, to children without a device for home learning or for those in large families where the little ones were the last to get a go. The weeks have passed, systems are secure, records are made of every contact and we are used to meeting virtually. Safeguarding is our daily priority.

As a school leader, the bombardment of emails and information from the DfE, our LA and the unions needs constant attention through the day and evening. The advice within is often conflicting. I am grateful to belong to a trust which has supported us throughout with clear direction and with the same ethos and commitment to supporting families as my own. We meet regularly online, in our networks of primary heads and trust leaders, and work our way through each emerging decision. We send emails late in the evening full of questions, shared responses and support for each other.

Throughout this strange lockdown period there have been highs and many lows. Families have reached out in crisis

and in kindness. We have experienced first-hand the aftermath of domestic violence and family breakdown in lockdown, as well as the joy of watching children come for their daily exercise and wave to us through the gates. The whole school staff made a ‘missing you’ video and parents rang, moved to tears, to say how much the children loved it.

They miss us, too. **TP**

*Claire Holmes is headteacher of Monkwick Infant School and Nursery, part of Sigma Trust, in Colchester, Essex.*



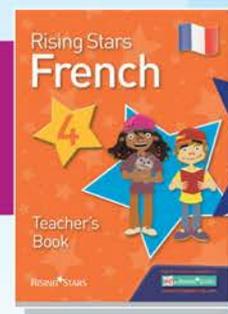
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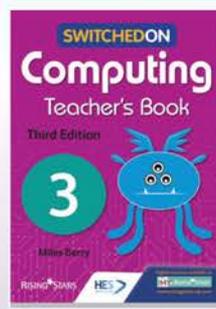
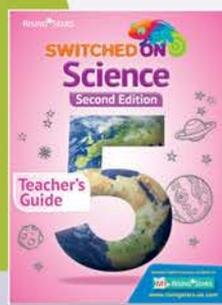
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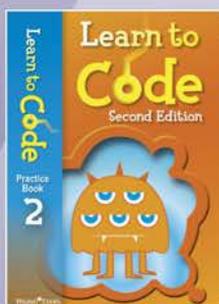
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*Each issue we ask a contributor to pen a note they would love to send*

## A letter to... *people criticising teachers*

We all desperately want to go back to school, but we need to know that it's safe...



I want to go back to school. Because when school is on I know I'm really good at my job. I'm organised at work, I can get stuff done and I can do what I love doing – teach

students – and can do it well. And then I can get home and I don't need to worry about whether my three-year-old daughter is getting a good deal during the day, and I can be a good dad and husband and help out doing all the things that need doing. When school is on I can take hats on and off with ease, and I'm not burdened by the crushing guilt each day that I'm not being a good enough dad to my little girl.

Every teacher I know and have spoken to wants exactly the same thing. The emotions I feel are the same as any teacher's. We are a madly driven profession, one wildly and chaotically in love with its work, one which feels the strongest pulls of vocation – of being called to labour. Whether things should be like that is a different question. I'm not here to discuss the teacher-as-martyr complex and how we go about building a sustainable profession. The simple fact is, we want to go back to school. I'd be surprised if you found a teacher who didn't.

The problem is, just because I want something, doesn't mean it's the right thing to do. We live in more complicated

times than that, and however much I wish the virus was gone, finished, into the green and Covid alert level one – it isn't. And the question of when we go back is not answered by assessing how much I want to go back. If it were, we would have been back months ago.

The question of when to go back is answered by assessing whether or not it is safe. Safe for teachers, safe for non-teachers, safe for students, safe for the people the pupils live with and could carry a deadly virus to. Is it safe to go back? Whether or not I want to go back has nothing to do with it.

So when I see members of the chattering classes saying that teachers are obstructing the reopening of schools, or front pages of massive national newspapers saying that militant unions are standing in the way of 'hero' teachers, I get worried. I get really worried.

Lord knows I've had my problems with the unions and have taken many a public position against them. But isn't it possible that the reason why unions and teachers are saying we shouldn't go back isn't because they don't want to – as I've said, we want to go back to work – but because we don't think it's safe yet?

You might disagree and think it is safe, but you surely have to at least acknowledge that it's possible someone could disagree with you, not because they are some feckless over-unionised work-shy wastrel, but because they don't think it's safe?

If I've read the guidelines, suggestions, FAQs and policy documents and thought, "Oh boy, they haven't thought this through," it's not because I'm enjoying my lockdown sipping lychee martinis on the veranda, but because I don't think it's safe. A friend and colleague told me that they cried after seeing some of the media coverage teachers have received; that they felt they had already given so much, and then to be accused of obstructing the one thing they cared about most – their students' welfare – it's just too much.

So here's the question: can you acknowledge that teachers know a little something about children and schools and might have a different opinion to you, an opinion that is not based on 1980s union belligerence, but instead on expertise and knowledge? I hope you can.

I hope you can listen to teachers without rejecting their voices out of hand. Because if you do reject them, if you ignore their experience and skill and fail to invite them to the table, then some very bad things could happen. And again, urging caution and hesitation rips at the very fabric of my being because, as I might have mentioned, I really, *really*, want to go back to school.

*From Adam*

*Adam Boxer is head of science at a school in north London and a Y7 science teacher for Oak National Academy.*

# BACK TO SCHOOL AND BEYOND



## During lockdown, what have pupils learned or forgotten?

### Also, how will you:

- Manage variations in attendance and social distancing?
- Manage and avoid excessive marking and workloads?
- Teach different abilities and groups?
- Cope without a full staff?

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children who need it.

I think it would be helpful if schools, government and parents – and the broader education community – could shift their expectations and make this brave new temporary world more about social and emotional support and contact for pupils, rather than just learning outcomes. In those distant days before the pandemic struck, we struggled to strike the right balance between the academic, the emotional and the social. Since we're in a time where the rapid reinvention and re-evaluation of learning has become commonplace, I believe that we should play to our natural instincts as social and emotional animals and focus more on the emotional and social aspect of schooling.

Technology can make this easier to achieve. It is, for example, easy for classes to come together regularly in an online learning or video conferencing platform so that children maintain a sense of class community, learning and pastoral leadership from their teacher. It's an opportunity for pupils to gather in a common space and connect with each other as well as learn.

I know there are many primary schools across the country already adopting this kind of approach with morning and afternoon 'check-in' sessions and I think it is useful to look to these for inspiration. There is certainly a need for wellbeing support at this time. Educare, a subsidiary of Tes, has seen huge demand from schools for its online training around children's mental health which it developed with the charity Young Minds.

At the end of all this we will need to reflect on what we have learnt about teaching, learning, technology and ourselves. I am sure the debate about the validity of Year 6 SATs will gain further traction if teacher assessments provide an adequate solution this summer. The role of parents as partners in children's education will also be a consideration, given that parents have had to step up and play a far more prominent role in their child's learning in recent weeks.

It has been an extraordinary time for our primary schools. Heads and teachers across the country have proven their remarkable energy, their commitment and their inventiveness in shifting schooling to the online realm. As we begin to look forward to at least a partial return to normality, the next challenge will be to ensure that some of the changes leave a lasting legacy.

*Lord Jim Knight is chief education and external officer at Tes Global, an international education business supporting schools in their work to improve children's lives through education. He is a Member of the House of Lords and a former schools minister.*



## WILL THERE BE A LOCKDOWN LEGACY?

Online learning isn't perfect, but it will most likely have a more prominent profile in education after this episode is behind us...

[@lordjimknight](https://twitter.com/lordjimknight) [tes.com/tesglobal](https://tes.com/tesglobal)

The shutdown provided us with an opportunity to re-evaluate many aspects of education, particularly the role of online learning. There has been a long standing interest in the role of online learning in our schools, but in the past few months it has jumped suddenly from the edge to the mainstream.

While primary teachers quickly grasped the challenge of moving learning online in extremely difficult circumstances and worked swiftly to employ a range of existing technology platforms to help support children's learning during the lockdown, larger organisations and government began to produce resources to support homeschooling. Schools and organisations across the sector joined together to develop Oak National Academy and the BBC launched three months of online and broadcast programming for pupils of primary and secondary ages.

As we begin to look beyond lockdown it is becoming clearer that online learning will remain a part of schooling. We know it is not perfect, and experiences have ranged from the good to the poor, but I think that online will have a more prominent profile in learning after this episode is behind us.

Now schools are slowly reopening, it's time to test how a blend of online and offline learning may work. Heads and teachers have concerns about the practicalities of social distancing, especially with younger primary children, so we may see a situation in which schools operate in shifts so that they can accommodate pupils as safely as possible. While part-time schooling may be a headache for heads, online learning could help to supplement face-to-face classroom teaching. In the meantime, schools will continue to focus on delivering at least an outline curriculum for children over the next few weeks – and make a special effort to target additional learning support to

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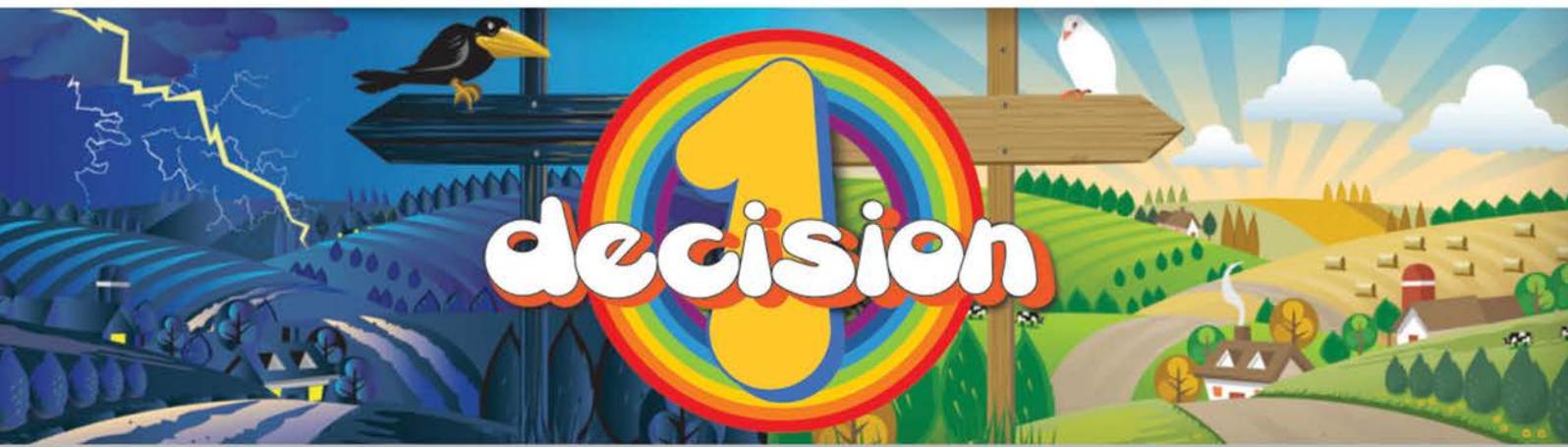
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### Is it unfair that some pupils aren't at school?

-  Write a pretend letter to yourself before lockdown started.
-  Create an acrostic poem using the letters of 'Lockdown'.



### Should families be able to block organ donation?

-  Write a thank you letter to the family of an imaginary organ donor.
-  Persuade other countries to adopt Max and Keira's Law.



### Is chalking on pavements just graffiti?

-  Write a diary entry about finding a tree with a tiny door in it.
-  Pen a poem from the perspective of a tree in the city.



### Should it be an offence to kill bugs?

-  Create an imaginary dialogue between a moth and a flower.
-  Describe the difference between moths and butterflies.



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# Welcome BACK

How can we reconnect with children after the enforced break? **Ben Ballin** sets out some ideas...

A friend of mine returned to work recently for the first time since the lockdown. She works with autistic children at an inner-city Birmingham primary school, in a majority BAME area that has experienced a great many Covid-19 deaths. She expressed her anxieties about the return as a practical question: will the crayons be sanitised?

*“I have never seen children, especially younger ones, deal so explicitly with death”*

Another friend has been rota-working throughout the lockdown at a primary school near one of the city’s hospitals. Some of the children were already designated ‘vulnerable’, while others are children of NHS workers. She regards them all as vulnerable, because key workers’ children have particular worries about their parents. She related the following incident from playtime:

“It started with someone throwing themselves off a climbing frame, lying there. Someone else said, ‘Let’s have a funeral.’ They pounced on the idea and all the children from Reception to Y6 got involved. The game was about taking it in turns to die. The others would hold their funeral, including a eulogy for them. Children were clamouring for it to be their turn. They played for at least 30 minutes.”

She reflected afterwards: “I see a lot of play about fighting,

about power and strength, but I have never seen children, especially younger ones, deal so explicitly with death. As an Early Years teacher, I am used to knowing what to do with play, but this time I felt out of my depth. This was not something any of us had ever experienced before.” She concluded: “They were playful about it. What they needed was for me to take a step back.”

## What are the experts saying?

The lockdown has caused individuals and organisations to produce innumerable materials supporting children and their families, including home learning resources and some good guidance on children’s needs. Much of this focuses on children’s need for a safe, loving and caring environment. Some experts, such as Professor Paul Ramchandani – LEGO professor of play in education at Cambridge University – have urged adults to balance formal learning with opportunities for unstructured play (see ‘Further reading’ panel, overleaf).

Looking ahead, neuroscientist Professor Irene Tracey has warned that

“increased levels of anxiety, OCD and other conditions” are a real risk that could affect pupils over the coming years. Helen Westerman, safeguarding expert at the NSPCC, has reported seeing increased levels of anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicidal thoughts during the lockdown, especially among the 400,000 children designated ‘vulnerable’ by the DfE, saying that “there is a potential generation of children that are very vulnerable following this epidemic.” Nigel Attwood, headteacher of Bellfield Junior in Birmingham, agrees, saying: “Our vulnerable children ... will be even more vulnerable.”

## So what can we do?

### Reassuring routines



Routine can be reassuring for both children and teachers:

not everything needs to be different or strange. There will be many things that are new for children in terms of social distancing: keeping clean; people potentially wearing masks and gloves. Everyday school rituals such as doing the register, playtime and putting things away at the end of the

day will help provide children with a sense of continuity and stability.



### Social contact

Replace pats on the back and high fives with other forms of human contact: spatial distance need not necessarily





### Challenging misconceptions

Fake news and conspiracy theories have flourished during the lockdown. Helping children distinguish fact from opinion will help them get their heads around what has been happening while developing their critical faculties. For younger children, this may mean being clear that washing hands regularly is a good idea. For older pupils, it may mean looking at news items or social media stories and comparing them with what the scientists actually say.



### Transition attention

Any rush to 'curriculum catch-up' may be particularly counter-productive for children transitioning from Reception to Y1, as pupils move to more formalised learning, having missed out on the full EYFS experience.



### Vulnerable pupils

Those who were already vulnerable may be more so. Some children not previously designated as vulnerable may have fresh worries, traumas or difficulties to deal with. Some pupils will have experienced bereavement, all will have experienced separation and a sense of loss. Safeguarding and emotional support will need to be prioritised, possibly for a long time to come.



### Story and drama

As the Staffordshire headteacher said, "Drama allows children to play out what's been going on, while story helps children use and develop their emotional literacy at a time that they will need it." Both allow them to do so within the safety of fiction. For my own part, I have been working with Big Brum TIE to develop drama strategies which support children's and teachers' wellbeing, including a coronavirus monodrama project.

## FURTHER READING

### Resources

Child Bereavement UK – Books and resources for adults supporting bereaved children. [childbereavementuk.org](http://childbereavementuk.org)

Cruse Bereavement Care – Recommended books for children about bereavement and grief. [tinyurl.com/tpcruse](http://tinyurl.com/tpcruse)

The Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association – Supporting Children at Home ebook. [sebda.org/news/supporting-children-at-home](http://sebda.org/news/supporting-children-at-home)

### Articles

The Syllabus – Important contributions on the political, economic and social effects of Covid-19. [covid19syllabus.substack.com](http://covid19syllabus.substack.com)

The Guardian – 'Don't turn your home into school,' says Professor Paul Ramchandani. [tinyurl.com/tpguardian](http://tinyurl.com/tpguardian)

Paul Hamlyn Foundation – What challenges are primary schools facing and how can the arts help? [tinyurl.com/tpphf](http://tinyurl.com/tpphf)

### Radio

Bellfield's Year – One year with a primary school in a poor part of Birmingham as it battles to stay solvent. Listen on BBC Sounds at [tinyurl.com/tpbbc1](http://tinyurl.com/tpbbc1)

The Briefing Room – The psychological impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Listen on BBC Sounds at [tinyurl.com/tpbbc2](http://tinyurl.com/tpbbc2)

mean a 'stand-off' environment. Be conscious of what your body language is telling children and remember that no disease was ever passed on through a friendly smile or a comforting word.



### Time to talk

Tune in to children's needs and listen to what they say. Use circle time to encourage pupils to ask questions. As one headteacher reported to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, "We need less focus on core subjects and more on the social and emotional at this hard time."



### Play time

As Professor Ramchandani reminds us, children need opportunities for both structured and unstructured play, especially now. This is not only true of the youngest children. As the teacher in the example above found out, this may sometimes mean standing back, watching, listening and letting children work things through for themselves.



### Look after yourself

Teachers are anxious too, and will sometimes be traumatised. This is a good time to be sensitive to your own needs and to those you work with, even if it is just a kind word or sharing your hand sanitiser.

right now is to keep prioritising children's very real personal, social and emotional needs over any perceived need to rush into regaining lost time with formal curriculum progress. Indeed, the latter is unlikely to happen if due attention is not paid to the former.

## Changing world

Much has been written about the wider ramifications of this crisis and how the world might change in its aftermath. Existing fault lines and inequalities have become increasingly visible. One headteacher has been quoted as saying, "The legacy of accountability and austerity has hit some schools hard. This crisis has made that all too clear. Now it's the time to change, slowly but surely."

For me, the crucial thing



*Ben Ballin is an educationalist at Big Brum TIE where he is working on a drama project focusing*

*on the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and vulnerable children. He has also co-authored research on global learning and the mental health and wellbeing of ASD pupils.*



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# AUTHOR IN YOUR CLASSROOM



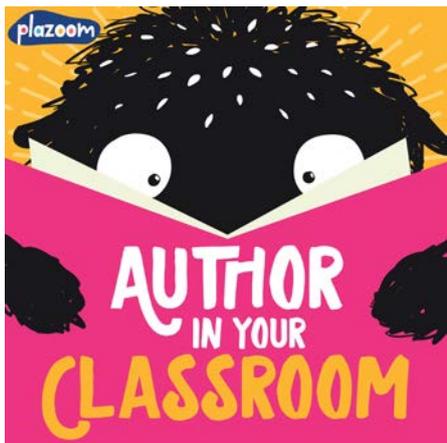
We've teamed up with Puffin to bring author Jamie Littler directly into your classroom – via a free podcast and downloadable resources

**F**ancy a virtual visit from a bestselling children's writer? Luckily for you, author and illustrator Jamie Littler is ready and waiting to share his thoughts, ideas and inspirations with your budding wordsmiths, via our free literacy podcast. The experience doesn't end there either; we've created some amazing free teaching resources to download at [plazoom.com](http://plazoom.com), so you can continue your reading adventure in the classroom.

Inventing new fantasy worlds can be a hugely rewarding experience for primary-aged children. It allows them to exercise their imaginations and play with ideas, as well as being a great way of starting them off with the tricky business of story writing. In this episode, Jamie talks about his adventure novel *Frostheart*, set in a fantasy world of snow, ice, monsters and music. There's also plenty of tips for young listeners on creating their own literary worlds and never giving up their writing dreams.



Jamie Littler



## HOW TO USE THE PODCAST

- ✓ Search for 'Author in your Classroom' podcast wherever you listen to podcasts
- ✓ Play it in your classroom in one go, or in seven to ten minutes chunks
- ✓ Pause the recording to talk about the points being raised

## FOUR THINGS KIDS WILL LEARN FROM THE PODCAST



### 1 KEEP PRACTISING

"I managed to get a job doing illustration, but in the background I was always practising my writing, trying to make it better. I sent story after story to publishers and they kept turning them down. Looking back at it now, they weren't very good, but every time I was getting better as I listened to their advice."

### 2 LISTEN TO ADVICE

"It can be quite hard when a teacher tells you that something isn't working. It's the same as when an editor tells me my story isn't working. When you've put your heart and soul into something that can be quite a shock, but it usually leads to a good place if you actually take away the advice and the positives."

### 3 ONE SIMPLE IDEA

"You may end up with stories that are hundreds of pages long and full of characters, but most stories come from one small idea. It all grows from there."

### 4 SHOW, DON'T TELL

"There's nothing more boring than writing, 'This happened then this happened then this happened.' Try to be really expressive and show how a character is feeling without telling the readers. Readers will understand what you are trying to say if you are accurately showing how a character feels."

LISTEN TO SAM'S ANSWERS IN FULL BY DOWNLOADING THE PODCAST

## CATCH UP ON PREVIOUS EPISODES

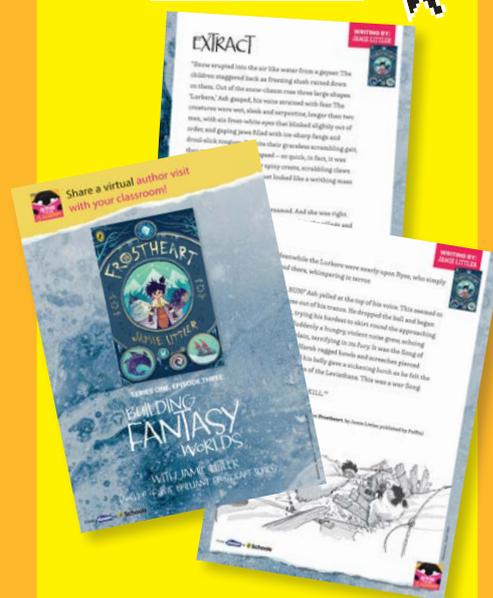


**ROBIN STEVENS**, author of murder mystery series *Murder Most Unladylike*, focused on planning, editing and redrafting. Use our teaching sequence to help children plan a great plot for their own murder mystery, including picking a setting, devising a detective, planting suspects and solving the crime at the end. Visit [plazoom.com/robinpodcast](http://plazoom.com/robinpodcast)



**SAM COPELAND**, author of *Charlie Morphs into a Mammoth*, spoke about creating believable three-dimensional characters. Download our teaching sequence and give pupils the chance to create a hero, a villain and plan their own story, while learning to 'show, not tell' what a character is like. Visit [plazoom.com/sampodcast](http://plazoom.com/sampodcast)

## How to download the resources



To accompany the podcast, teaching experts at Plazoom have created free resources that you can use to develop your pupils' writing. The teaching pack includes lesson plans, a Powerpoint, teacher notes and activity sheets. In this teaching sequence, children will have the chance to create a new fantasy world and then write a story set there.

DOWNLOAD THEM AT  
[PLAZOOM.COM/SAMPODCAST](http://PLAZOOM.COM/SAMPODCAST)

Puffin Schools is curated by the children's publisher Puffin. You'll find video resources, book lists and ideas to bring stories to life at [puffinschools.co.uk](http://puffinschools.co.uk)



# Last RESORT

Excluding a pupil may make your life easier, but the consequences for children are severe

EMMA TONNY

**E**xclusions in primary schools have a marked impact on our children's futures. Students excluded in primary school have a far more challenging time transitioning into mainstream schools later on. Those excluded throughout their school experience have far lower rates of permanent employment and far higher rates of criminal convictions.

To begin with, let me clear up a common misconception. There are different kinds of exclusions that students can be given. Too often, when you read about them, permanent exclusions are often made to sound like the only kind. Permanent exclusions are the most severe, where a child is taken off a school's roll and can no longer attend, but they are also the rarest kind. Given that they are the rarest, it is perhaps even more shocking that in 2017/18 there were 7,900 permanent exclusions from schools in England – a 70% increase since 2012/13. So, what happens to these children once they are permanently excluded?

## Life in a PRU

Once children are permanently excluded they go to a pupil referral unit (PRU). The main problem with a PRU is that it only has children who have behavioural challenges. Due to this, the staff's time is really only taken up with

behaviour management – not with learning.

I have spent a disproportionate amount of time doing arts and crafts with primary school children sent to a PRU. There's a point at which 'mindfulness' only goes so far, and you do actually need to learn something. Arts and crafts becomes the new norm, and English and maths lessons a distant memory. I don't deny for a second that children in PRUs, of any age, can be absolute nightmares.

***“I don't deny for a second that children in PRUs, of any age, can be absolute nightmares”***

There's no point dressing that up. They will threaten (or enact) violence, tell you they hate you, and absolutely refuse to do any work. But they're human. It's an obvious point but it has to be remembered. From the point of exclusion in primary school onwards they're treated as an inconvenience.

Those that work with these children must have the patience of a saint; however awful they may be to you it's crucial to ensure they are listened to and feel safe. They need the very best teachers to turn the situation around. And yet, students in PRUs are

twice as likely to be supported by unqualified staff.

Many children referred to PRUs in primary school have serious problems around attachment. They will try everything possible to push you away because they're simply so used to being hurt or left that they don't want to let anyone close. That can be really hard to remember when you're exhausted and have been nothing but nice to them, but perseverance pays off. It can take months to

build a bond with many of these children but I've seen first-hand how incredible it is when that's achieved.

If a child has been excluded then they often have an incredibly complex range of needs. It is worth noting that students with SEN are far more likely to be excluded than their peers. This is particularly the case for students with ADHD – 39% of young people who have ADHD have fixed term exclusions.

## The other side

However, the picture can often be painted to depict students as innocent victims of an unfair

system. This is very far from always being the case. I have had students come at me with scissors, punch walls, attempt to climb through windows... the list goes on. Sometimes, students are such a risk to themselves and others that a mainstream school simply won't work for them. They need a smaller ratio of teaching staff to have the supervision they need for safeguarding reasons.

Aside from the needs of these individual students, there is the wider impact their behaviour has on learning of other students. A constant battle I face is between knowing full well that keeping a child in mainstream school is the best thing for them, versus acknowledging that they are making learning almost impossible for others. If you have a primary school child flipping tables and swearing at the teacher then others are not able to learn and, perhaps more importantly, are scarred by the experience.

The latest DfE figures reveal that 62 Y1 children and 163 Y2 pupils were in PRUs in 2018, rising to 454 in Y6. Those figures sound shocking, but the challenges that teachers (and fellow students) are facing is very real.

## What can we do?

First and foremost, it comes down to investment. At the

broadest scale this must come from the government and I am very aware that I write at a time where there are cuts across the country. However, even on limited funds, there are choices that have to be made. A key priority must be investing in SEN specialist staff to support students'

learning and behaviour. Consider the following:

- Don't invest in new technology, but instead get a SEN or SEMH

(social, emotional, mental health lead).

- Recruit specialist staff (or train staff you currently have) to support children's needs. This can be the difference between keeping them in school and losing them to a downward spiral. As hard as the choices are, we have a responsibility to fight for every child's future.

- Spot behavioural patterns early and attempt to remedy this with clear routines and expectation setting. This can make a big difference.

- Don't let things slide because a pupil is six and it's sort of endearing when they have a strop. It will not remain endearing. If we expect a lot of students from an early age, they will often meet or even exceed those expectations. By this, I do not necessarily mean academic targets – which great pressure is placed around. Rather, I mean expectations around students being well mannered, kind to one another and ready to try their hardest.



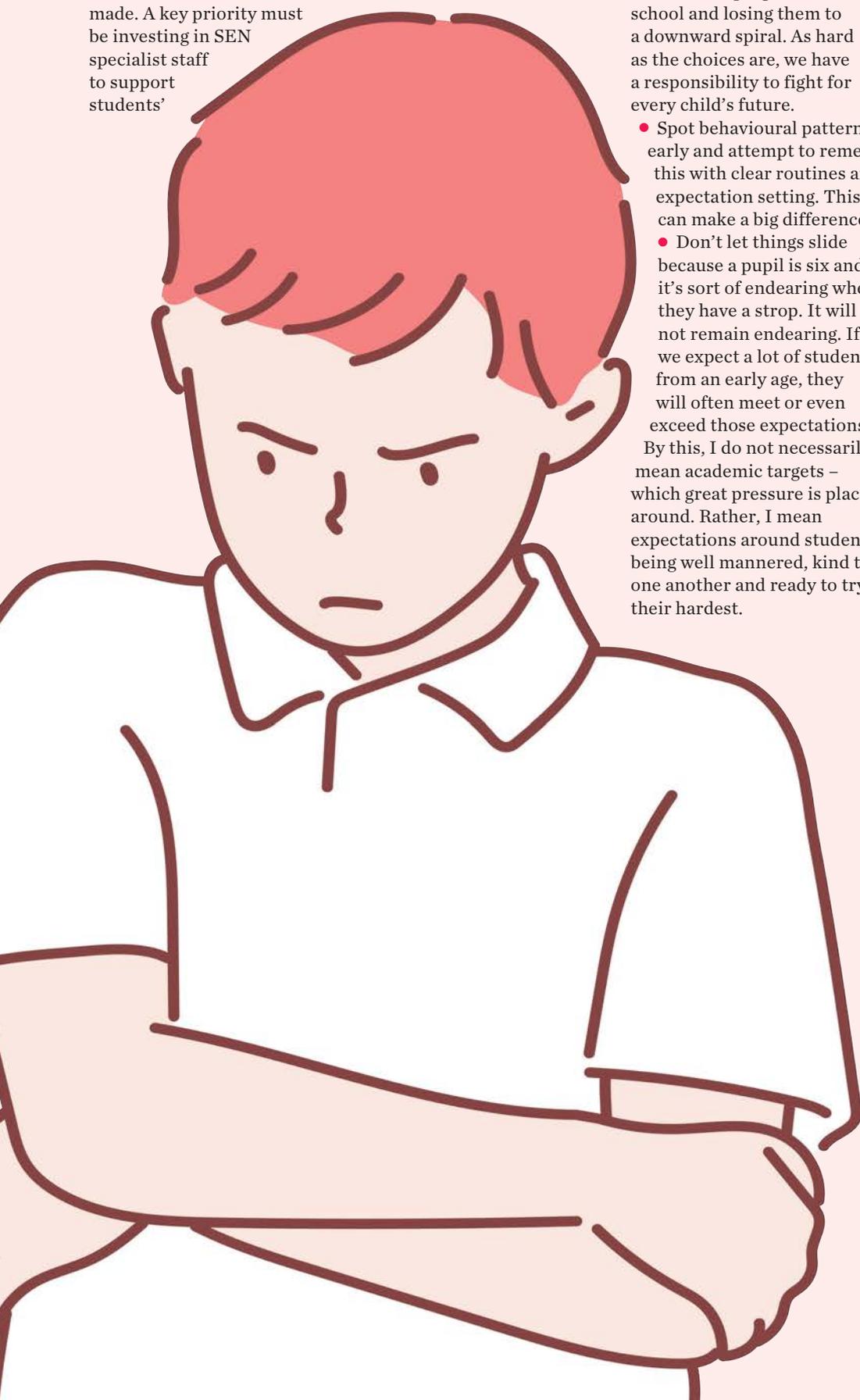
This article first featured in our sister title Primary School Management. Find out more at [primaryleaders.com](http://primaryleaders.com)

- Develop close working relationships between parents and, where needed, social services. You can establish routines and values at school, but if this isn't mirrored at home then you're fighting a losing battle. In my experience, this can be the hardest part of the process. Building a relationship with families takes time which teachers often don't have. Again, having a specialist member of staff whose role includes this kind of work is invaluable.
- Only use exclusions as an absolute last resort. It can feel as if they make everyone's lives easier – not least the lives of other children in the school, but the consequences for excluded children are severe.

There are so many other things to try before it gets to the point where an exclusion should even be considered: behaviour contracts, sticker charts, clear sanctions, coming in to school for half days and building back up from there, one on one or small group interventions...

All of this takes time but it is time invested in our children's futures and that is time very well worth spending. **TP**

*Emma Tonny is a former member of staff at a PRU and currently works as an intervention and inclusion specialist.*





# Writer's BLOCK

We must find time for creative writing during teacher CPD sessions

MARK LOWERY

**D**uring seventeen years in teaching, I must've attended a hundred CPD sessions about writing. I've brainstormed six trillion ways to write in other subjects. I've got a black belt in 17 forms of assessment. I've moderated so hard I thought I might lose an eye. I've been rigorously drilled in how to write feedback comments, how to not write feedback comments, and how to express feedback comments through contemporary dance. I've attended a seven-day summit in Davos to resolve the whole purple-pen-green-pen controversy. And I've watched

two mature female colleagues slug it out like drunken sailors in the car park over whether or not we should use 'well done' stickers in books.

But how many meetings have focused on me becoming a better writer? Exactly four. And those four sessions only happened because I asked the headteacher if I could run them myself. If I hadn't asked, then I wouldn't have ever had any training to develop my skills and confidence in writing.

We all agree that writing is central to the curriculum, and hugely difficult. We all agree that future employers are crying out for a creative workforce who can

communicate effectively. We all agree that children learn better when their teacher is confident, enthusiastic, and has sound subject knowledge. And we all agree that it's really hard to model anything in front of children, especially if you haven't had much practice at it.

Yet, for a lot of primary teachers, creative writing isn't

something they've actually done since secondary school. To quote a former colleague: "Outside the classroom, I never even write a shopping list." If schools find time and opportunities for teachers to develop their own writing skills, the benefits can be enormous. I believe that creative writing CPD has the potential to change a whole

***"For a lot of primary teachers, creative writing isn't something they've done since secondary school"***

school's attitude towards, and culture of, writing.

## Morale and empathy

Firstly, teachers and TAs are extremely creative people. By offering writing CPD, schools can give them an outlet for this creativity, enable them to develop it and show them that it's valued. Perhaps it might encourage them to use their creativity in other ways, and boost morale.

It will also enable staff to develop a greater understanding of the writing process. They'll become more confident in their own skills, and consequently more able to model high-quality writing in front of a group. A staff meeting offers a safe and supportive space to practise, away from 30 sets of watchful eyes.

It should also lead to staff having greater empathy towards children. By carrying out writing tasks themselves and talking them through with colleagues afterwards, teachers can learn a lot about how children might feel during similar activities, and what might help them. How did it feel when you looked at the blank sheet? How did other people's ideas inform yours? Would you like to read it out or are you more comfortable to just share it with the person next to you? What might've made that task easier or more enjoyable? And, perhaps, did it help you when I wrote 20 technical points on the board that you had to follow or your work would be deemed a failure?

## Box-ticking exercise

With this last question in mind, there's long been a dichotomy between the ideas of creativity and technical skill. The current heavy

grammar focus, and the 'writing by numbers' approach of the Literacy Strategy before it, have meant that (in some classrooms) writing has become more of a box-ticking exercise than a worthwhile, creative activity in its own right.

Teachers, and by extension children, have been drilled that 'good' writing follows a set of predetermined features. Yes, these features are important but, sadly, this approach alone can result in us all missing the point somewhat. Really good writing transports us somewhere else, affects us emotionally and lets us walk in someone else's shoes.

How often have you lamented about a child whose technically-perfect work is bland and 'lacks a spark'? These intelligent, diligent pupils tick all the boxes because they're conditioned to believe that writing is all about the replication of a list of specified elements. However, without also focusing on the value of the intangible aspects of writing – the creative process, the essence of the piece – some children will only ever produce flat, uninspiring and uninspired work.

## Shared experience

Giving children a strong purpose for their written work goes some way to developing the idea that it's valued and relevant. However, in order to really motivate children, teachers themselves need to be fully engaged in the creative process so they can model it with enthusiasm and credibility.

Put simply, being a writer is at the heart of teaching writing. By regularly experiencing creative writing, staff will be in a far better position to help others to do it more effectively. Hopefully

## MAXIMISE YOUR WRITING CPD

- If you need some writing CPD, request it from your head or SLT. They can't know unless you ask them!
- Think carefully about when it's timetabled. The morning of an Inset day is probably best. People don't always jump for joy when they're asked to write a story at 3:30pm on a Thursday afternoon.
- Don't be too guided by outcomes. Well-structured but open opportunities to write work best, then reflect afterwards on what you found, felt and learnt. Comparing people's experiences can be really illuminating and leads to greater understanding of children's attitudes to writing.
- Invite TAs along. They'll benefit from practice too (as will the children they support).
- Think about the type of activity you want to do. Do you want to try several short, sharp tasks (eg story opener, poem, letter to a character), or do you want an hour to write a longer piece?
- Encourage everyone to take it seriously by explaining the reasons for it clearly.
- Repeat the training later in the year. Focus on different skills and reflect on any ways that the training has impacted on practice.

they'll be more attuned to finding those sparks of brilliance that illuminate an effective piece of writing but perhaps don't tick a particular technical box. Which feedback would you prefer on your work: "Well done. You've used three relative clauses, a fronted adverbial and an obliterated espadrille"; or: "I love the way you've built up the tension here. It's so creepy. I found it really hard to do that in my story. Can we share it so we can all see how you did it?"

Of course, there's no reason why this shouldn't extend beyond the staffroom and into the classroom. The next time you set your class off on a piece of writing, why not do it yourself at the same time? Writing alongside you will show the children that the task is worthwhile. Afterwards, you can discuss the work with them as a

fellow writer, comparing and contrasting your successes, challenges and shared experiences. Writing is hard. Teaching other people to write is even harder. But teaching people to write without writing yourself? That's impossible. **TP**



*Mark Lowery is the author of ten books for children. His latest, **Eating Chips With***

*Monkey (Piccadilly Press), is out now. Mark carries out school author visits and teaches part-time in a primary school near Cambridge.*

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# Why ‘catch up’ WON’T WORK

Focusing solely on academic learning when pupils return is damaging and will lead to disengagement

SARA ALSTON

Questions about the return to school are haunted by two ‘spectres’: the impact of the lockdown on the economy and how we ensure children catch up. Both are rooted in a desire to return to normality and a fear that we, as a nation, and our children in particular, are going to be left behind in some kind of imaginary race. In reality, the clock stopped for everyone at the same time and we will not be returning to normality.

All our children have missed schooling and will have had different experiences of learning during lockdown. It will be easy to look at those children who have spent

every day, including holidays, engaged in formal learning activities and completed every piece of work set by the school and believe that they will be in some way ahead. Many people outside of the education system assume those attending school sites are receiving ‘normal schooling’ and will be ahead in this imaginary race. Those of us rotated to support on-site know that this is not true.

The lockdown has highlighted and exacerbated the inequalities between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’. This has led to a moral panic about children who have not been able to access schooling at home and a desire to force feed them all the lessons they have missed as quickly as possible.

## Fundamental misconception

The demand for ‘catch up’ is founded on false premises; children cannot be learning unless they are in school and that they only learn when they are being taught. This has led to a focus on those children who have not accessed teaching during the lockdown.

There is a school of thought, spearheaded by ex-MP Andrew Adonis, that this teaching should be online, regardless of the access, suitability and safeguarding issues. But this highlights a more fundamental misconception: that receiving teaching is the same as learning. As any classroom teacher will tell you, there is a significant gap between what is taught and what is learnt. All children, even those with a replicated school day being livestreamed into their home are going to have missed key parts of their education. Education and schooling are about more than book learning and teachers standing up in front of the class delivering instruction. It is about the interactions and relationships that are at the heart of learning.

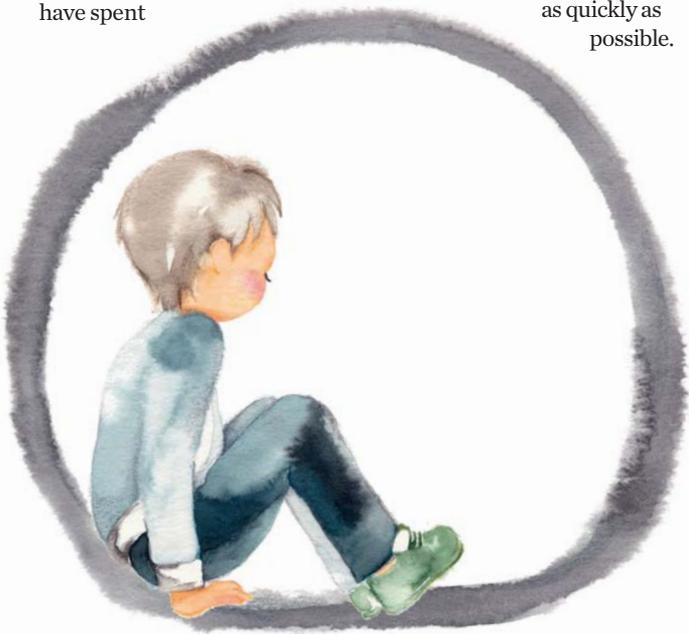
Those who adhere to the ‘teaching is learning’ school of thought are deeply

concerned about the time children have missed in the classroom. They see a need to make up this lost time and missed learning as quickly as possible. They are focused on children who will not meet ‘age expectations’. We will need to accept that children have missed school and will not be at the same point as previous cohorts. We will need to respond to what children have learnt, not what we expected them to have learnt.

## Sense of exclusion

The concern about ‘age expectations’ is likely to lead to a rush to formal assessments, so we know where the children are academically and can fill the gaps in their learning. However, this approach will further exacerbate the inequalities.

Pushing children (and teachers) into ‘catch up’ – including holiday and Saturday classes – will force children into learning they are not emotionally ready to access. Rather than help them to ‘catch up’, it will exacerbate the inequalities. It will add to the sense of exclusion increased by calls for learning which they struggled to access without internet access, appropriate resources or a quiet space to learn. It will leave children feeling lost and unsupported as they struggle



*“The greatest necessity in the return to school will be to make children feel safe, valued and wanted”*

to deal with bereavement, loss and separation. It will confirm their feelings that somehow school rejected them when it shut down and so it is not a safe place for them.

If we get this wrong and focus solely on academic learning which children are not ready or able to access it will intensify their feelings of disconnection, leading to disengagement from school and learning. If the focus is on academic catch-up and telling children how much they have missed, it will be ineffective and counterproductive.

### Proper learning

Whatever their educational experience during lockdown, children will have been learning – even those who accessed no formal schooling. It is too easy to feel that if work was not set by the school and is not measurable in academic terms that it is not ‘proper’ learning and doesn’t count. If we are to re-engage children in school, we must recognise, value and celebrate their learning of all kinds.

Much of this learning will be different to ‘school learning’ and not on the curriculum. We need to take time to find out who has experienced baking a cake, building a wall or becoming an expert on the Roman Army or the life of an Amazonian dolphin. Even more importantly, who has been a carer for a sick relative or dealt with grief for someone they couldn’t see?

This learning and possible trauma may not be on the curriculum but will be key to who our children are. Teachers’ responses will be key to how children are able to reintegrate into school and the people that they will become. If we dismiss this as not being ‘proper’ learning and focus solely on ‘catch up’, we devalue children’s experiences and deliver damaging messages about school and their place in it.

### New normal

For children to catch up and re-engage with school we will need to give them the time and space to understand and process their experiences of lockdown. They will need to learn and adjust to the

expectations and routines of the ‘new normal’. It will take time and support for children to create trusting relationships with adults and each other. This will not be a quick process and will be different for different children.

For many who have experienced abuse and trauma, it may take weeks or months for them to be ready to access learning. Without this support children will not be able to ‘catch up’. Teachers know that unless children feel safe, they cannot learn. The greatest necessity in the return to school will be to make children feel safe, valued and wanted. Only when we have achieved this, can we begin

to move their academic learning on. This may feel impossible, but it is the challenge met yearly by the best practice in EYFS. This can act as our model for supportive transitions to enable our children to re-engage in learning and catch up when they are ready. **TP**



*Sara Alston is a practising SENCo and an independent consultant and trainer*

*with SEA Inclusion and Safeguarding.*

 @seainclusion

 seainclusion.co.uk



# Money TALKS

Six activities to teach kids about saving – from the UK's best personal finance teachers

**L**earning how to manage money is an invaluable lesson to teach children. Here, the winners of the Moneywise Personal Finance Teacher of the Year Awards share their ideas to help pupils get to grips with everyday money tasks. Encourage children to try these activities at home with their families, or adapt them if you want to try them in the classroom.

## Create your own bank

BY: TOM RAFFIELD, MATHS TEACHER, ST DAVID'S SCHOOL, PURLEY

**MONEY SKILLS:**  
BANKING, CURRENCY CONVERSION, SAVING

Ask your child to identify something that they want – for example, a toy – and set its value as the target.

Then encourage your child to save money and log their progress.

Giving them the flexibility to save what they can will help them to work out how long it will take to reach that target. To take this

a step further, create your own household currency. Help your child to name and design the tender, and the conversion rate to pounds sterling. For example, five 'star dollars' could equal £1. This new currency can be used to reward your child for helping around the house, good behaviour and doing well in home school.

At the end of the week, convert what they earn into pounds, which they can then choose to save or spend.

## Discount detective

BY: NICOLA BUTLER, MATHS AND FINANCE TEACHER, EIRIAS HIGH, COLWYN BAY

**MONEY SKILLS:**  
BARGAIN HUNTING, SAVING

This challenge is designed to help children shop around and find the best deals. For this activity, set a challenge for your child to complete. For example, this could be finding the best value broadband deal or pet insurance policy. Encourage your child to note down what the different deals include – for example, the channels included in different TV and broadband deals. This will help distinguish which offers are better value for money, rather than just being the cheapest option.



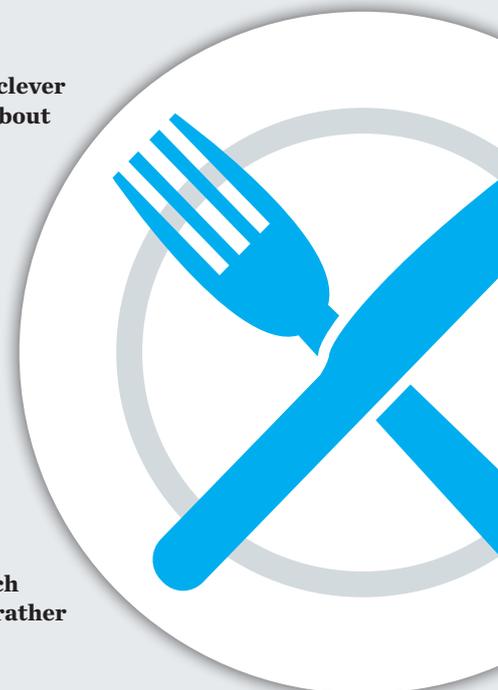
## OPEN A RESTAURANT

BY: SIAN BENTLEY, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL, QUEENSMED PRIMARY ACADEMY, LEICESTER

**MONEY SKILLS:**  
BUDGETING, SAVING

Setting up a restaurant is a clever way to help children learn about money.

First, get children to think about their favourite restaurant meal or takeaway and have a look online to calculate how much it would cost the family to order it. Next, make a list of ingredients needed to help recreate the meal at home and work out how much this would cost. At this stage you can recreate the meal using real ingredients, if possible. Calculate how much you have saved by cooking, rather than eating out or ordering a takeaway.



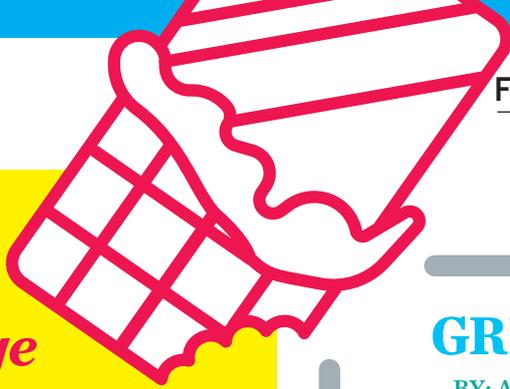
## Pocket money challenge

BY: HELEN WESTWOOD,  
FINANCIAL STUDIES TEACHER,  
CAROLINE CHISHOLM SCHOOL,  
NORTHAMPTON

**MONEY SKILLS:**  
BUDGETING, SAVING

Teaching children the importance of having an effective budget can help them develop good money habits as they grow up. Creating a budget for pocket money is a fun and interactive way to learn money management.

Encourage your child to set financial targets – for example, saving for a new bike – and work toward these goals by setting money aside. To help incentivise saving, offer to pay top-ups when your child hits certain milestones. For example, if they save £20, you may wish to add an extra £10 on top as a reward for saving. This helps develop an understanding of how saving works and the benefits of putting money away. Get creative and use colouring pencils, crayons and other stationery to bring the budget to life.



## GREAT SAVINGS RACE

BY: AGNELO MENDONÇA, BUSINESS TEACHER,  
LOXFORD SCHOOL, LONDON

**MONEY SKILLS:**  
INVESTING, SAVING

This challenge can help children focus on savings and develop good money habits. When your child receives income, such as birthday money, encourage them to split it into the following:

- 50% into long-term savings
- 30% into short-term savings
- 20% for an immediate treat

Long-term savings can be held in a savings account or Junior Isa. You and your child can monitor their savings' progress as time goes on. Short-term savings are for items they would like, but need to put money away for. The remainder can be used to buy something right away.

Encouraging your child to split their income helps them understand the difference between short-term and long-term savings. Add top-ups or additional rewards to your child's income if they hit a particular savings target in a set period of time.



## BARE NECESSITIES CHALLENGE

**MONEY SKILLS:**  
MONEY MANAGEMENT, SAVING

Ask your child to write a list of your family's regular costs, including bills, commuting, food, toiletries, cinema tickets, etc. Review the list and work out what you're still spending on (bills, food and insurance, for example) and what you're no longer buying (food from cafes, theatre or cinema tickets). Discuss whether or not you miss those expenses and how much you are saving. This can help children to understand the difference between essential and non-essential spending.

## Know a great personal finance teacher?

Nominate them for this year's Moneywise Personal Finance Teacher of the Year Awards. Winners will receive a share of a £24,000 cash prize pot from Interactive Investor for their school. The awards are open to all qualified UK primary and secondary teachers. Email nominations to [editor@moneywise.co.uk](mailto:editor@moneywise.co.uk) before 3rd September 2020. The first 250 teachers to nominate themselves will receive a £50 Amazon voucher.

[moneywise.co.uk/personal-finance-teacher-of-the-year-awards](http://moneywise.co.uk/personal-finance-teacher-of-the-year-awards)



# All about ME, ME, ME

Adding the word 'you' to a task is a quick and free way to boost pupils' learning

DR SHEILA CUNNINGHAM

Teachers have long been encouraged to personalise information to fit children's interests. For instance, we might create football-based maths questions or set a writing task about favourite pets. But this puts a strain on our time and resources, because it requires different materials for children with different interests. A simpler solution is to get the children to think about the one subject they are all interested in: themselves!

In psychology, linking information to ourselves is known as 'self-referencing'. There is lots of evidence that this can have a positive impact on learning. When information is about you, your attention system is automatically engaged. For example, if you were talking to one colleague but overheard another mentioning your name, could you keep on attending to your own conversation and ignore the one about you? Most people couldn't, because self-relevant information automatically captures attention. This system ensures that information that is potentially relevant to you is not missed.

Self-referenced information is also associated with enhanced memory. When you think about yourself while encoding new information, that material

is slotted into the existing 'self-knowledge framework', the network of information you already hold about yourself in memory. You know more about yourself than any other concept, so activating this knowledge framework while encoding new information

were using their homework to practise spelling, by copying out their spelling words and generating sentences in which they could be used. One week, we asked the children to write sentences about themselves ("Start your sentence with the word 'I'") and another

to process the text, work out the operation to be applied and extract the right numbers to which to apply the operation. That is a lot to keep in mind! Given the effect of self-referencing on attention, it is perhaps unsurprising that research suggests including self-referent terms in maths problems could help. For example, take a common text-based maths problem: 'Max has four apples, Jen has three apples more than Max. How many apples does Jen have?'. In this example, the child has to keep track of Max and Jen, two new characters, and their belongings in working memory while working out the problem.

We have examined the effectiveness of reducing the load by replacing one of the characters with the pronoun 'you'. In the example above, a self-referenced version of the question would be 'You have four apples, Jen has three

***"When information is about you, your attention system is automatically engaged"***

provides a powerful ready-made support system. The incoming information is organised and elaborated with existing self-knowledge, which increases the chance that it will be successfully recalled later.

Our research has focused on examining whether the attention and memory biases we know are associated with self-referencing can be applied in education. To date, we have tested its effectiveness on a number of different literacy, numeracy and learning tasks. Across this variety of tasks, we've found very positive effects of self-referencing. Below are some examples:

## Spelling sentences

In one study we took over the homework of primary school children, asking them to try a self-referenced and non-self-referenced version of the same task. The children

week, they were asked to write about Harry Potter ("Start your sentence with the word 'Harry'").

The children's end-of-week spelling tests showed that the self-reference ('I') week produced spelling that was significantly more accurate, and they also wrote longer sentences in this condition. This suggests that the children were more engaged in the task when they were writing about themselves, and their learning was improved as a result. We produced this statistically reliable improvement in pupils' spelling learning with just a free and easy change of instruction, to make the task self-referent.

## Problem solving

When children are trying to solve numerical problems, they have to keep a lot of information in working memory. They need



apples more than you. How many apples does Jen have?'. Replicating previous research done by D'Ailly et al, we found that primary children find this self-referent version significantly easier to solve – they are faster and more accurate. Similar to the spelling task, this may be related to the children finding the self-referent version more engaging, as well as benefiting from the reduced load on working memory

achieved by removing one of the new characters.

### Ownership games

A third idea for applying self-referencing in education that we have tested is to use ownership games to link information to self. In ownership games, information presented on flashcards can be divided between a number of children so that each pupil owns some of the items. For example, a colour sorting task

can be used so that one child gets all the cards with a blue sticker, and another all the cards with a green sticker.

We conducted a study in which primary children sorted flashcards depicting novel named shapes into those owned by themselves and those owned by the experimenter, using this colour-sorting technique. Afterwards, we asked the children to draw and label the shapes from memory. We found that memory was much higher for the cards they owned themselves, even though they had only seen each card for a couple of seconds, and didn't 'own' the shapes in any meaningful way.

This ownership game strategy might be useful when you are trying to engage children in learning facts, for example times tables, second-language vocabulary or science terms. You can change who has 'ownership' of the different cards across different sessions, to ensure they get a broad overview. Overall, the research suggests that children are more engaged in the learning when it's put into an ownership game, and much more likely to remember the information!

### Try it yourself

Talking to teachers about self-

referencing has made me realise that actually, many people in education already use this technique spontaneously, without knowing that they are doing it. If you have a child in class who is struggling to generate ideas for a piece of creative writing, presentation or picture, do you encourage them to think about something that's happened to them as a starting point? Do you ever ask children to reflect on their own experiences in relation to a topic, to help them to realise its importance or impact?

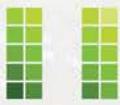
These are examples of self-referencing – whenever children are thinking about themselves, or relating new information to their own experiences, the same memory and attention biases associated with self-referencing will be triggered, supporting their learning. As these examples show, self-referencing is quick, free and easy to implement – adding 'you' to a task really can boost learning. **TP**



*Dr Sheila Cunningham is a senior lecturer in psychology at Abertay University.*

*She has published widely on self-processing biases in cognition.*





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# What do THEY WANT?

I've reviewed 100 Ofsted reports – here's what inspectors are looking for and how you can utilise this unique period to get there

DR HELEN EDWARDS

**L**ockdown and social distancing feels like it will stretch on for much of the summer term at the moment. For those educators not in school, the role as a remote teacher is dramatically different and all the planning and strategic work is largely on hold. Prior to lockdown, I reviewed 100 Ofsted 'good' or 'outstanding' inspection reports and it's highlighted a number of areas that teachers and leaders might want to consider now, ahead of reopening to all pupils.

## Curriculum

The need for a coherently planned and sequenced curriculum features extensively in the reports. They talk about leaders having thought carefully about the knowledge and skills they want pupils to learn, for each subject and year group.

Leaders also make sure that all teachers have clear oversight of all subjects in the wider curriculum so they can help children to make those links.

For teachers, the reports highlight that they are planning lessons that help children to make connections with what they already know. They help pupils to revisit and review previous learning to help embed that knowledge.

Planning and sequencing the curriculum so that it weaves together across year groups and subject areas is a significant undertaking. However, in the past few weeks I've seen so many imaginative ways to help children learn at home. Can we keep this going and start to plan a really creative curriculum with which to engage children when they return to school?

### WHAT TO DO NOW

Think about setting up a learning peer group via video conferencing to start this work now.

## Assessment

Unsurprisingly, assessment still features as a key part of inspection. How well is assessment being used to check understanding and inform teaching? Or to help learners to embed and use knowledge fluently?

In the 100 reports I reviewed, assessment was the area with most areas of improvement identified. For some schools this was around using assessment to help children to be able to recall what they have previously learnt and connect to what they are learning now. The reports suggest teachers should provide

pupils with more opportunities to revisit concepts so that pupils remember more and apply what they know to new learning.

Reports identified good schools using assessment in a dynamic, detailed and thorough way at all stages. They highlight school leaders using assessment information to provide feedback and challenge to teachers about the progress of pupils in their classes.

For me, this speaks of the need for more ongoing formative assessment so we can describe children's learning in meaningful narratives. Now is an opportunity for teachers to reflect on how best to assess children's learning.

### WHAT TO DO NOW

Can you revisit and improve strategies for orally assessing prior learning? How can you work with colleagues to create a system that's manageable and effective, and not just a complicated spreadsheet?

## Parental engagement

Ofsted reports have identified a range of good practice in parental engagement. These recognise that having excellent links in place for communication is essential. Building on this, parents and carers need to be kept well-informed about their child's progress and have a good understanding about how they support their child's learning at home.

More than anything, school closures have underlined the importance of parental engagement. Teachers have been incredibly inventive in

how they are keeping in touch with their children and families.

### WHAT TO DO NOW

Build on your good work during lockdown and consider how you can continue to help parents and carers feel more engaged with their child's education once pupils return.

## Staff wellbeing

This new area of the EIF is to be welcomed and the majority of reports were very positive. Leaders put in place structures to enable teachers to do their jobs well and are considerate about staff workload and wellbeing. Leaders reviewed workload and removed unnecessary tasks, for instance changing the way pupils' work is marked. Staff are positive about leaders' actions to improve workload and work-life balance.

### WHAT TO DO NOW

Teacher wellbeing is more important than ever. I have seen lots of examples of staff and leaders developing a more supportive language in the past few weeks. This is hugely encouraging and I hope that when schools start to return to some sort of normality we will continue to nurture this and appreciate its role in supporting staff wellbeing. **TP**



*Dr Helen Edwards is co-founder of Tapestry and Foundation Stage Forum, and a former Ofsted inspector.*

[tapestry.info](https://www.tapestry.info)



# Could it be DLD?

What you need to know about developmental language disorder

NAOMI REED

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## Differentiation For Home Schooling

It's not something that has to stop once your students' learning is taken outside the classroom...

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## Back To The Daily Routine

Transitioning out of lockdown will be tough for everyone, but especially for children with SEND.

Read it at [tinyurl.com/tpropen](https://tinyurl.com/tpropen)



## Reasonable Adjustment

What schools sometimes overlook when it comes to drawing up accessibility plans.

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In the average class of 30 children, two will be affected by developmental language disorder. Despite its prevalence – it affects seven times more children than autism – it's likely that many in the teaching profession will have never heard of it. Yet its impact can be both extensive and long-term, affecting the way in which children use and understand spoken language.

DLD is a hidden disability, and as such can often go unidentified or be misinterpreted. Accurately identifying children's needs is key to helping them be both understood and supported. Take the child who often seems to have their head in the clouds, or doesn't follow instructions in class. Perhaps this isn't down to a lack of attention and concentration on their part. It's possible that they're not purposefully ignoring you. If DLD is the issue, they may not actually understand what you are asking and struggle to follow the flow of information.

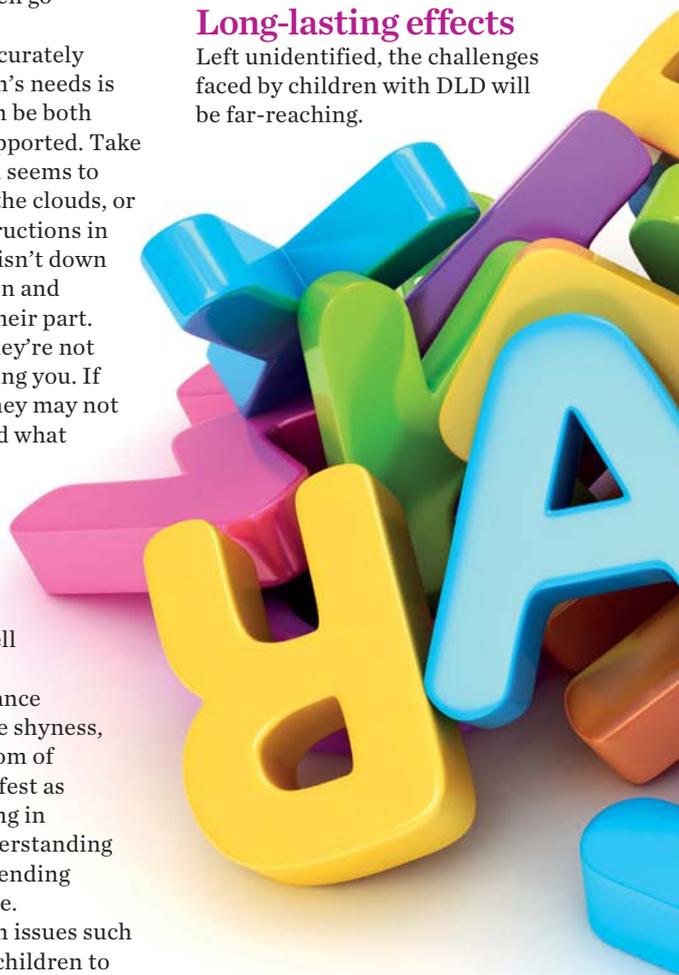
What about the child who isn't interacting well with others in the class? There's a chance that this may not be shyness, but rather a symptom of DLD that can manifest as a difficulty in joining in conversations, understanding jokes and comprehending non-literal language.

Communication issues such as these can cause children to miss the usual conversational

cues and conventions that form the very essence of social interactions. Making friends – one of the cornerstones of a happy and settled school life – thus becomes a much more complex process. As a consequence, DLD can be commonly misinterpreted as a form of challenging behaviour, with a child left confused by day-to-day school rules and structures and isolated within the playground.

## Long-lasting effects

Left unidentified, the challenges faced by children with DLD will be far-reaching.



Language skills are crucial for accessing higher level, more abstract learning concepts. If a child doesn't have an effective internal dialogue, for example, then they'll struggle to work out a maths problem by talking it through in their head. Planning and compiling a narrative becomes similarly problematic, causing children to struggle at the very first step of a literacy task.

## *“The pupil who often can't describe what they did at the weekend could potentially have DLD”*

If DLD isn't addressed at primary school then these issues will follow the child into adulthood, impacting upon their mental health and wellbeing. The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists found that a third of children with untreated communication needs

will go on to develop subsequent mental health problems.

### **How to spot it**

Despite its prevalence and impact, DLD can be tough to identify, but there are definite clues. If a child demonstrates some of the behaviours described above, and tends towards using more functional language over sophisticated concepts, there may be an issue. Think of the child

who might say, “Doing the thing with the water,” rather than “Pouring the water” or “Using the watering can.” In other cases, children with DLD may find it difficult to retell a simple narrative. The pupil who often can't describe what they did at the weekend could potentially have DLD.

The waiting time to access speech and language therapy services can vary across the UK, but early identification and intervention is a key predictor in closing the gap for pupils with DLD. That's one of the reasons why we've teamed up with GL Assessment to develop a simple screening tool and interventions

resource book called WellComm Primary, which can be used with all children in a class to identify those at risk of having DLD. It ensures that if there are any suspicions, work can begin immediately on helping struggling students develop their vocabulary, grammar, narrative and social skills while a referral is processed.

### **Ideas to try**

Using prompts and visual material, such as word webs, can help a child get the name of something right and then start building the new word into their conversations. Use of symbols, task plans and visual timetables can further support pupils who experience difficulty with following instructions and retaining verbal information.

We've found that giving pupils choices when asking them to narrate something can also help, as it's a useful way of demonstrating the language a pupil might need if they get stuck. If a child struggles to explain what they did at the weekend or during an activity, provide them with suggestions and options: “Did you stay in or did you go out this weekend?” or “Did you complete the worksheet about telling the time, or the worksheet about days of the week?”. This gives the child a chance to get started with their story and structure their ideas.

Another way of offering support to children with DLD is to pre-teach the vocabulary they'll need before starting an activity. Word webs work well here, as DLD sufferers often find it demanding to listen to new vocabulary, remember it and store it efficiently in their memory. This can result in the pupil missing out on the learning that follows, since they'll require longer to grasp the basic vocabulary making up a new topic or lesson. Using word webs or mind maps in this way, and devoting time to teaching the new vocabulary for a topic or lesson beforehand, will make a vast difference to a pupil's learning.

Addressing DLD early on can help pupils catch up with their peers, equip them with the tools they'll need to make friends and seriously improve their future life chances. **TP**



*Naomi Reed is a speech and language therapist at Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, and one of the authors of GL Assessment's WellComm Primary Toolkit.*

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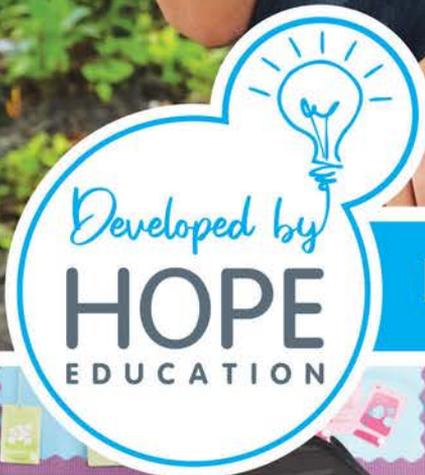


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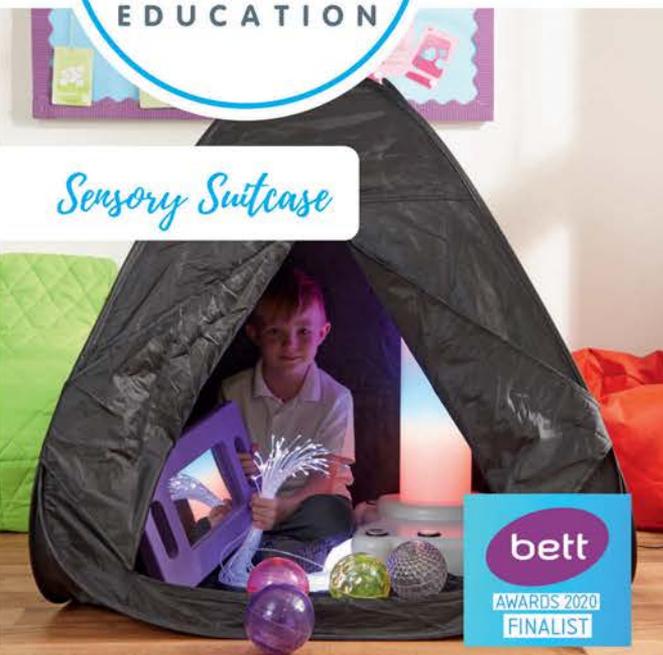
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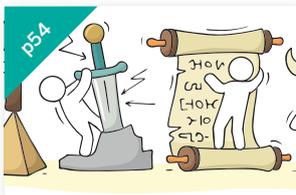
## INSIDE THIS SECTION



In uncertain times, this Dr Seuss project is perfect for helping older pupils feel hopeful about the road ahead



We review five brand new titles that primary-age children will love, including both fiction and non-fiction



When building depth into your curriculum, English and history can be combined with great results



Use Antje Damm's book to help pupils explore the sensitive topics of loneliness, anxiety and lockdown

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# Virtual VISIT

Amid the pandemic chaos, a daily dose of online storytime can help to make reading a habit

JEFF NORTON

One of the special privileges extended to authors of children's books is to be invited into schools. It's an opportunity to discuss our work, engage (and hopefully inspire) young readers, and give the school a healthy dose of external creative stimulus.

When I was young, I wasn't so lucky to have such a visit, but now, as an author, I have witnessed first-hand the impact it can have on students. Meeting the human behind the book is especially impactful for those more reluctant readers who sometimes believe that reading just isn't for them.

I'd spent early March riding the rails, visiting schools up and down the UK as part of World Book Day celebrations, talking to students about everything from neurotic zombies and high school aliens to dinosaur-riding knights and near-future virtual worlds that seem strangely prescient now.

In our post-pandemic reality, those school visits feel like they belong in a different world now. With schools partially closed, and everyone engaging in different forms of remote learning, I'm in awe of the teachers, librarians, and headteachers who have valiantly risen to the occasion to adapt to a whole new way of engaging students, using a somewhat dizzying array of new virtual tools

## Daily dose

In the days leading up to the UK's lockdown I watched Irish Taoiseach Leo Varadkar's inspiring speech, and wondered what I might be able to do to help. With many working parents pulled between

new work-from-home regimes and supervising home schooling, I thought at the very least I might be able to offer a daily dose of virtual storytime.

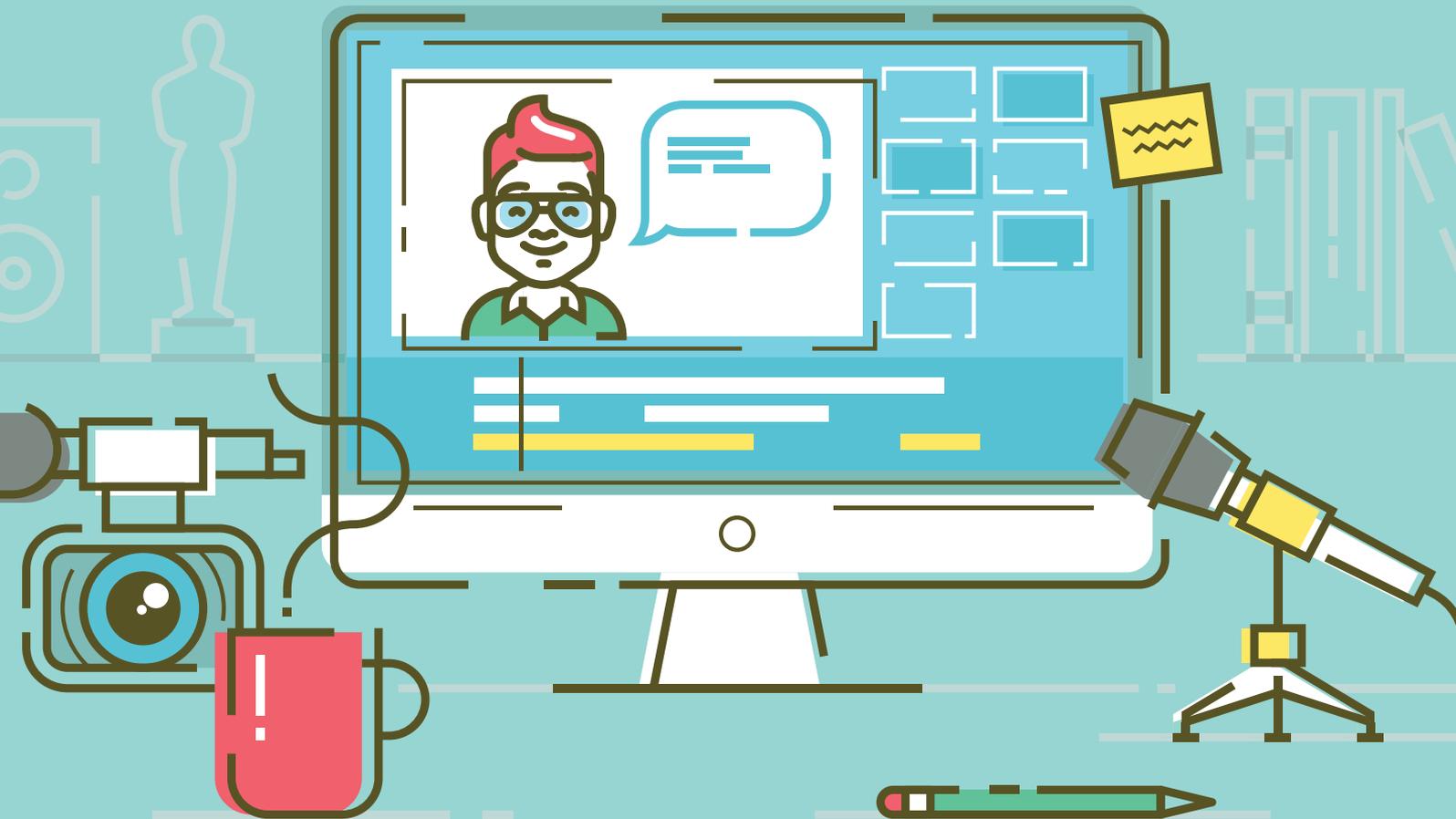
So, without much fanfare, I read the prologue of my middle-grade novel, *Alienated: Grounded At Groom Lake*, from my living room and uploaded it to my YouTube channel, with the promise to keep reading every weekday until the end of the book. This book is the story of the only two human kids at the school for aliens at Area 51. It's a fish-out-of-water sci-fi comedy: think Harry Potter meets Men in Black.

I chose to read this particular title for two reasons. First, it is set at school (albeit one for aliens) and I thought young people might start to miss their schools. And second, it's a hopeful and uplifting story about overcoming adversity through teamwork, getting on with your family in strange circumstances, and being your best self despite making (many, many) mistakes.

I filmed each video in different parts of my house (depending on where my kids were doing their homeschooling), often roping in my ten-year-old to serve as camera operator. Each video goes up on YouTube and all of them are archived on my website.

## Global readers

Since starting, I've heard from teachers and parents all around the world. Michael Curtis, a primary teacher in Victoria, Australia, said: "During this time of uncertainty and physical distancing, teachers have been working hard to motivate all learners, even those



*“In these strange and uncertain times, reading fiction is a great way to allow the mind to escape reality”*

who might be reluctant or want to avoid their work. While normally I would be able to pick up a book and engage the kids with a story, this hasn't been possible lately. Having you read your own novel, from your own house (all the way across the world!) has been an amazing experience for my students. It has helped to 'normalise' our remote learning, establish the idea that we're all in this together, and that they truly do exist as global citizens."

Pam Balistreri, a teacher in Apple Valley, Minnesota wrote to me and shared: "As a teacher, I am inspired by the way you have engaged my class and given them something to look forward to each day. The book is filled with cliffhangers and it continues to make my students want more. The children said that having an author read their own writing adds an element that they wouldn't necessarily get if they were reading it themselves. One

of the students even told me after the recording was complete that he has now been video recording himself reading aloud his choice book. He never liked to read aloud before and now he is reading his book chapter by chapter, inspired by what you are doing!"

In every video, I give a brief shout-out to a student who's reading along at home. Melissa Little, a parent in Powder Springs, Georgia, reached out to ask me to mention her son's class. She said, "One of the hardest parts of everything being closed has been not being able to go to the library and finding new books to read. We used to go two or three times a week! Listening to you read has been a bit of joy every day. The book has very likable characters and a great storyline."

I believe that reading is a habit, and so doing the daily video is a way to role model that habit. I've been buoyed by how many people have been reading along with me, and how

teachers have been using it as part of their remote learning. In these strange and uncertain times, reading fiction is a great way to allow the mind to escape reality and grapple with emotions through a fictional lens. The world outside your front door might feel scary right now, but just imagine being Sherman Capote, trying to stop a world-ending alien invasion!

While these are grave times indeed, I believe we need to find the small wins. I sincerely hope that amid all of the chaos and loss of this pandemic, I may have been able to inspire some students to make reading for fun a daily habit. It's a tiny fraction of what teachers are doing each and every day, but I'm proud to do my bit to help. **TP**



*Jeff Norton is an award-winning author of books such as **MetaWars**, **Memoirs Of A Neurotic Zombie** and **Dino Knights**. He is reading **Alienated:***

***Grounded At Groom Lake** chapter by chapter at [bit.ly/unitedbybooks](http://bit.ly/unitedbybooks)*

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# Oh, The Places YOU'LL GO!

In uncertain times, this **Dr Seuss** inspired project is perfect for helping older pupils make sense of the present, and feel hopeful about the road ahead

CAREY FLUKER HUNT

“**F**rom fun times and triumphs to lurches and slumps...”  
The ideas in this article were created before schools were closed due to COVID-19, but the themes of overcoming setbacks and maintaining optimism about the future are needed now perhaps more than ever. Some tweaks will be required and of course you'll need to be sensitive to the mood and experiences of your class, but with primary children in Y6 back for their final terms, these lessons and resources provide a focus for acknowledging challenge, while also looking with hope to the road ahead.

## Part 1 - Digging deeper

*Oh, The Places You'll Go!* is great fun to read, but there are complex ideas here, too, and the story can mean different things to different people. On one level, it's about the Traveller's journey through a strange and surreal landscape. But there are other ways of reading this book, too – ways that relate to our own experiences and emotions, encourage us to imagine our futures and help us make the most of what happens as our lives unfold. This part of the lesson will help children think critically, explore some of the layers of meaning in the story and interpret what they find.

Try summarising this book in five sentences. What do you have to leave out? Can you do



a better job if you can use ten sentences? Is your summary fair? Do you think this story is easy to understand? Why/why not?

Look at the consecutive spreads showing the balloon stuck in the tree (“left in a Lurch”) and the Traveller walking through the Slump. Talk about what's going on.

Does the Slump remind you of anything in real life? We're unlikely to find ourselves walking through a blue and mauve landscape, but we might find ourselves feeling sad, for

example, or struggling to make progress.

Re-read the book to find more examples of events or places that could have other meanings, or ideas that could be applied to real life.

## Activity 1 – What could it mean?

As a class, discuss the six quotations listed on the table on **Downloadable Activity Sheet 1** (available for free from [plazoom.com/seuss](http://plazoom.com/seuss)). Work on the first quotation together (“Unslumping yourself...”) and answer the questions, then give children time in pairs to explore the other quotations and discuss possible answers.

Bring the whole class together to share ideas, then ask children to work independently to complete the table.

## Part 2 - Navigating life's story

*Oh, the Places You'll Go!* tells the story of a journey. This journey represents the Traveller's life. Working together, make a list of the places the Traveller visits and the things that happen along the way – his life story. Draw a timeline and mark the places and events on it.

Can you find a way of showing how the Traveller feels about these places and events? Perhaps the timeline could go up and down, or you could use colour to represent emotions.

Talk about some or all of the following words and phrases. What do they mean? How are these ideas explored in the book?

- Responsibility (you are in charge!)
- Your choices matter
- Self-awareness
- Good judgment

- Patience
- Facing up to challenges
- Courage
- Resilience
- Dealing with adversity
- Being tenacious (not giving up)
- Making the best of things

Using the timeline to help you, can you find a point in the story where the Traveller makes the best of things? Is resilient? Shows good judgment? Is patient? Mark these points on the timeline.

### Part 3 - Developing emotional literacy

Like the Traveller in this book, story characters have challenges to face and often get themselves into difficulties. Real life throws plenty of setbacks at us, too. We can't always choose how we deal with them, but we can develop attitudes and behaviours that will help us through tough times. And sometimes it's the changes and challenges that shape our lives and help us grow.

Use the book and the timeline to revisit the

challenges and setbacks faced by the Traveller. How are they described? How does the Traveller respond? Do his or her attitudes and behaviours help? How? What do you think about this aspect of the book?

Challenges and changes can scare us, even when we welcome them. It's possible to feel scared and excited at the same time! In this book, Dr Seuss has shown the Traveller meeting some scary rock-like creatures with green eyes.

*"And when you're alone, there's a very good chance you'll meet things that scare you right out of your pants. There are some down the road between hither and yon That can scare you so much you won't want to go on..."*

Imagine you're walking along the path in this picture with the Traveller. What can you see, hear and smell? How do you feel? What does the Traveller say, and how do you respond? What

happens as you pass the rock-creatures? Tell the story.

What frightens you? How does being frightened make you behave? What attitudes and actions help you deal with your fear and keep going?

Use plasticine (or similar) to make rock-creatures like the ones in this picture. Give your rocks eyes and stand them in a circle around a small toy. What would you say to the toy to encourage it, help it confront its fear or make it feel better? On slips of paper, write your words of advice or support. Put them in the middle of the circle, then read the suggestions as a group and discuss. Have you discovered something that could help you when you're scared or worried?

Alternatively, look at the spread showing the Traveller rowing his boat past the Hakken-Kraks. What could they be saying to the Traveller? Explore ideas by roleplaying the scene in small groups. Show to the whole class, then write the best ideas on sticky notes and add them to the picture. What would you say to help the Traveller? Have you any advice you could offer people who are worried or afraid?

#### Activity 2 - Confronting the problem

Follow up this part of the lesson with the 'Confronting the problem' activity on **Downloadable Activity Sheet 2**.

### Part 4 - Oh, The Places I'll Go!

What are your hopes for the future? Talk about what you'd like to do, where you'd like to go and the things you'd like to achieve. What skills, behaviours or attitudes will you need to make these things happen? For example, you might need to be hardworking, open-minded,

learn how to milk goats, be able to run fast...

What are the first steps you could take towards making these things possible? You might need to spend more time on your homework, for example, or join a goat-milking club...

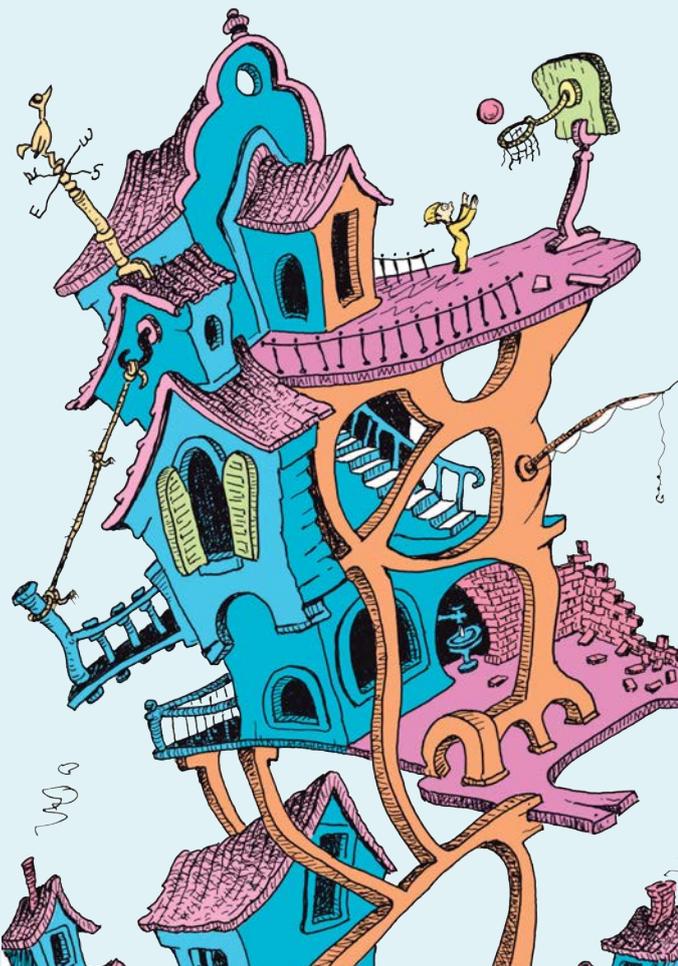
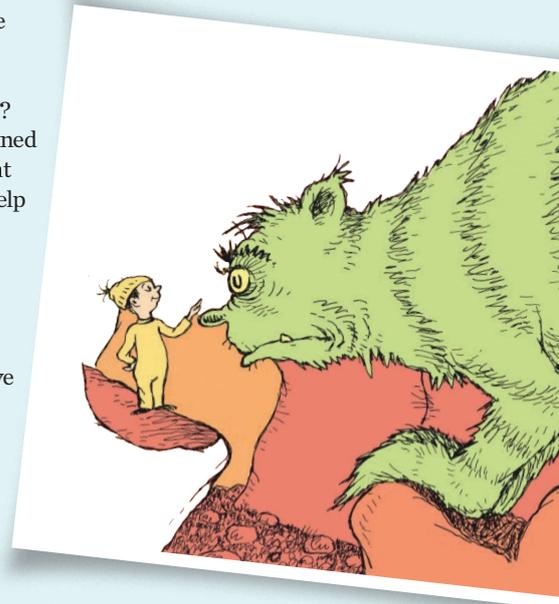
In the future, what kind of person will you be? How will you behave? What will you think is important? How would you like other people to describe you?

Make a list of words or phrases to describe the person you'd like to become. Draw a picture of your future self, leaving space inside your body to write the list. Show your picture to a partner and introduce the 'future you'.

#### Activity 3 - Thinking about the future

Use **Downloadable Activity Sheet 3** and invite children to imagine six events they'd like to happen in the future, or things they'd like to do.

Ask children to draw pictures of their chosen events or activities, one per square. Underneath each picture, ask pupils to write about what they've drawn. Alternatively, ask them to write a list of the skills, attitudes and behaviours they'll need to make this activity or achievement possible.



## Part 5 - Words to keep close

*Oh, The Places You'll Go!* is often given to people starting a new chapter in their lives. Do you think people who are moving house or leaving school would enjoy this book? Why? Could adults enjoy it as much as children?

### Activity 4 - Special words

*"So be sure when you step. Step with care and great tact and remember that Life's a Great Balancing Act..."*

What do you think this quotation means? Could it help you in real life? How? Many people like to remember quotations that offer good advice – and there are plenty to choose from in this book. Find passages that would make good quotations for this purpose. Which is your favourite, and why? Write your chosen quotation on our **Downloadable Take-Home Sheet** and put it where it will help or inspire you.

## Part 6 - Extending the lesson

*"Waiting around for a Yes or a No or waiting for their hair to grow..."*

Sometimes lots of things seem to be happening to us, and sometimes nothing much is going on. What are you able to affect or change in your life? Think about things you can do immediately, and things that take longer – or for which you must prepare. What do you have to accept? Some things can't be changed,

however much you try. Think of examples.

Rather than waiting around doing nothing, the Traveller goes looking for "bright places where Boom Bands are playing..." What do you think Dr Seuss means by this?

Look at the spread showing the people in The Waiting Place. What are they doing? What could they be thinking and feeling? Copy some of their postures and expressions to help you find out. Why do you think they haven't gone looking for "bright places where Boom Bands are playing", like the Traveller? The text might give you some ideas.

What does Dr Seuss mean when he talks about The Waiting Place? Do you agree? Why/why not? Can there be



advantages to waiting? When might you need time to reflect, or gather evidence? Will your first idea or solution to a problem always be the best?

Allocate a Waiting Place character to each child. Can they explore how their character moves as they do different tasks? What expressions do their characters have? What gestures do they use? Working in pairs, interview your characters to find out more about them. Name them and introduce your characters to everyone.

As a class, recreate The Waiting Place illustration as a freeze-frame, with

children playing the parts of the characters they've been exploring. Use 'touch and tell' to cue each character to say what they're thinking at that 'frozen moment'. Then give an agreed signal to bring your freeze-frame to life.

What will happen as conversations get going and characters start moving?

Now tell the story of one or more of these characters. How did they come to be in The Waiting Room? How do they get out? What happens when they leave? Write your story and illustrate it.



Carey Fluker Hunt is a freelance writer, creative learning

consultant and founder of *Cast of Thousands*.

[castofthousands.co.uk](http://castofthousands.co.uk)

## FREE RESOURCES

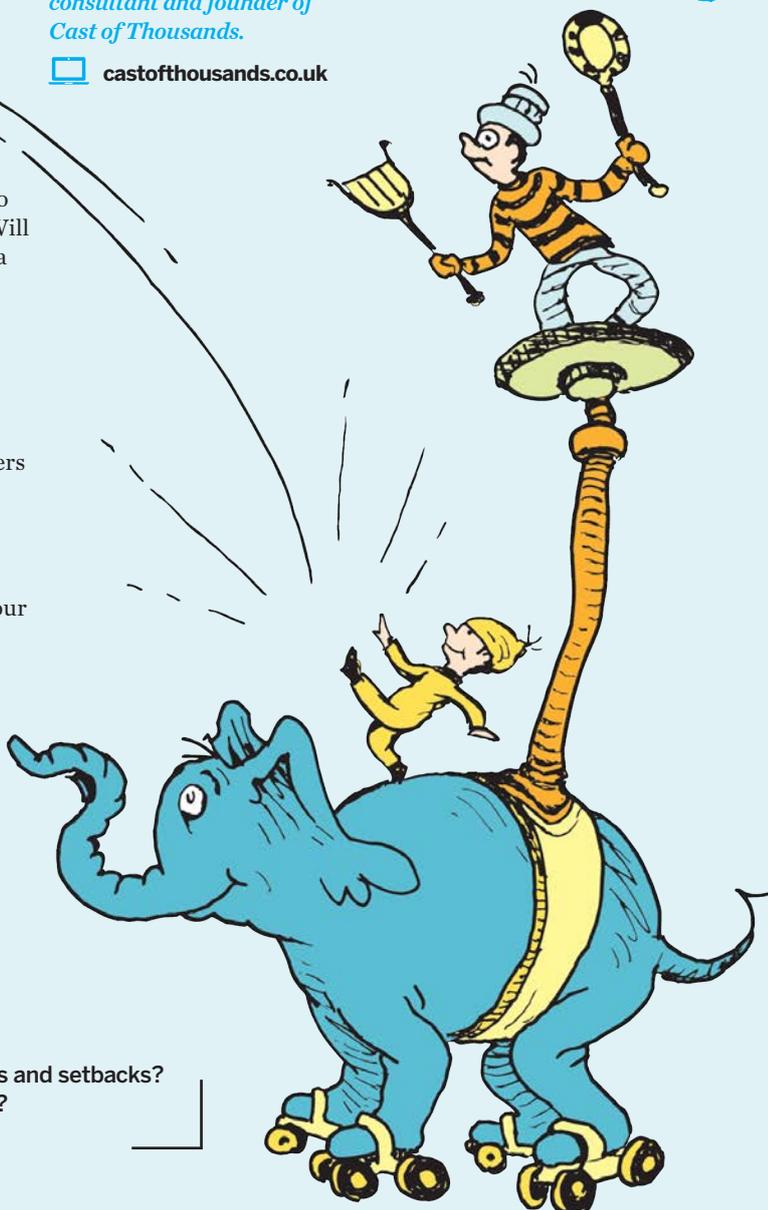


Together with HarperCollins, we've created a beautiful resource pack, complete with lesson plans, certificates and activity sheets, which you can use to teach all the ideas in this article.

Download it now at [plazoom.com/seuss](http://plazoom.com/seuss)

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Can a funny book say something serious?
- Where would you like your life to take you?  
What qualities and skills will you need to get you there?
- Does being successful always mean winning?  
What else could it mean?
- What's the most effective way of dealing with challenges and setbacks?
- What advice does this book give? How could it help you?





## THE NEXT BIG THING

# POST-LOCKDOWN WELLBEING

Professor Clare Wood shares how to support your pupils' wellbeing when they return to school after lockdown

### [ THE TREND ]

## SUPPORTING PUPILS

Monitoring and supporting children's wellbeing and attitudes to learning after a potential six-month absence from school is going to be such an important aspect of the new normal when children return to the classroom.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING?

We are dealing with so many unknowns in relation to how the time away from the classroom has impacted children's learning and wellbeing. School isn't just about lessons, of course. It is about having access to safe places to learn, to trusted adults, to friends. It is a place to play, to explore social relationships and to develop a sense of identity. Returning from a six-month absence from the classroom is likely to not only introduce additional barriers to children's learning once back at school, but may also impact their relationships with peers and teachers as they process the earlier period of lockdown, their new socially-distant school environment, and, for some, trauma.

### WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

The loss of the physical school environment for most children during lockdown is likely to have impacted their wellbeing in a range of ways: those who have developed a negative relationship with learning and of school, those who lack confidence in their own abilities, and those who are low because school isn't 'school' as they expected it. Throw into the picture anxiety related to the existence of a new, mysterious but potentially fatal virus, and the impact of losing family members and family friends, and we are likely to have large numbers of children re-entering school in September whose wellbeing and attitudes to learning are likely to be negatively impacted.



### WHAT'S NEXT?

The return to school represents a significant period of transition for all children. They may not be moving schools, but the schools they re-enter are going to be changed environments, with new rules and new physical set-ups that will change the way children feel when they enter them. The need to monitor children's wellbeing and attitudes to learning goes beyond any desire to maximise children's attainment and improve their behaviour and motivation: we have to have some sort of mechanism in place to enable us to identify our most vulnerable students on return, recognising that this may be a much larger group than we had before lockdown.

### Discover More...

Contact:  
[risingstars-uk.com/  
 wellbeing-survey](https://risingstars-uk.com/wellbeing-survey)



## GET INVOLVED

Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning: Survey and Strategies is an online tool designed to highlight children's strengths and indicate weaknesses across four critical aspects of wellbeing: positivity, sense of self-efficacy, what motivates them and how resilient they are. Children take a 20-minute online survey where they answer multiple-choice questions about how they feel about school, and this creates a profile showing the areas of wellbeing they need the most support with. Follow-up evidence-based strategies for individuals, classes and whole year groups are also provided to help support pupil wellbeing and re-engage children with their learning.

# kitesforschools.co.uk

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# 5 REASONS TO TRY... Numicon

Louise Pennington, professional development leader, discusses how to use Numicon in your school



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

Numicon is an approach to teaching maths that makes tangible connections between numbers and concepts and is suitable for KS1, KS2 and the transition into KS3. Based on a concrete-pictorial-abstract approach, Numicon encourages children to explore maths using structured imagery and manipulatives in order to understand and explain mathematical concepts.

### 1 20+ YEARS OF RESEARCH

Numicon is not just the name of the well-known plastic pieces. It actually refers to a pedagogical approach which was first developed in 1996. It was the result of a UK-based longitudinal research study, funded by a TTA grant, and carried out by Dr Tony Wing and practising teachers Romey Tacon and Ruth Atkinson. The Numicon approach centres on three key aspects: communicating mathematically (thinking, talking and manipulating resources), making connections (between mathematical ideas) and generalising (using knowledge in different situations).

### 2 FLEXIBLE PROGRAMME

Numicon consists of printed books, digital online resource Numicon Online (see below) and concrete apparatus such as Numicon Shapes and Cuisenaire rods. The Teaching Resource Handbooks contain pedagogical and organisational support and long- and medium-term planning, alongside activity groups to ensure concept progression across lessons. Pupil Books contain additional 'practice' and 'going deeper' activities and printed homework activities. Together these different resources make a flexible programme that can be used alongside other resources or as a full programme to teach Primary maths.

### 3 ONLINE RESOURCES

Numicon Online contains a wealth of planning and teaching support, including new digital



versions of the Teaching Resource Handbooks hosted within a simple planning tool; videos to support teaching and learning and downloadable resources for teaching and homework. There's also a range of front-of-class resources, including the BETT award-winning

#### Contact:

For any enquiries and to get free access to Numicon Online until September 2020 email [oxfordprimary@oup.com](mailto:oxfordprimary@oup.com)

Interactive Whiteboard Software programme which enables teachers to model for the class and children to manipulate. Schools can request a free trial up until September 2020 (see contact details below).

### 4 CATCH-UP & INTERVENTION

Numicon also has catch-up and intervention programmes. Breaking Barriers is a one-on-one or small group intervention aimed at children aged seven onwards who need to revisit content or have individual programmes based on earlier curriculum content. Big Ideas is a catch-up programme for nine to 12-year-olds who would benefit from revisiting key concepts from the upper primary maths curriculum. Numicon Intervention Programme (NIP) is a 12-week intervention aimed at narrowing the gap for children aged seven and up. A two-day course supports schools to implement this independently-proven intervention\*.

### 5 JOIN OUR COMMUNITY

There is an active Numicon community on social media. Numicon Facebook group members from all over the world ask and answer each other's questions and share photographs and ideas for teaching in school and supporting learning at home. You can also find Numicon on Twitter by following the #Numicon and #WeLoveNumicon hashtags. There's also lots of Numicon videos to watch on Oxford Education's YouTube channel.

## KEY POINTS

Numicon is the most well-known maths brand in the UK. It is successfully integrated into global curriculums to support primary-aged children to learn maths.

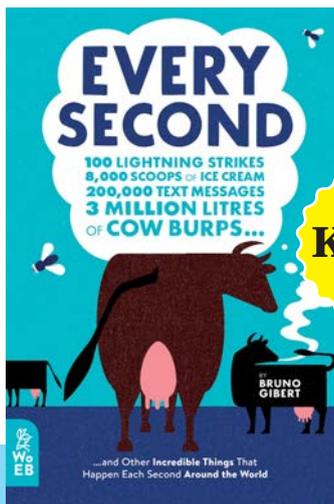
Numicon Shapes are weighted – a seven-shape and a three-shape weigh the same as a ten-shape or any combination of Numicon shapes that make ten.

Numicon Shapes can be popped into the top rack of a dishwasher on a normal wash or dipped into diluted sterilising fluid to fully sanitise the pieces.

NCETM-accredited Numicon Professional Development from OUP ensures that schools get the most out of the Numicon print, digital and manipulative resources.

# Book CLUB

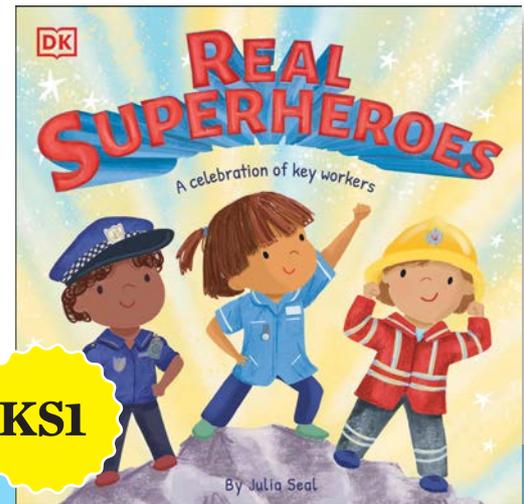
We review five brand new titles that your class will love



KS1/2



KS2



KS1

## **Every Second**

**by Bruno Gibert**  
(£12.99, What On Earth Books)

Every second, somewhere across the globe, four babies are born, 500 pairs of shoes are sold and 8,000 scoops of ice cream are eaten. This lushly illustrated non-fiction book has a simple premise – each page documents a different jaw-dropping statistic about the incredible things that happen each and every second in our world. The clean, colourful infographics are the perfect launchpad for classroom discussions about a wide range of issues, including the environment. The statistics would also be a great jumping-off point for a maths project. How can we work out the difference between how many plastic bottles are produced and how many are recycled? What about the number of trees cut down versus the number that are planted? Mildly naughty numbers about the amount of farts produced and the weight of poo created will get your class giggling.

## **Pizazz**

**by Sophy Henn**  
(£6.99, Simon & Schuster Children's)

It's not easy being a superhero when all you want to be is normal. Pizazz is the first book in a new series from Sophy Henn and is jam-packed with comic strips and black and white illustrations. Our reluctant protagonist, nine-year-old Pizazz, has just moved to a new town, but it's tricky to make friends when you have a daft name, have to wear a stupid cape all the time and have a really embarrassing superpower. Author Henn is a two-time World Book Day illustrator and has been nominated in the past for the Kate Greenaway Medal and Waterstones Children's Book Prize. Deftly blending humour and action, this page-turner is excellent for reluctant readers and superhero fanatics alike and features a strong female lead. For pupils who enjoy their journey into this new world, book two is set to follow next year.

## **Real Superheroes**

**by Julia Seal**  
(£6.99, DK)

The phrase 'key worker' entered our collective vocabularies back at the start of the coronavirus crisis and pupils will probably have enjoyed clapping for them at 8pm on Thursdays. While they may not have capes, a loveable sidekick or the ability to fly over cities, these are the people who have been keeping us safe over the last few months. This charming picturebook from prolific author-illustrator Julia Seal features a diverse cast of characters and celebrates the brave, everyday folk who keep our world turning during difficult times. From doctors and delivery drivers to supermarket staff and – of course – teachers, this rhyming book encourages children to acknowledge and celebrate the role of key workers in our society. Use it in the classroom to encourage pupils to think about how they too can play a role in keeping themselves and others safe.

→→→ **RECOMMENDED**

## RESOURCES



Use this free resource from Plazoom to help children explore and have fun with Shakespeare's rich language. Pupils will enjoy creating their own insults and inferring the meaning.

The pack contains teacher notes, a PowerPoint, Shakespearean insult cards, a worksheet and themed writing paper. Find it at [plazoom.com/resource/ks2-shakespeare-amazing-insults](http://plazoom.com/resource/ks2-shakespeare-amazing-insults)

## Meet the author

**KARRA MCFARLANE ON CREATING A BOOK IN JUST FIVE WEEKS**



### Why did you decide to create the book?

There are plenty of great factual books out there to help children understand the current situation,

but we wanted to write something which encourages them to open up about their emotions and anxieties around being at home and not able to see their friends and wider family. Every child is different and will have their own way of dealing with things, but the most important thing for adults is to talk to them and let them ask questions. *Pete Stays Home* aims to be that conversation starter – encouraging little ones to talk about their feelings and feel reassured that life will return to normal again.

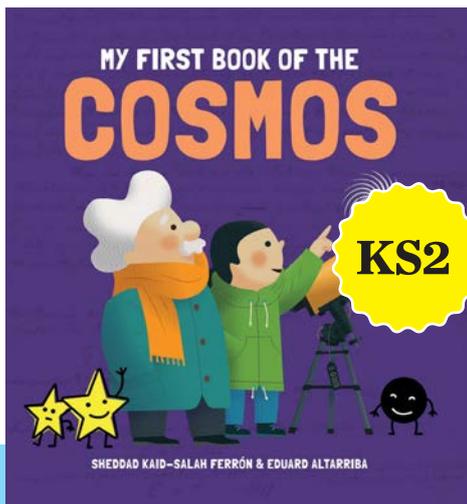
### How were you able to produce the book so quickly?

I have been working in book publishing for a number of years, as has my illustrator Kim Hankinson. We've spent the last year working on a big project together and have formed a great working relationship, so it felt really natural to take on another project together. The key to getting *Pete Stays Home* out so quickly was to draw on our experiences and do the work ourselves. We knew that if we went through a large publisher it would take a minimum of six months to get the book out so we made the decision to self-publish. We wanted to share the book with children at the time when we felt it would have the greatest impact.

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

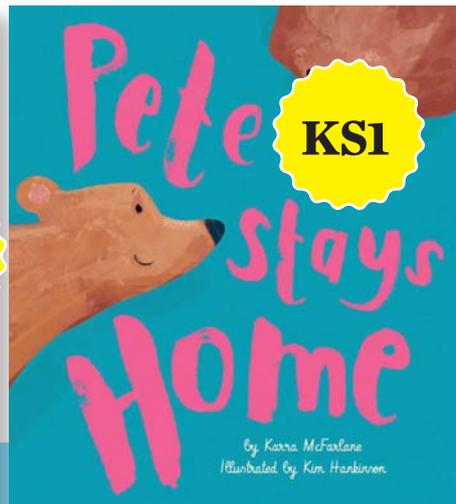
*Pete Stays Home* is a great book to help children reflect on their experiences during their time at home. The important thing with this book is that it prompts discussion. Using the resources available on our website and the notes in the front of the book, children will be able to talk about, draw and write about their own very individual experiences and worries. This is a time that children will remember and it's important they are given time and space to talk about and reflect on this time, both now and in the weeks and months that follow.

***Pete Stays Home* is available to buy from [petestayshome.com](http://petestayshome.com) and from [we-are-pop.co.uk](http://we-are-pop.co.uk). All profits from We Are Pop sales will be donated to the NSPCC.**



***My First Book of the Cosmos***  
by Sheddad Kaid-Salah Ferrón  
& Eduard Altarriba  
(£12.99, Button Books)

Cosmology is the study of the origin and evolution of the universe. Take a trip through the life of the cosmos and unravel some of its mysteries with this ambitious non-fiction title, which begins with the head-spinning question, "Why does the universe bother to exist?". Children will explore Newtonian and Einsteinian gravitational models, learn how a star is born, investigate black holes and the mystery of dark matter and dive into the relatively new fields of exoplanets and gravitational waves. Making an incredibly complex subject fun and entertaining is an art, and the author's teaching experience shines through in his simple, lively explanations. Pupils with a passion for science – and those that love to ask "Why?" – will lap this up, and can then go back to the first book in the series, *My First Book of Quantum Physics*.



***Pete Stays Home***  
by Karra McFarlane  
(£6.99, Karra McFarlane  
Editorial Ltd)

In uncertain times such as these it can be tricky to encourage young children to open up about their anxieties. *Pete Stays Home* follows the story of a little grizzly bear forced to retreat from the forest to his cave until spring arrives and things get back to normal – sound familiar? When the day to leave the cave finally arrives, Pete feels apprehensive but learns that fun times are just around the corner. Author, publisher and editor Karra McFarlane was inspired to write the tale for her three sons who were finding isolation difficult. The self-published book went from concept to publication in just five weeks so it could reach children when most needed. Order a print copy or download an ebook version from [petestayshome.com](http://petestayshome.com), where you'll also find free downloadable resources to support children with the return to school. Pupils can also join in with illustrator Kim Hankinson and paint their own Pete.

# How do we KNOW?

When building depth into your curriculum, English and history can be combined with great results...

NIKKI GAMBLE

“**H**ow do we know that Walter Tull didn't like it in the children's home where he was sent to live? The story says he didn't like it. But how do we *know*?”

Ravi and the rest of his Y4 class are reading an account of the life of Walter Tull, a black man of Afro-Caribbean descent living in London at the end of the 19th century, and he's challenging the text. It's a fictionalised scrapbook written in the first person as if Walter has assembled it – complete with what look like facsimile artefacts. In fact, Michaela Morgan, a white 21st century female author, has written the text and many of the artefacts have been created by a designer. The book won the Blue Peter 'Best Book With Facts' award.

“That's an excellent question, Ravi. Do we know? Who wrote the book? Does it tell us *how* the writer knows? Or do you think she is filling in some knowledge gaps with her imagination? Let's see if there's some evidence to support these two theories.”

Ravi's teacher, Lucy, is taking part in a two-year class-based project with six other teachers to look at ways to teach reading in history.

## The research group

The project was set up by Just Imagine with a group of teachers to investigate some of the approaches being developed for our reading resource, Take One Book. One of the teacher-researchers, Sam, was teaching a lesson about the Romans in Britain. She had presented some background orally, supported with

a short film clip. Using retrieval skills, the children had helped her to list the main facts they had just learnt, which were then written on the board. They were using these to write a first-person account. Other than watching a short film, no additional reading had taken place.

We talked about this later in the staffroom over a cup of tea. Was it a typical history lesson? Sam admitted that it was. She explained the teaching was supported by reading a class novel, *Across the Wall* by Teresa Breslin, which included a lot of historical details. Before studying the topic, the children visited a local archaeological site and were given a talk by one of the curators. The question that interested me was how much reading did they do for the subject? This seemed relevant as the discipline of history involves a lot of reading and interpretation of sources. Could more reading be incorporated in lessons?

This question was posed for the teacher research group to consider. Daniel, a Y5 teacher, reflected that his class did quite a lot of reading, with the emphasis on information and research skills. They were skilled at skimming and scanning, using structural guiders and retrieving information from text. Usually they used this research to produce their own writing. However, he felt that there was scope to look more specifically at the reading skills of being a 'historian'.

Though they were approaching the

project from individual contexts, the teachers felt there was some room for development - and these are some of the approaches they tried in their classrooms:

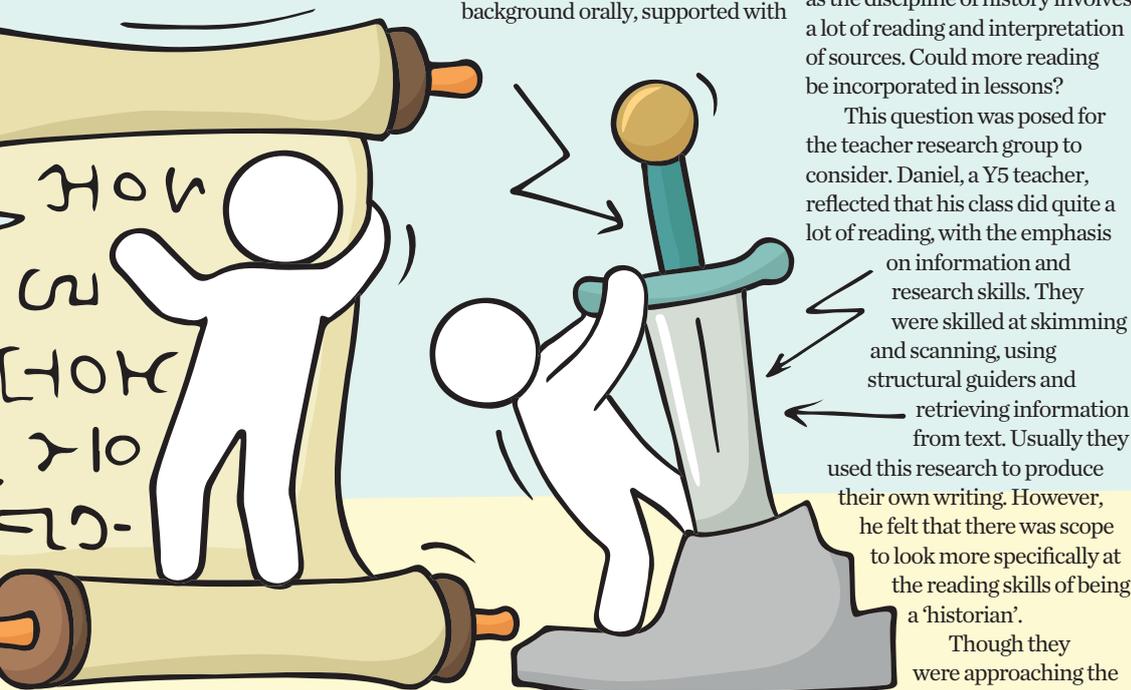
## Who wrote it?

First, we agreed on a key question to ask before reading any new text, whether it was an information book, a novel, a website, or a guide book. Several supplementary questions were then devised:

- What knowledge does the writer have of the subject?
- Why did they write this text?
- When was it written?

These questions, asked before reading, prompted the children to consider that writers have varying degrees of interest in the subjects they are writing about; a writer's motive could influence the way that they write. Being aware of this is the first step towards criticality. When Ravi asked how we know what Walter Tull felt, he was displaying an awareness that the writer might be making assumptions. That doesn't mean that it is untrue, but it's not an indisputable fact.

A Y6 class reading one of Wilfred Owen's poems discussed the same questions, and this led them to debate whether first-hand knowledge means that your view is more valid than the view of a researcher using primary sources. “Not always,” Jasmine argued. “Sometimes it means you are too close and your feelings get in the way.” This group of pupils were



beginning to think about the concept of subjectivity.

## How does the writer know?

Further questions to ask during reading were formulated by the teacher-researchers. 'How does the writer know that?' encouraged the children to probe more deeply than being asked to identify facts and opinions. Posing the question

been researched on location at Hadrian's Wall and that an archaeologist had provided expert consultancy. Being able to find this information and know what it means is where reading like a historian begins.

## Certainty and speculation

History is told with varying degrees of certainty. Words commonly found in historical

*“It made me think how a small change to a question makes the historical learning more powerful”*

in this way helped them to interrogate the facts, rather than simply locate them.

For example, a class of Y3 children reading Mick Manning and Brita Granstrom's Roman Fort were fascinated with the details of the Roman ablutions. An illustration of three Romans chatting on the communal toilet was labelled 'Sponges on sticks to wipe your bum. You wash your sponge stick and put it back for someone else to use!'. They were fascinated to know if this could be true.

Books for this age rarely have sources included in the text. Detailed referencing would weigh the writing down. But a quick check on the copyright page revealed that the book has

texts such as 'possibly', 'perhaps', 'most likely', 'are known to', 'claimed', 'first recorded' and 'some experts think', were explicitly taught. The children learnt what they meant in relation to historical knowledge and were encouraged to look out for them when reading.

## Comparing sources

Classrooms often have several books on the same subject for children to read when they are studying a historical topic, and it's not unusual for these books to be compared. From a historical point of view, we found it interesting to compare and contrast history books written

in different periods to show how perspectives change over time. To do this, we bought some second-hand Ladybird books to compare with more up-to-date sources. One class studying exploration and discovery found a comparison of the 1957 Ladybird book about Walter Raleigh with the 1980 edition of the same book particularly revealing. There was a big shift in the perspective on Raleigh's colonisation in the Americas. In the earlier edition, the invader's point of view is shown and in the later, the point of view is alongside the native invaders, watching as strangers land on their beach.

## Vocabulary for history

The national curriculum requires that pupils in KS2 "gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as empire, civilisation and peasantry". These are words which recur when reading history. We identified historical vocabulary that we were going to introduce, focusing on concepts rather than names. So 'monarchy' was chosen rather than King Aethelred. Once these words had been introduced, they were put in the 'history treasure chest' and

new words were accumulated across the year.

Periodically, words were used to play a Pictionary-style game. The children demonstrated their understanding of the concept by drawing it. The following discussion reinforced the concepts so that learning was revisited and deepened. These changes were in many ways small adaptations of existing practice. This made it easy to implement. However, as Lucy pointed out at the end of the project, "It made me think how a small change to a question makes the historical learning more powerful, but at the same time we are still developing the comprehension needed for teaching English."



*Nikki Gamble is director of Just Imagine, Centre for Excellence*

*in Reading, Writing and Oracy. Take One Book is a resource that provides detailed plans to develop deeper reading with great literature.*

 @nikkigamble

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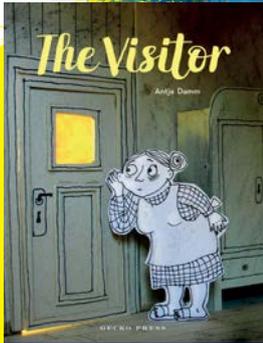
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For further information contact [assistant@justimaginestorycentre.co.uk](mailto:assistant@justimaginestorycentre.co.uk)





Published by  
Gecko Press, 2018



# The Visitor

Use Antje Damm's book to explore the sensitive topics of loneliness and anxiety and help pupils reflect on their lockdown experience

## CAREY FLUKER HUNT

**E**lise is scared of everything and never leaves her house. One day a paper plane flies in through an open window. "That'll have to go!" says Elise, and throws it on the fire. Then comes a knock at the door. It's a boy called Emil, and he wants his plane back. He'd also like to use the bathroom, read a story, play a game and eat a snack. As Elise and Emil interact, colour seeps into the cold, grey room. And by the time we leave her, Elise is folding paper planes and everything feels different.

Readers are quickly drawn into Elise

and Emil's world and care about the characters, but there's more to this warm-hearted book than story fun. "I think we can, and ought, to confront children with the big questions of the world," Antje Damm told blogger Mel Schuit, and *The Visitor* does a great job of making profound and complex themes like loneliness and anxiety accessible and meaningful to young audiences. There is real depth to this picturebook that will stay with children long after reading and give them much to think about – not least a way to reflect on their experiences of lockdown.

Damm's artwork has a special luminosity and depth that makes it hugely inviting, and the gradual addition of colour says so much about Elise's changing emotions. To illustrate *The Visitor*, Damm created a mini theatre set from white card decorated with black line details. Cut-out characters were positioned for each scene and carefully lit before being photographed. Colour was applied directly to the model – it wasn't generated digitally – and the story evolved as Damm worked on it, giving the book a fresh immediacy that really comes across.



## How to share this book

Lockdown confined many of us to our homes and stopped us visiting family and friends. Show children the cover of the book and explain that this story is about someone who never leaves her house. How does this character feel? How can you tell? Who – or what – will come through the door when she opens it?

Ask children about their memories of being at home, unable to go out. Did they miss having visitors? Who used to visit before lockdown? What did they do? Talk about loneliness. What is it? How does it make you feel and behave? Is it the same as being alone? Did pupils feel lonely during lockdown? What made them feel better?

Without reading the text, examine the first spread. Invite comments and ask open-ended questions. What can we see? How do we think this character is feeling? How can we tell? What could have happened to make her feel this way? Talk about fear. What are pupils afraid of? What could be making this character feel anxious? Explain that Elise is scared of many things. She doesn't go out and she's very lonely. But one day, something surprising happens....

Read the whole story for enjoyment, then go back and look more closely at the pictures, commenting on your observations and discussing responses. What did children like about this book? Does it remind them of anything? Which is their favourite moment, and why?

Discuss the ideas that interest you. Where and why does colour appear? How do pupils think Antje Damm created this artwork? How does sharing a story make us feel? Why do people need friends? Why do the children think Elise dreams about paper aeroplanes? Talk about safeguarding. When is it OK to knock on someone's door and go into their house, and when is it not?



## Practical activities

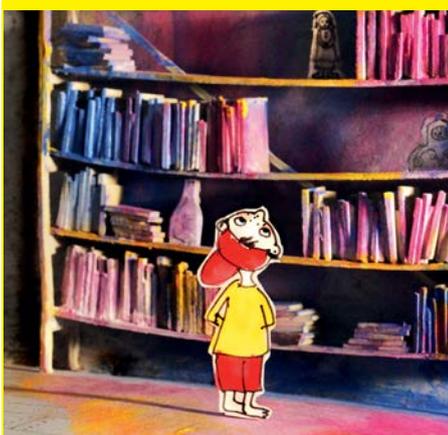
### Exploring the drama

Examine the characters' expressions, gestures and postures. Copy them. What do you notice? What do these things tell us? Look at the picture of Emil waiting to be invited in. Recreate the scene in pairs, like actors on a stage. Can pupils bring the picture to life by showing what happens next? Try freeze-framing another picture, then bring that to life, too. How many pictures can you explore? Could you join them to make a performance?

What happens after this book ends? Get the children to talk about their ideas for a 'next episode' and develop this through roleplay, drawing, storytelling and writing. Alternatively, roleplay Emil telling his Mum or Dad about visiting Elise. How will they respond?

### Staying at home

Many of us now know what it's like to stay at home and rarely go out. What did pupils do during lockdown? What did they like about staying at home? What didn't they



## Take it further → → →

### MAKE A STORY SET!

Construct room sets using shoeboxes, white card and black markers. Children could recreate Elise's living-room, model their own bedroom or use their imagination to create something completely new. Add cardboard furniture and props, and cut windows or a roof flap for a light source.

Once the sets are ready, position cut-out characters and photograph the

scene. Try different lighting and camera angles to get the best results. Alternatively, photograph cardboard characters in a doll's house or use them as puppets to retell the story..

### INVESTIGATE PAPER PLANES

Learn how to fold model planes. Launch them in a large, clear indoor space and measure how far they fly. How can you make your tests fair? (Using the same



**Loved this? Try these...**

- ❖ Ask Me by Antje Damm
- ❖ Waiting for Goliath by Antje Damm
- ❖ The Tiger Who Came to Tea by Judith Kerr
- ❖ The Snorgh and the Sailor by Will Buckingham and Thomas Docherty
- ❖ A Visitor for Bear by Bonny Becker and Kady MacDonald Denton

Photograph each group. If you want food, ask children to draw on a paper square the same size as the tabletop, then add them to your scenes. Ask children to write reports explaining what they did. Display these with your photographs, figures and menus.

**Reading to Emil**

Add collections of short stories to your reading corner. Record children reading their story choice aloud for Emil and build an audio library for everyone to enjoy. Recruit some older volunteers to read 'Emil stories' to small groups.

**What scares you?**

What frightens Elise? What impact have these fears had on her life? What scares your children? Share ways to manage fear. Devise a questionnaire to discover what scares children and grownups in your school. Examine your results. How many people answered? What is the most common fear? Is there a difference between children and adults? Show your results on a table and as a graph. **TP**



*Carey Fluker Hunt is a freelance writer, creative learning consultant and founder of Cast of Thousands, a teachers' resource featuring a selection of the best children's books and related cross-curricular activities.*

[castofthousands.co.uk](http://castofthousands.co.uk)

like? What did they miss?

Look at the first spread (showing Elise at a grey table.) How would you describe her? Talk about loneliness. How is Elise feeling? What could she be thinking? Add sticky note thought bubbles to capture pupils' ideas then ask them to write descriptively about loneliness or being 'stuck indoors.' Emil helped Elise by visiting her. What else could she do to connect with others? Could we help someone who is feeling lonely? How?

**Colour moods**

Look at the front endpaper (Elise's unoccupied room) and compare with the back endpaper (the same room in colour.) List words and phrases to describe each picture. How do they make us feel? What stays the same? What changes?

Use paints, pastels and other media to investigate colour combinations. Sort the results into mood groups: happy, sad,

energetic, calm, etc. Does everyone agree on choices? Are there 'right' answers? If we wanted to cheer someone up, which colours would we use? Paint cheerful pictures for someone who's feeling sad?

**Special visitors**

If children could invite anyone to visit them – friends, family, famous people, imaginary characters – who would they choose? Why would they invite these guests? What games would you play? What refreshments would you offer?

Ask children to choose three visitors to join them for an imaginary tea. Who will they invite, and why? What will they eat and drink? Provide invitation, menu and place card templates to be filled in.

Ask children to draw themselves and their guests in black marker on white card. Cut the characters out and sit them on chairs around a table – use doll's house furniture or make from cardboard.

paper, making a rule about how planes are launched, etc). Try different paper types or add paperclip weights to the nose or wings, then retest. What effect do your changes have?

Repeat the investigation outside. Did the planes fly further? Write about what you've done and learnt.

Extend the activity by decorating sheets of paper with paint and printed patterns. Fold into planes and hang from the ceiling to create mobiles. Make special planes with friendly messages on them and send them to someone who

has to stay indoors or might be lonely.

**THROW A PARTY**

Build on the work you did earlier by hosting a real tea party for special guests. If visitors are not allowed into school, invite toys. Involve children at all stages of planning and delivery, giving them responsibility for manageable tasks. Play hide and seek, grandmother's footsteps, musical statues and other traditional games that Elise would recognise and enjoy sharing. Remember to leave plenty of time for Emil stories!





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# STEM SPECIAL

## INSIDE THIS SECTION



Calling all science coordinators – here's how to ensure your curriculum is top-notch...



Online CPD has rocketed in popularity since lockdown – here's how to get involved...



Five practical ways to cover the computing curriculum in KS1, including algorithms and programming



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# Pick up STICKS

Get hands-on in KS1 with these STEM activity ideas

LAURA CROSS

Covering STEM in primary schools all too often involves hiring an expert for one week per year.

Chances are, many of your KS1 pupils are regularly building and creating at home, whether that's with Lego, junk modelling or even Minecraft. You can help develop these creative engineering and technology skills within a purposeful classroom learning environment with these simple ideas. You'll only need a few basic resources and once you get started, you'll realise how much fun it can be to teach STEM on a regular basis.

### Build a boat

**What you'll need:** aluminium foil, weights (eg coins), trays of water

**The hook:** Read *Who Sank the Boat?* by Pamela Allen or look at photos of different boats. Discuss floating and misconceptions around heavy things always sinking.

**Activity (20 mins):** Give each group three squares of aluminium

foil and some weights. Ask them to design and build three different boats (different shapes, side heights, sizes, etc) to hold weights. Ask the children to make predictions then test these out. While buoyancy and upthrust are not KS1 content, the enquiry and experimentation needed in this activity make it great for STEM skills practice.

**Take it further:** Give children junk materials, tape and scissors to build a boat for toy characters. How can they make the boat waterproof? What can keep the boat afloat? Can they build a boat that will keep a can of food afloat?

### Shoot a film

**What you'll need:** iPad or tablet per small group with free Stop Motion Studio app downloaded, paper, pencil, counters

**The hook:** Show pupils a short simple stop-motion video online. Discuss how long these take to make and the need to be slow and precise.

**Activity (15 mins):** Each group should use a pencil to lightly draw a line, shape or word across a piece of paper. Put a counter at one end. Next, one child holds the iPad still and snaps the first photo. Other group members move the object along the lines a tiny bit, taking a photo at each new location. Use at least 20 photos. Press play and watch the film, then reflect on the results and consider what could be improved. It's worth having a go at shooting your own stop-motion film beforehand so you can take children through the steps carefully.

**Take it further:** Create a 2D stop-motion picture linked to a topic you're covering. Draw a background on one piece of paper and then separately draw and cut out a moving piece. For example, this could be a garden with a butterfly as the moving piece. Create stop-motion videos with the moving piece and try incorporating other moving parts too. Stop-motion can be linked to literacy and class topics as pupils make videos of their own 3D stories.

## Make a pulley

**What you'll need:** string/wool, pencils, junk modelling materials including small pots, tape, scissors

**The hook:** Read or paraphrase the fairy tale Rapunzel and discuss how engineers, designers and inventors always start with a problem they want to solve.

**Activity (30-45 mins):** Empathise with Rapunzel as a class to identify the problems she faces (does she get headaches?). Narrow in on solving the problem of getting things up her tower without climbing her hair and discuss some possible solutions. Introduce pulleys with examples of how they're used to lift heavy things by looping the rope over a wheel or wheels. While pulleys themselves are KS2 content, this is a great extended activity to get children thinking about machines and solving problems. In groups, children can build their own pulleys as follows:

- Build a tower out of boxes, tubes etc. Focus on strength and stability.
- Model making a basket out of a small cup or container and tying the string on.
- Add something to the top of the tower to function as the pulley for the string to loop over. This could be a pencil, straw or bottle neck.

● Loop the string over the pulley and have children pull down to make the basket go up.

## Construct with craft sticks

**What you'll need:** Every classroom should have a collection of craft sticks for engineering practice. Add some tape, paper cups and pegs and you'll have a term's worth of short engineering challenges.

**Activity (15 mins):** There are hundreds of possible craft stick challenges, but simple ones to start with include:

- Tallest tower with craft sticks and tape
- Tallest tower with craft sticks and paper cups
- Bridge across a 15cm gap with craft sticks and tape
- Build the best catapult – measure the distance an object is thrown

Pupils will start to better understand how to construct frames as they progress through different challenges. Let them start with their own structures before showing examples. Why not finish every Friday afternoon with a craft stick challenge?

## Invent with junk

**What you'll need:** paper, pencil, junk modelling materials, tape, scissors.

**The hook:** Read Izzy Gizmo by Pip Jones to discuss finding solutions to problems by inventing new things.

## HOW TO DEVELOP PUPILS' STEM SKILLS

- Arrange opportunities for children to work in small groups. This improves collaboration and communication.
- Emphasise experimentation and enquiry. Allow children to form predictions and make discoveries themselves.
- Encourage problem-solving. When pupils ask for help, use questioning to encourage them to find their own solutions.
- Make time to reflect at the end of every activity. What went well? What could they improve?
- Start collecting junk modelling materials and build your own engineering supply box containing tape, craft sticks, straws, string, foil, cling film, etc.

**Activity (20 mins):** Come up with a problem as a class, perhaps linked to a class topic, or give each group their own simple problem, eg 'You are a bird and haven't got anywhere for your bird family to live.' Give each small group a random selection of junk modelling materials plus tape and scissors. Give them a time limit to come up with a solution to their problem using the materials. If time allows they could draw and label the invention first before they start building and present these to the rest of the class. **TP**



*Laura Cross is a former primary teacher and worked as head of curriculum*

*at a Californian edtech company. She set up Inventors & Makers in 2019 and runs workshops and classes focusing on STEM, design and 21st century skills.*



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# Deep dive READY?

Calling all science coordinators – here’s how to ensure your curriculum is top-notch...

**DANNY NICHOLSON**

**T**he latest Ofsted buzzword to fill teachers with dread is ‘deep dive’. This doesn’t mean that inspectors will be turning up with snorkels and flippers, but it does mean you will need to be prepared for them to take a hard look at some of your subjects.

With the arrival of the new Ofsted inspection framework for primary schools, the focus is now shifting towards whether a school is teaching a broad and engaging curriculum to its children. Ofsted inspectors will be exploring the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum in schools. Let’s look more closely at those terms:

**INTENT:** What does the curriculum intend to do? What do you want the children to learn, and what skills do you want them to acquire? Be clear on exactly what these aims are. What do your teachers think is the objective in teaching science?

**IMPLEMENTATION:** How do you put your curriculum plans into practice, and how do you ensure that your intent is being carried out? How likely is it that the teaching methods used will deliver the teacher’s objectives for each subject?

**IMPACT:** What progress do your children make? Have the children learnt what they are supposed to? Have they gained the knowledge and skills that they need? What is the potential impact on the subject teaching on the pupils?

Many schools are using this as an opportunity to take a fresh look at their science programme to ensure it’s as good as it can be and in line with the changes brought in with the revamped 2014 national curriculum. With a little advance preparation, the deep dive shouldn’t be a scary affair. If you are a science coordinator for your school, here are eight things to consider:

## 1 Curriculum coverage and progression

Take a good look at the national curriculum for science and make sure you understand what each year group should be doing. Map out the content of various topics and how they progress from year to year.

For example, focus on a theme such as materials and track how it is taught from Y1 through to Y5. In KS1, children are introduced to the idea of different materials, and the properties that they

have. In Y3 they look at properties relating to rocks and their uses. Later they are introduced to the idea of solids, liquids and gases and the properties of each. Reversible changes are also introduced at this time, with changes of state as the main example. Later, chemical changes can be introduced – non-reversible changes such as burning and rusting.

Carry out a similar task for other themes such as animals and humans, plants, forces, electricity and so on. Be clear about the progression in your subject. Can you talk through your curriculum map and highlight the progression of skills and ideas across a year and across key stages?

## 2 Scientific vocabulary

Scientific development in children involves the use of a wide and increasingly scientific vocabulary. Ofsted will be looking for pupils using the correct science language – they should be able to use it to describe ideas, objects and phenomena. Encourage this by using resources like science word mats and having a science vocabulary wall in your classroom. Add definitions to any words used in science displays. Play vocabulary games but with a science twist. For instance, try and describe a word (‘skeleton’, for example) without using specified words related to it (‘bone’, for instance).

Highlight opportunities in your plans to promote

communication, dialogue and reflection. Talk like a scientist yourself in lessons. Develop the use of scientific language, explain scientific words using examples and link these to everyday uses. Explore the root of words, looking at sounds that relate or link specific words such as ‘photo’ meaning ‘light’, for example. If you’re looking for inspiration, The Wellcome Trust’s Explorify website ([explorify.wellcome.ac.uk](http://explorify.wellcome.ac.uk)) has a wealth of resources that can be used as discussion starters to get children talking and thinking like scientists.

## 3 Development of skills and ideas

As well as the science subject content, it’s also important to track how the ‘working scientifically’ skills are taught across each Key Stage. To help with this, there’s a useful guide produced by the Centre for Industry Education and Collaboration which you can use to identify and track these skills ([ciec.org.uk/resources/working-scientifically.html](http://ciec.org.uk/resources/working-scientifically.html)). Display them as a set of ‘I can...’ statements to help the children understand what they are expected to be able to do.

Moving from lower to upper primary, children should become increasingly autonomous in their decision-making when carrying out investigations. They should become systematic and accurate in collecting and analysing data and able to evaluate their results.

*“With a little advance preparation, the deep dive shouldn’t be a scary affair”*

The non-statutory section of each unit in the national curriculum contains plenty of ideas for 'working scientifically' activities. Do your lessons include a 'working scientifically' lesson objective, alongside the science content?

## 4 Assessment

Take a good look at how you are assessing science learning. How do your teachers know where the children are? A useful resource to help support this is the Teacher Assessment in Primary Science (TAPS) project funded by the Primary Science Teaching Trust. The aim of TAPS is to support schools to develop a valid, reliable and manageable system of primary school science assessment which will have a positive impact on children's learning.

The TAPS pyramid tool provides a structure to help schools evaluate and develop their assessment processes. It's well worth spending some time as a school going through the TAPS self-evaluation process ([pstt.org.uk/resources/curriculum-materials/assessment](http://pstt.org.uk/resources/curriculum-materials/assessment)).

## 5 Cross-curricular links

Map all the ways your science curriculum links with other subjects. Maths and literacy have obvious links, but there's plenty of opportunities to link to PE, history, geography, music and more. Highlight these cross-curricular opportunities in your lesson plans.

A good curriculum not only makes links horizontally between different subjects but also vertically within different years of a subject. It should also highlight joint concepts that link diagonally across both year groups and subjects.

## 6 Science books

Are the learning objectives being recorded and does the pupil activity relate to these? Can you find evidence in books to show what that

progress looked like? As you are teaching, try to ensure that children's work demonstrates the skills they are learning.

## 7 Resourcing

How well resourced is science in your school? Most primary science can be tackled with a cheap and cheerful kitchen-science approach, but some areas such as electricity require more specialist kit and for many schools money is getting increasingly tight. There are good guides available online (from the PSTT and elsewhere) that give suggested resources for each topic area. How could you cover any gaps? Are there particular big-ticket resources that your PTA could help fundraise for? Perhaps your local secondary could help out with loans of kit?

## 8 Action plan

Update your science action plan and return to it regularly. Identify any weaknesses and outline steps that can be taken to address them. Be honest. When Ofsted comes, your headteacher should get some say in the subjects that will be inspected, based on your strengths or areas that have improved. So, if you get the call, good luck! **TP**



*Danny Nicholson is an educational consultant and blogger at Think Bank Education. He provides support and training for PGCE students and in schools.*

*Education. He provides support and training for PGCE students and in schools.*

 @dannynic

 [sciencefix.co.uk](http://sciencefix.co.uk)

## 5 THINGS TO THINK ABOUT



**Are you covering all the statutory content of the national curriculum for science in each year group? What about 'working scientifically' skills? Are cross-curricular links highlighted?**



**How do the concepts you teach progress up through the years and during the course of a unit of lessons? Is there a logical sequence to the lessons?**



**What strategies do you use to assess learning? Do your teachers know where the children are in terms of science knowledge and 'working scientifically' skills?**



**Are pupils encouraged to develop a wide scientific vocabulary? Do you provide opportunities for them to talk like scientists and discuss scientific ideas with each other?**



**Do you have an up-to-date action plan which identifies weaknesses and outlines steps to address them?**



# Brush up on STEM

Online CPD has rocketed in popularity since lockdown – here’s how to get involved...

ANNA BLEWETT

**H**ow’s your year going, professionally speaking? As you grapple with unprecedented disruption in and out of the classroom, it’s tempting to write 2020 off as a bad lot. And yet, while we all work through the challenges, grappling with our own personal circumstances and handling massively diverse workloads, those who do find themselves with a little more time have a golden opportunity to develop areas of CPD neglected during the frenetic pace of a normal academic year.

In fact, STEM Learning, a not-for-profit organisation that provides educational support in STEM subjects, has seen demand for its online CPD courses skyrocket amid the lockdown. “My gut feeling is teachers who aren’t as busy with work as they would normally be are self-selecting,” says Tanya Shields, primary STEM lead at STEM Learning and the National STEM learning centre in York. “Science hasn’t really had a profile at primary for a great number of years,” she explains. “It’s only since the new Ofsted framework with a greater emphasis on a broad and balanced curriculum that schools are really beginning to pay attention to this. And I don’t think schools put science at the top of their budget spend, but we see a lot more primary teachers recognising they need to support how they deliver science in the classroom.” If your CV could do

with a strengthening in STEM subjects without a conventional course, here’s how...

## Grab a MOOC

That’s ‘massive open online courses’ or, to most of us, the free CPD courses you can find by googling a subject matter. “The MOOCs that we run on FutureLearn have step-by-step tasks so teachers can run though at their own pace,” says Tanya. “When it

comes to an area they are familiar with they can skip on, whereas if it’s new to them it can be taken slowly. And the courses are mentored, so as facilitators we can jump in and respond to comments.” STEM Learning has also developed new remote CPD material; hour-long sessions delivered via AdobeConnect consist of a 45-minute powerpoint (“research shows us that’s the maximum length of engagement online”) and 15-minutes of interaction between the facilitator and participant. There are even virtual ‘break-out rooms’ so smaller groups can discuss the content.

Tanya is clear that there are limitations to what can be delivered online – she feels there will always be a place for face-to-face – but that a joined up programme that includes both is the way forward. “We know primary school teachers might not always be as forthcoming to get involved in STEM CPD as they would in local English or maths CPD. Quite often with STEM subjects, primary teachers can feel

in field work without leaving your classroom. “Citizen science allows primary teachers to engage with real research in an accessible way, which they can then pass down to their students”, says Molly Simon, planetary scientist and education lead at Zooniverse, the world’s largest volunteer research platform. “The tasks for a majority of the projects can be completed by primary school students, so teachers can bring citizen science directly into their STEM classrooms to help students apply what they are learning to active science research. If pupils and teachers know that they are making a difference by helping real scientists with their research, that definitely contributes to a higher level of enthusiasm about the subjects being taught.”

There is no shortage of current research to dip into, from hunting for and classifying extra-solar stars to spotting protected wildlife in raw footage from safari camera traps. Meanwhile, the Zooniverse blog has suggestions for projects that might be easily worked into KS1 and KS2 lesson plans.

*“We’ve always found online courses give teachers that safe step into developing their subject knowledge”*

nervous about stepping back into a facility where there’s a science expert who might expose their insecurities or lack of knowledge. We’ve always found online courses give teachers that safe step into developing their subject knowledge and what they’ll be doing in the classroom.”

## Participate in citizen science

Expanding your knowledge of the vocabulary, latest debates and real-world applications of different branches of science can feel like a daunting (and, ahem, boring) task, but there is a way to immerse yourself

## Memorise core facts

Whether you’ve lost your grip on the terminology of plant parts, want to understand the basics of computer science to keep one step ahead of a keen pupil, or have an embarrassing

hole in your own arithmetic skills, platforms informed by machine learning can be a godsend.

"Edtech in general has been doing quite well, but this recent period has escalated things to significant levels," says Rahim Hirji, UK manager of Quizlet. Why? We're suddenly looking at remote learning afresh, and not just students but ourselves too. "Let's say you're trying to up-skill in the basics of human biology to support your students," says Rahim. "On the platform there are 400 million sets [of revision questions], so you might search 'parts of the body'. And what makes it really easy and useful is others have created the sets for you. A teacher can skill up quickly on certain topics; there's a plethora of content available." It's free to access too, making it a great tool to slot in with other learning methods.

### Raid scientific institutions

If time and access allow, a visit to a bombastic science show, engineering exhibit or tech event is a fantastic way to kickstart your enthusiasm for – and understanding of – explorations in the field of STEM. But even once our national museums and archives are once again accessible, there is a cost- and

time-effective alternative to paying a visit in person.

"We have a huge number of STEM resources for teachers, which are currently being used more than ever before," says Susan Raikes, director of learning at the Science Museum Group, which has institutions in London, Manchester, York, County Durham and Bradford. "Specifically for teacher training we have the Science Museum Group Academy ([learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/academy](http://learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/academy)), plus other learning and teaching resources ([learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/learning-resources](http://learning.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/learning-resources)). Our Transforming Practice blog reflects on how best to engage people of all ages and backgrounds with science subjects – an increasingly pressing issue in current times."

### Call in the experts

A visit from a STEM-based expert is a great way

to ensure you and colleagues share training sessions. You'll find a directory of providers at [stem.org.uk/enrichment](http://stem.org.uk/enrichment), and also – thanks to the legacy of lockdown – plenty of new virtual assistance from organisations that have expanded their resources for teachers.

"My programme usually involves going into schools and libraries to offer our workshops", says Daryl Stenvoll-Wells of the Linnean Society of London.

"It's looking likely that this won't be possible for the remainder of this school year and possibly autumn term, so I'm currently creating a series of video tutorials on how to keep a nature journal, in conjunction with several experts in botany education, biology education, and nature-inspired art and illustration. I'll also be planning some individual consultations to help teachers plan projects around the existing resources they have available." **TP**

### EVEN MORE CPD

- Find virtual workshops plus webinars and informal 'teachmeets' hosted by the Association for Science Education at [ase.org.uk](http://ase.org.uk)
- The Royal School of Chemistry has made professional development courses for teachers free until August. Visit [rsc.org/cpd/teachers](http://rsc.org/cpd/teachers)



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**SNAPSHOT ASSESSMENT: NAME THAT ANIMAL!**  
Year group: Y1/Middle; OCR: Animal, Animals; Whole module | Module 2: Looking at Animals; Lessons 1, 8, 9  
Curriculum statement:  
Identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.  
Activity instructions:  
Identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.  
But responsibility does not transfer this task.  
Put the picture cards face up on the table in front of the children and ask them to play the picture cards face up on the table in front of the children and ask them to help you shuffle them around.  
Ask the children to pick a card showing an animal they know. They should be able to name it and place it with the correct animal group card.  
They should be able to explain how they matched each animal to its group. For example: I know this penguin is a bird because it has wings and can fly.  
Continue the activity with two or three more cards of the children's choosing.  
Children like to choose from the animal cards, according to those contained! There are three fish, two reptiles, two amphibians, three more birds and three more mammals. Ask the children to explain as they choose.  
Questions to check understanding:  
What is this animal called? Which animal group does it belong to? How do you know?  
Can you find another mammal? A bird? An amphibian? A reptile? A fish?  
Mastery is achieved if the child:  
Can explain and name at least five mammals, birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles and give a correct reason for choosing them, according to observable features or known behaviour.  
For example: choose a penguin when asked to find a fish and says they know it is a fish because it has fins and lives in water.

Amphibians	Fish	Reptiles
Birds	Mammals	

**What's the human impact?**

Before!

**Journey into space**

Our Solar System

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# OK *computer*

Five practical ways to cover the computing curriculum in KS1

LISA MOSS AND DR THOMAS BERNARD

**D**eveloping STEM skills, including critical and computational thinking, is key from a young age. 2018 research by Richard Sheldrake showed that exposure to and building confidence in these disciplines can often be a predictor to following a career in STEM fields.

Imaginative and active hands-on play, combined with problem-solving through play, is essential for providing an engaging experience. Young children's natural curiosity is a magical state of mind that supercharges learning. By introducing problem-solving skills, and learning to fail from a young age, children are better equipped to face a fast-paced, changing world.

The key is to connect children's imagination and curiosity to the world they live in with simple challenges where problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity are the keys to finding solutions. Here are some simple and practical STEM ideas that develop transferable

critical and computational thinking skills, and will engage your KS1 pupils. They cover some of the essential KS1 objectives for the computing national curriculum.

## Cooking with algorithms

Nothing motivates children more than getting to make their favourite snack, especially when they know they will get to enjoy it at the end. In school this could be making a smoothie or popcorn, linked to a restaurant or movie theme.

Algorithms are sequences of steps which need to be followed in a specific order to reach an end result, and following a recipe is the perfect activity. Throw in some challenges such as the following: if the smoothies are for group A, use kiwis and carrot juice; if they are for group B, use bananas. If we've run out of butter for the popcorn, what should we use instead?

'If-then-else' statements are conditional sequences of steps which are done only if the 'if' condition criteria are met. Furthermore, 'debugging' is a great way for children to

determine why their smoothies are suddenly not tasting as planned. They have to use their problem-solving skills to figure out that they have missed adding the bananas.

## Abstraction treasure maps

Plan a pirate treasure hunt quest. The adventure starts with dressing up and making a treasure map (a simplified version of the school environment). Children need to hide their 'treasure', mark it on the map and then give this to the other team. This activity helps children to grasp the idea of focusing on the most important information to reach the end goal, with a strong emphasis on teamwork.

## Programme your robot

One child takes on the role of a 'human robot'. Another pupil gives the robot a set of verbal 'commands' to complete a task. For example, to drink a glass of water the first step is to open your right hand, then grab the glass in front of you, etc.

Vary the challenge depending on the age group of pupils, from simply walking to the door to making a sandwich and eating it. Children will learn the importance of commands (steps) and sequencing, as well as how to debug and try again (reprogramme) when it doesn't go as planned.

## Patterns of nature

Ask children to go on a nature expedition, collecting different

items from the park or wood (leaves, flowers, pinecones, etc). Pupils must then work together in teams to sort through their 'treasures' based on similarities and differences and then place them in different buckets.

Next, create patterns using the collected items and ask children to predict which items come next. This helps children to identify patterns and predict in a logical way what comes next.

## Problem decomposition

Ask children to select an object or a construction they see around them, such as a house. Ask them to draw what they've selected, then ask them to draw the separate pieces of what they've selected. Set up a competition to draw the object in the most number of pieces. Pupils will have to decompose the object into smaller pieces while keeping in mind the bigger picture. **TP**

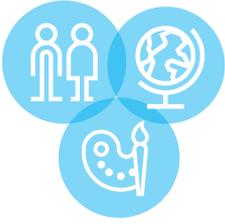


**Lisa Moss and Dr Thomas Bernard are co-founders of QuestFriendz which aims to inspire STEM learning through interactive storytelling. Visit the website to pre-order a copy of educational picturebook *The Adventures of Lillicorn in WooWoo Land* and download STEM activity sheets and lesson plans.**

 [questfriendz](#)

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





## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Use map drawing to plot out a fantasy story
- How to create action scenes in a story
- Imaginatively select vocabulary to evoke a sense of time and place
- Apply geographical map features such as direction and landmarks

# Draw your own fantasy story map



Venture into worlds unknown by drawing imaginary landscapes and writing stories based on them, says author **Vashti Hardy**

 @vashti\_hardy

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

Author Vashti Hardy's book *Wildspark* recently won Best Story in the Blue Peter Book Awards 2020. This lesson focuses on her previous title *Brightstorm*, an adventure story which sees twins Maudie and Arthur set off on a mission to South Polaris to restore honour to their family name. Read the novel as a class then spend a lesson creating fantasy maps, before using these as a springboard for writing your own adventure stories. This is also the perfect opportunity to introduce children to the features of real-world maps.



the different climates and environments that are in our world, such as deserts and rainforests, and how we could show these on a map. Can pupils think of a new fantasy climate?

Consider how the names of places in fantasy worlds evoke a sense of time and place. How can we expand on this when creating our own maps? Can we draw from real life to come up with the names of places and evoke a sense of atmosphere? For example, in *Brightstorm*, 'Lontown' draws on 'London' to create a sense of 'similar but different'.

## 2 | HAZARDS AHEAD

Look at images of potential obstacles that could get in your characters' way during the adventure. These could include natural hazards such as volcanoes, earthquake zones and

## START HERE

Begin with an exploration of fantasy maps from novels. Aside from *Brightstorm*, other examples you might like to look at include *The Chronicles*

of *Narnia*, *How To Train Your Dragon* and the *Marauder's Map* in the illustrated version of *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Lead a class discussion about how maps might help readers to navigate and visualise a story world, and how they can also help to move a plot along – the *Marauder's Map* enables Remus Lupin to discover the truth about Peter Pettigrew, for example. Link to geography by also exploring the features of real maps.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | FANTASY PLACES

Begin by looking at the map of the 'Great Wide' in *Brightstorm* by Vashti Hardy. Write some of the major plot points from the story in the appropriate location on the map. Discuss what the crew's goal was (to be the first to reach South Polaris).

Next, consider the different goals in adventure quests, such as searching for a magical object, mythical creature or missing person.

Consider what might be in the 'unknown' regions of the *Brightstorm* map. What are the different environments that the explorers could come across in the Wide? Consider



**“Discuss how it’s OK to deviate from the norm when creating a fantasy world”**

doom where you could fall forever if you slipped. Ask pupils to determine a starting point and end goal (reaching an island no one has set foot on before, for example, or retrieving a lost explorer).

**3 GET DRAWING**

Decide whether you’d like children to work individually or collaboratively. They could draw individual maps that cleverly join together with an island, bridge or portal. A3 paper is good because it provides lots of space for world building.

Lay out various maps in the classroom so that children can draw inspiration from the various island and continent shapes. It is also a good idea to have some images of potential features and obstacles on the tables to spark ideas.

Set various levels of challenge according to ability. Some children may measure the journey to scale and add this to their map, for example. Draw dotted journey lines to show the route our hero takes through the adventure.

Encourage children to discuss their creations and choices. They will enjoy giving a summary of their potential adventure plots and this is a wonderful way to celebrate their ideas.

*Before becoming a full-time children’s author, Vashti Hardy was a primary teacher with a special interest in children’s writing. Her books include Darkwhispers, Wildspark and Brightstorm (all Scholastic).*

**EXTENDING THE LESSON**



- Encourage pupils to draw a key for the features on their map.
- Draw the characters that will feature in your new adventure story. Children can also design a new fantasy transport system that suits their new world.
- Ask children to write a scene of their fantasy adventure, based on their map. If time allows, write a complete story.
- Pupils can start their own creative writing journals; unmarked spaces where they can collect images, jot story ideas, draw maps, design cover art and free write.
- Create playlists for the stories you have created to aid with writing. Movie soundtracks can work well. Listen to tracks that evoke danger, sadness, joy, saying goodbye, etc.

blizzards; mythical creatures; different climates.

Discuss how it’s OK to deviate from the norm when creating a fantasy world. For example, what if the volcano on pupils’ maps erupts with something different from lava,

such as magic spells? What if lions can fly in this world?

Encourage the children to include at least three hazard points on their maps, such as a volcano erupting with poisonous insects, a forest of lost memories or a chasm of



**USEFUL QUESTIONS**

- How might climate pose different problems for your characters?
- How could names create a sense of place in your world?
- Can you bring aspects of your own interests into your map?



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- About human geography and tourism in a chosen location
- Identify significant places of interest and customs of another locality
- Where and how to gather geographical information

# Let your pupils book your next holiday



Coronavirus has put travel plans on hold, so let's use our imagination instead, says **Adam Jevons-Newman**

@3edmigos

Ready for a holiday? While current circumstances make this less than likely at the moment, jet off to the destination of your dreams by tasking your pupils with the job of creating the perfect vacation itinerary – including places of interest, hotels, flights and restaurant recommendations. This lesson focuses on human geography and tourism as pupils research, price up and pitch to your brief. It's an engaging way to study the tourism of another locality in a real-life, purposeful context, plus travel planning is a useful real-world skill for pupils to learn.



flight? How did their group achieve that? This gives you the means to ensure everybody has a common date, but also serves as some formative assessment in gauging pupils' understanding of the concept and level of support needed for the next step.

## START HERE

Ahead of the lesson, you'll need to devise a brief for your imaginary holiday. Investigate possible options to help you to support pupils in the lesson,

including departure and arrival airports, month of travel and holiday duration. The aim of this lesson is learning about tourism and human geography, so focus your brief on the excursions, attractions and local cuisine you want to experience. Introduce pupils to the idea that they are now travel agents. Present them with your inquiry and ask them for their ideas about how they will respond to this. Where will they look? How will they make decisions? What do they already know?



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | COME FLY WITH ME

To introduce the concept of the lesson to pupils, begin by sharing a site such as Google Flights. Model navigating the site and how to adjust passenger numbers, dates and departure airports. From here, ask pupils to independently price up your flight requirements, working in groups of three or four.

Discuss with individual groups whether they think they've found the best deal, and why they think that. Regroup as a class and ask each team to share what they have found for you: who has the quickest or most direct flight? Who has the cheapest

### 2 | THE ITINERARY

Recap the children's existing knowledge of the location you are studying and mind-map some of these ideas. What is the location famous for? What sort of things are synonymous with the location? What would somebody be expecting to eat while there?

From here, give pupils a short introduction to an attractions website such as TripAdvisor. It is a good idea to work through a shared example as a whole class first, taken from their mind map of suggestions.



**“By modelling your own reasoning and process, pupils can understand how to research”**

## EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Extend the mathematical components of the lesson by challenging pupils to price the holiday to a budget. Explore the variables of flying on different days or changing the hotel requirements. This could be a good chance to look at percentages.
- Use a photo montage app or equivalent to create a travel guide video for your chosen location. Pupils can narrate images of attractions and hotels with their rationale for choosing it.
- Write a letter persuading your headteacher to consider allowing you to go on a school trip to your chosen destination. Pupils must extol the educational benefits of the holiday.
- Create your own class version of TripAdvisor using Google Sites or equivalent. Embed your travel guide video into this.

As pupils build your itinerary, they should use a sheet to record their planned trip, including the cost of each experience and the rationale behind their choices. They will be able to share this in their ‘pitch’ at the end, in role as travel agents.

## Free online resources

Download a pupil worksheet to help you deliver this lesson from [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/travel-itinerary](https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/travel-itinerary)



By modelling your own reasoning and process, pupils can understand how to research. For example, say, “I really want to see what Oaxaca has to offer, Y6. What sort of things should I be choosing?”.

Emphasise that you are interested in authentic local history and tourism and model the reasoning and research you want pupils to apply. On this basis, pupils can develop their own appreciation for the place you are studying and begin to make their own decisions, reflecting their own understanding of the place.

As pupils research, navigate around the groups. While children may need support with the research itself, try to focus on questioning their reasoning. Why have they selected a particular attraction? How does it help them to really experience and understand your locality of choice? What have people said about it from the TripAdvisor reviews? Do pupils think you, as the client, will enjoy it? How does it help us to get a better understanding of the place we’re studying?

### 3 MAKING A BOOKING

Now pupils have gathered their various recommendations and prices, ask them to assimilate their findings, ready to report back to their client. What are their top three recommendations and why? How do their choices meet your brief?

It’s now time to bring the class back together so each group can pitch their holiday proposal to you. Are there common recommendations the class agree on – the ‘must-dos’ in your locality?

*Adam Jevons-Newman is KS2 and curriculum leader at Farmilo Primary School and Nursery in Nottinghamshire.*

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What are the must-do things in this location?
- How does this attraction or activity link to the place we’re revisiting?
- If I could only do one thing you suggest, which would you insist on, and why?



# Use a simple tool to hack BBC Newsround



Show pupils how to play around with code to insert themselves into the news, says **Adam Parkhouse**

 @parky\_teaches

## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Key phrases of HTML code
- How websites are structured
- How easy it is to make 'fake news'
- The choices journalists need to make when producing web content

If you were going to make the headlines, wouldn't you want to be in control of your own story? This lesson allows pupils to do just that. With a few simple lines of code and the right image you can bring children's newspaper article writing to life. Before the lesson you'll need to install the 'X-Ray Goggles' bookmark onto your web browser (see below for more information) to allow you to edit the BBC Newsround website. The changes disappear once you refresh the page, so don't worry about any lasting damage!



address' then paste this URL into the code that appears when you click one of the Newsround images. Change the headline to something that will grab pupils' attention. When you are happy, take a screenshot of your creation. Use a program like Microsoft Paint to crop it then before pupils enter the classroom, open the image with Internet Explorer for added authenticity.

Once pupils enter the classroom, act casually and don't mention the fact that your school is on the Newsround website. Hopefully there will be a ripple of excitement when children notice that something is up. Now it's time to show them how it's done...

**2 | SHOW THE CLASS**  
This lesson works on the assumption that the children

## START HERE

Before you start creating your own headlines, start with a discussion about the impact of the news.

Ask your class if anyone has

been in the newspaper before. Can they remember the headline? How would it feel if you appeared on the front page with a positive headline? What if a different newspaper showed a different image of the same event with a negative headline? Having a discussion about the ethics of an editor's role and the impact of the language and images chosen will encourage children to take more care over their own choices later in the lesson.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | PREPARING THE WEBSITE

Prior to the lesson, install the X-Ray Goggles bookmark onto your web browser (follow the simple instructions at [x-ray-goggles.mouse.org](http://x-ray-goggles.mouse.org)). Next, visit the BBC Newsround website ([bbc.co.uk/newsround](http://bbc.co.uk/newsround)). Click on the bookmark you have just installed and select one of the boxes. You can now change the image and headline. Take screenshots of the below process to turn into a step-by-step guide – this will be useful for pupils later.

Search online for an image of your own school. Right click it and select 'copy image

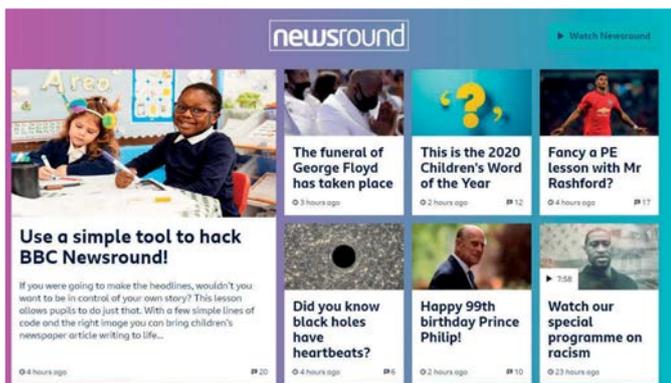


*“Once pupils enter the classroom, act casually and don’t mention the fact that your school is on the Newsround website”*

have little knowledge of HTML code (as may you!). The key elements to show them are the tags that say ‘<img>’ and ‘<p>’. This requires whole-class modelling. Giving pupils the step-by-step guide you created earlier will allow them to refer to the process during the lesson.

Hover your mouse over a piece of text on the Newsround website and

show the children how it is highlighted. Clicking on the box reveals a strip of code. Get the children to find the original headline in the code. Using the backspace key, remove the text and replace it with a sensible suggestion from the class. When you hit update, the class will see the clear change. It is worth repeating this before letting pupils attempt a change of their own.



### 3 CHANGING IMAGES

If you have a school website, and with the right parental permission, you may be able to attach photos of pupils to the headlines. If not, explain to the children that all images have their own web address that can be accessed by right clicking on it and selecting the ‘copy image address’ option. This is also a useful opportunity to introduce children to abbreviations such as ‘.jpeg/.jpg’ and the idea that addresses start with ‘http’.

In the same way that you replaced the headline text, show how to delete the existing image address and paste in the new one. This should replace the image on the screen in front of you. Check for understanding then let children create their own ‘fake news’.

Make sure pupils take a screenshot of their creations. You may need to show them how to paste this into Microsoft Paint. Save the image in a shared folder so children can see each other’s work. End the lesson by selecting some of the best images to share at the front of the class.

*Adam Parkhouse was a silver winner at the Pearson Teaching Awards and is a Y5 teacher at Little Plumstead C of E Primary, Norwich.*

## EXTENDING THE LESSON



- How could pupils use this new skill in other ways or on other websites? Why is this potentially dangerous? What are the benefits of it? Is someone who doesn’t use the internet going to know something is wrong?
- Ask pupils to make their own tutorial using screengrabs for another child to use. Consider using screen recording technology if you have it available. If not, Powerpoint or similar works well.
- Investigate the webpage for other codes aside from ‘<img>’ and ‘<p>’. Make a list of them. Click on them, read the code and see if you can change anything else. Find out how to change font colours by looking at HEX numbers

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What do the bracketed phrases ‘<img>’ and ‘<p>’ stand for (image, paragraph)? Which one changes the image?
- How do you find the web address of an image?
- How can you make your changes look believable?



## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Vocabulary for parts of the body

- Know that all nouns in French are either masculine or feminine

- Recognise the plural form of nouns

- Listen carefully and improve their pronunciation through a well-known song

# Learn French body parts with a song



Get pupils up and active as you introduce the idea of gender in nouns, says **Amanda Barton**

 @amandabook2

This lesson is great if you want pupils to burn off some energy because the topic of body parts lends itself well to kinaesthetic learning. If the weather allows, it's a great activity to do outside or in a larger area such as the hall.

Use this plan to introduce or reinforce the concept of gender in nouns, which many English-speaking children find puzzling, as well as highlighting the plural form. The examples below are given in French but the activities can be used with any language.



## START HERE

Play a game of 'Simon says' in English as the starter. As well as being a good mental and physical warm-up, and being very popular with

children, it helps to prevent any misunderstanding of the body parts you're going to be teaching. Children can think 'la tête' means 'hair' if you touch your head and 'les genoux' means 'legs'. This is a quick way of avoiding ambiguity without having to translate into English. Make sure that you use only the eight words they'll need for the song they'll sing next: head, shoulders, knees, toes, eyes, ears, mouth and nose.



## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | BODY PARTS

Ask pupils to stand up. Introduce the eight body parts in French by pointing to your own body and asking the children to repeat. Start with the easier, singular words – le nez (nose); la bouche (mouth – push your lips forward to emphasise the pronunciation); la tête (head). Then move onto the more difficult ones – les yeux (eyes); les oreilles (ears); les épaules (shoulders); les genoux (knees); les pieds (feet).

After you've introduced a word, and it's been repeated with a gesture, go back to the first word and ask children to repeat that, then the second

word and so on, before moving onto the next new word so that the children have maximum practice in listening and pronunciation.

Say a body part and ask pupils to point to it on themselves. Steadily increase the speed to increase the challenge. Play 'Shout it out.' You call out a body part in French and the pupils shout out the English translation, then vice versa. To make it harder, and really keep the children on their toes, alternate randomly between French and English.

### 2 | SING A SONG

Sing 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes' in French:

*Tête, épaules, genoux et pieds  
(genoux et pieds),  
Tête, épaules, genoux et pieds  
(genoux et pieds),  
J'ai deux yeux, deux oreilles,*



## “Can children remember other masculine or feminine words they’ve learnt previously?”

some of the words start with ‘le’ and some ‘la’. Explain that this shows whether they are masculine or feminine and that all nouns in French have a gender. The gender of a noun isn’t always what you think it is, so you can’t guess. Can children remember other masculine or feminine words they’ve learnt previously?

Why are some of the words ‘les’? Explain that this is the plural form and emphasise that the pronunciation is not like English; this is a common error as pupils apply their English phonics knowledge to French. Play a game to practise – point to different parts of your body and where you indicate more than one, eg both arms, pupils call out ‘les’. More able pupils could also add the noun. If you point to only one body part, pupils stay silent.

Play ‘Simon says’ in French. Pupils will be interested to know that, in French, Simon has a different name: Jacques. The game is just as in English: ‘Jacques a dit touchez le pied’, or just ‘Touchez le pied’ to catch children out. Tell those children who are out to sit down – ‘Asseyez-vous’ – and help you to see who’s going wrong. Ask more able children who are caught out to take on your role and deliver the ‘Jacques a dit’ instruction.

*Dr Amanda Barton is a freelance writer and educational consultant who has taught MFL in primary and secondary schools. She is co-author of Teaching Primary French and Teaching Primary Spanish (Bloomsbury).*

*une bouche et un nez, Tête, épaules, genoux, pieds – genoux et pieds!*

As most children will already know the tune, you don’t really need any musical accompaniment, but there are lots of videos on YouTube if you want some cartoon figures or an animated robot to sing along with you. It can also be useful to display the lyrics for some children. Find them on our Powerpoint download (see panel, right).

### 3 | NOUN GENDERS

This part of the lesson focuses on the gender of nouns. Display the body part words you have learnt (see our Powerpoint) and introduce new ones such as ‘le bras’ (arm), ‘le ventre’ (belly), ‘la main’ (hand) and ‘la jambe’ (leg).

Ask pupils why they think

## EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Play pupils the catchy song and video from BBC Bitesize ([tinyurl.com/tpbbcfrench](http://tinyurl.com/tpbbcfrench)) which looks at the crazy idea of gender in French. Ask pupils to write ‘le’ on one side of a mini whiteboard and ‘la’ on the other and to hold it up whenever they hear one or the other.
- Play an extended version of ‘Jacques a dit’ which includes additional body vocab and some new instructions. As well as ‘Touchez les genoux’ etc, you can also include imperatives such as: *hochez la tête* (nod your head); *levez-vous* (stand up); *asseyez-vous* (sit down); *levez la main* (raise your hand); *baissez la main* (lower your hand); *ondulez les bras* (wave your arms); *dansez* (dance); *marchez* (walk); stop.

## Free online resources

Download an accompanying Powerpoint to help you deliver this lesson from [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/french-body-parts](http://teachwire.net/teaching-resources/french-body-parts)

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Using an online or physical dictionary can you work out what the following words are in French and what gender they are? *Face*; *tooth*; *thumb*; *cheek*; *back*; *neck*.
- What are the following plural forms in English? *Les cheveux* (hair); *les dents* (teeth); *les doigts* (fingers); *les cils* (eyelashes).

# Top of the class

Resources and activities to bring fresh inspiration to your classroom...



1

## Talk for writing

Teacher and literacy expert Pie Corbett and his Talk for Writing team have created 32 Talk for Writing home-school English booklets available free to download (though a voluntary donation to charity for use is requested).

The units are all 25+ pages long and age-related for Reception to Y6. They include a model text, which is also available as a streamed audio recording, and a number of engaging activities. Pie has also been broadcasting a live, interactive and creative KS2 literacy show each weekday morning at 9.30am on radioblogging.net. Daily guests on the show have included Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Anthony Horowitz and Cressida Cowell.

[talk4writing.com](http://talk4writing.com)

2



## Take one book

Take One Book is a flexible framework with teaching sequences and resources to develop deeper reading, comprehension and language enrichment. Keri Edge, executive head at Agate Momentum Trust in Newham says, "Our children are not only enjoying the thoughtfully selected texts but also the rich discussion and deeper thinking it brings to our reading lessons." For the new academic year, 20 new sequences focusing on curriculum subjects, a vocabulary map and an online CPD programme will be added, all based on outstanding children's books.

Email [assistant@justimaginestorycentre.co.uk](mailto:assistant@justimaginestorycentre.co.uk)

3



## RSHE resources

Discovery Education Health and Relationships provides an all-in-one digital programme to help you deliver the new RSHE curriculum – both in the classroom and via distance learning. User-friendly resources for Y1-6 use real-life, child-led scenarios, making teaching PSHE easy, fun and relevant. Written by subject-expert teachers, the programme includes a variety of activities, age-appropriate resources and comprehensive teacher and parent communication support. Free access until October (T&Cs apply – offer valid until 31/8/20). [discoveryeducation.co.uk/pshe](http://discoveryeducation.co.uk/pshe)

5



## Classroom refresh

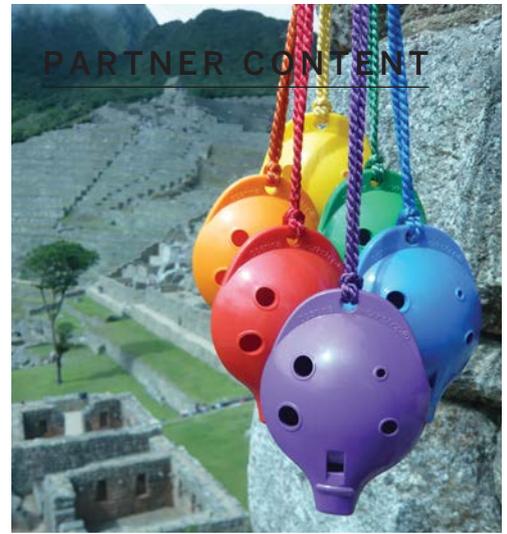
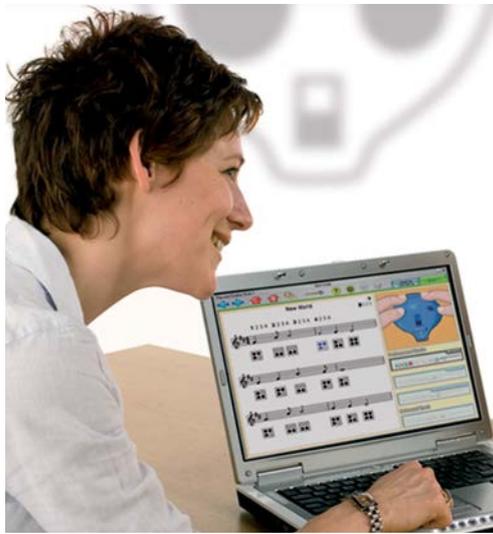
It's a challenging time for teachers at the moment. Hope Education makes it easy for you to fill your classroom with safe, fun and engaging products to create a learning environment that pupils will love. There are hundreds of new resources, all inspired, tried and tested by teachers like you, as well as all the everyday essentials your classroom shouldn't be without. Product descriptions contain curriculum links, allowing you to quickly see which areas of the curriculum they are suitable for. [hope-education.co.uk](http://hope-education.co.uk)

4



## Question everything

Learning by Questions (LbQ) addresses two of the big issues facing schools upon reopening: how to quickly identify and narrow gaps in learning, and how to effectively educate learners both in class and at home. The innovative teaching, learning and assessment tool features 80,000 automatically marked curriculum-aligned questions that give constructive feedback to learners as they answer them. This is proven to deepen understanding, accelerate learning and boost progress. Book a free online demo at [lbq.org/backtoschool](http://lbq.org/backtoschool)



PARTNER CONTENT

### ASK THE EXPERT

# “Everyone can be a musician”

Teacher and songwriter David Liggins explains how you and your pupils can play tuned musical instruments

#### Can every child play a musical instrument?

Yes, with the right instruments. My classes played tin whistle, guitar, keyboard, ukulele and brass – each instrument created its own problems. Then, I discovered four-hole ocarinas. Everyone loved them and played instinctively – all problems solved! Instead of struggling to play just a few notes, children can play full-octave tunes straight away, and harmonies soon follow. With ocarinas, any class can make music; and any teacher can lead whole-class music-making.

#### Can every primary teacher teach music?

As with swimming, you may either be confident, or likely to drown! Your heart may sink at the thought of pupils ‘armed’ with musical instruments and the sight of music notation. However, just as every teacher teaches numeracy and literacy, every teacher can teach music. Ocarina charts show which finger holes to cover – even a four-year-old can read these. And, using bespoke Ocarina teaching materials, you and your classes can make tuneful music that everyone will enjoy.

#### How can musical success be guaranteed?

These teacher-friendly, child-friendly musical instruments and resources together create the right environment for success. Rapid progress is down to a simple ‘what you see is what you play’ approach. Playing tunes is easy, with no mystique and no complexity. Your general teaching skills and teacher-pupil relationship will be more effective than the specialisms of any visiting ‘music expert’, so even if you don’t think you’re very ‘musical’, try playing an ocarina yourself and your class will soon follow.



#### EXPERT PROFILE

**NAME:**  
David Liggins  
**JOB TITLE:**  
Teacher, songwriter, publisher  
**AREA OF EXPERTISE:**  
Whole-class music teaching  
**BEST PART OF MY JOB:**  
Enabling everyone to make music

#### Why is the ocarina a unique solution?

Most wind instruments, even recorders, need carefully controlled breath, ‘intelligent’ third fingers, and an embouchure: special manipulation of lips and facial muscles. Playing the Oc® is so natural that no specialist skills are needed: children play all 11 notes and lots of high-quality music, easily. The four-hole ocarina fingering system is the simplest, and the Oc® sound has been acoustically tested and verified to be purer than that of any other instrument.

#### Why should we ‘do music’ every day?

Research shows that listening, playing and singing all accelerate learning. Physically engaging with music activates the brain. So, singing and playing number patterns, rhyming words, facts about Ancient Egyptians or rainforest tunes, all reinforce learning and embed information, making lessons memorable and enjoyable. This is why dementia sufferers still remember songs from their youth, when other faculties are lost. Active music-making is vital for children’s learning and brain development.

To improve every day, sing and play!

### ASK ME ABOUT

**BEGINNING** – How to involve the whole staff; which class music packs to choose; how to get off to a flying start with whole-class music-making

**COMPOSING** – The national curriculum demands it and few do it. You don’t have to be Beethoven to get creative musically!

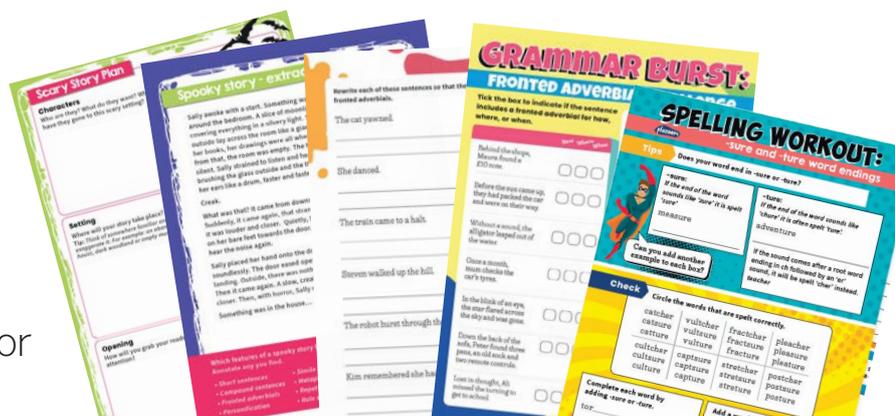
**EXPLORING** – The world is full of music. Discover different eras, cultures and peoples by playing and singing their music, today

ocarina.co.uk/ask T: 01536 485963 E: david@ocarina.co.uk

# ENGLISH

# Plazoom

Outstanding literacy resources for Y1-6, created by teaching experts for the classroom and home learning



## AT A GLANCE

- A comprehensive bank of activities and resources to help develop children's literacy skills
- Designed by teachers and aligned with research informed practice
- Access to over 600 resources, 80+ CPD sessions and full coverage of the primary literacy curriculum
- Resources for teachers as well as parents who are assisting with learning at home

REVIEWED BY: ADAM RICHES



The internet is full of literacy-focused resources that tout themselves as game changing for teachers. It isn't often that you come across a platform that actually delivers on its claims; Plazoom, however, breaks the mould somewhat in this respect – offering a full bank of literacy resources that are well designed, correlated with the curriculum and ordered in a simple, truly timesaving fashion.

Plazoom is incredibly simple to navigate. The interface is intuitive and the content is accessible, regardless of it containing well over 600 resources. These are linked by helpful tags, and each activity and resource is correlated to a substrand of the curriculum, with a preview display of what's included, making finding exactly what you're after incredibly easy; especially as you can filter by year group.

Another organisational feature I like is the concept of resource 'collections'. Plazoom's content is pooled into groups so that you are able to easily navigate between topics without missing any little gems. It sounds like a strange thing to say, but you get a real personal feeling from the platform – it's genuinely user-friendly, both in terms of functionality and interaction.

Of course, functionality and

navigation aren't important if the content you're looking for is no good. Luckily, the resources on Plazoom are as impressive as the site itself. Take the 'spelling workouts' collection, for example: the aim of the sheets are clear, they are well laid out, the desirable difficulty is perfectly balanced with gradually increasing challenge and most importantly, they are presented in a way that engages learners. This is where you really see the expertise and knowledge behind the resource creation. The extraneous load is low and the tasks are focused, using subject specific language and action words from the curriculum objectives. The complexity is present but it is subtle. This approach is used right across Plazoom's resources for reading, writing, spelling and grammar. Very clever stuff.

At £25 for a year's full access (for a limited time only), Plazoom membership is a steal. The resources are worth their weight in gold for teachers; they will help children progress, and save hours and hours of planning time. In addition, the CPD offer – 80+ expert guides – is exceptional. The amount I have learnt that I am already considering translating to my own practice has really surprised me.

teach  
PRIMARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Exceptional breadth of resources that cover topics in substantial depth
- ✓ Highly accurate content that is meticulously planned for success and progress
- ✓ Resources based around real-life events and ideas creating high engagement
- ✓ Sequential resource design allows for full curriculum coverage
- ✓ Significantly reduces teacher workload

## UPGRADE IF...

You are looking for a bank of well-planned, well-thought-through literacy resources that you can download and use instantly, plus solid CPD support. If you're pushed for time due to planning, this is a seriously credible platform from which to source content.

[plazoom.com/benefits](https://plazoom.com/benefits)

CREATIVE PLAY 

# Hope Education home learning kits

Comprehensive sets for children that encourage open-ended play and creative learning



## AT A GLANCE

- Fully-resourced messy play set
- Aesthetically-pleasing imaginative play set
- Stimulating for the senses and imagination
- Promotes open-ended activities

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



The extraordinary events of this year have really tested parents' ability to provide a stimulating and varied learning environment for children. After all the more formal education tasks that many families will have received from schools, how nice to have the opportunity for some more open-ended activities that stimulate the senses as well as the imagination.

Hope Education has created two new home learning kits to meet precisely that need for children. Designed for children aged three and over, there's a fantasy world set which requires a dash of imagination and a messy play set which requires an apron. Both kits contain an impressive range of materials and offer broad scope for hands-on learning.

The messy play set includes fake snow, food colouring, a giant bubble wand and instant slime, plus a collection of containers, measuring spoons and funnels. As well as guaranteeing broad grins, these give ample opportunity for children to experiment, explore and solve problems while developing their linguistic skills as they describe what they are doing.

It has been sweet to watch my young assistant improving her pouring and measuring skills. We also now have two

pump dispensers filled with different coloured slime for whenever we feel the need to help ourselves to a dollop of slightly surreal goo.

The imaginative play set provides everything children need to create their own elf or fairy garden adventure. There are little figures onto which they can project their own ideas of characters without it being dictated to them by design. There is also a delightful set of kitchen furniture, together with a range of materials such as stones, bark squares and moss with which to create and recreate exciting story settings within a convenient large tray. My young assistant had soon laid out an exciting landscape, complete with a wooden shack, made possible by her determination to turn the bark into walls and a roof.

It could be argued that some of the things included within both packs could be found around the home or on a walk through the woods. However, everything here is just right for the job and, particularly with the imaginative play set, very pleasingly finished. Above all, by doing it this way, you can get all the materials for each set in one convenient pack. Children will love them; no doubt their adults will too.

teach  
PRIMARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Good range of resources
- ✓ Convenient one-stop solution for busy families and schools
- ✓ Promotes open-ended play
- ✓ Stimulates children's language and imagination skills

## UPGRADE IF...

You want to create more open-ended, imaginative and stimulating home learning activities.

Messy play set, £29.99 + VAT; imaginative play set, £39.99 + VAT, [hope-education.co.uk](http://hope-education.co.uk)



# DAY in the LIFE



We follow a teacher from first alarm to lights out during lockdown...

## WAKING UP

During lockdown my alarm was my little girl who wakes at about 8am, but usually I get up at 5.45am, eat my cereal while half awake, drop Ember at nursery at 7.15am then drive an hour to work. I drink coffee and sing along to 80s tunes on the commute to motivate me for the long day ahead...



**NIOMI CLYDE ROBERTS** IS A CLASS TEACHER AND ASSISTANT HEAD AT ST GEORGE'S C OF E PRIMARY IN COLCHESTER, ESSEX.

[@teachingaht](#)



## MY MORNING

While we've been confined to home I like to start with a fitness session then I work on curriculum mapping, respond to parent emails and send feedback for learning. I've also been checking over risk assessments and safety regulations so we're ready to receive more children in school.

## MY AFTERNOON

It's back to my laptop to continue where I left off. When I'm in the classroom I normally mark books until 5pm, but I never take work home with me. I like having that divide between home and school.



## LUNCHTIME

I stop at 1pm for lunch – it's either Mexican couscous or pitta bread and taramasalata. I may have a cheeky bag of Skips and a few Jaffa Cakes for good measure!



## MY EVENING

I go for a walk to get some headspace. I tend to overthink things but this helps to refresh my mind. In the evening I drink red wine and watch TV, then often end up dozing on the sofa!



## QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

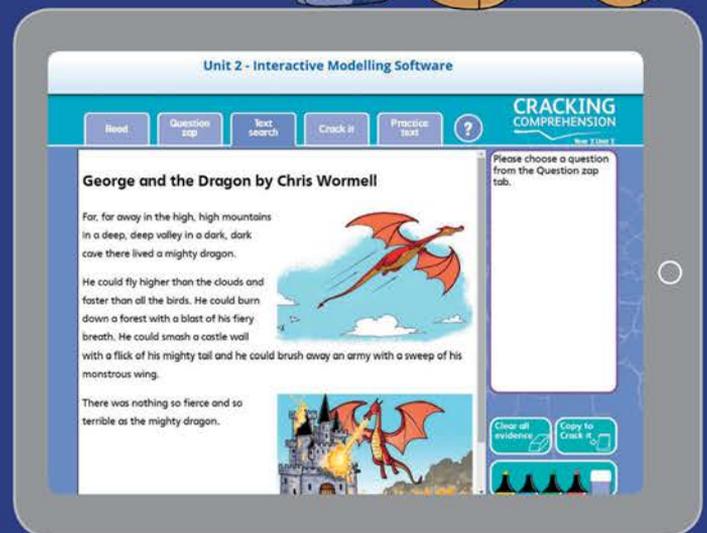
- ❖ **Career plan B?** Own a dance school or become a fitness instructor.
- ❖ **Fave music?** Upbeat songs – Madonna, Scouting For Girls, Annie Lennox, Lighthouse Family, Simply Red, Taylor Swift...
- ❖ **Shows you binge?** Friday Night Dinner, A League of Their Own and stand-up specials from Micky Flanagan and Jon Richardson.
- ❖ **Must-read books?** I worked with Heidi (@hbudders) at my last school and she is an incredibly positive force. She's great at what she does but really humble.

# Embed key reading comprehension and measure progress

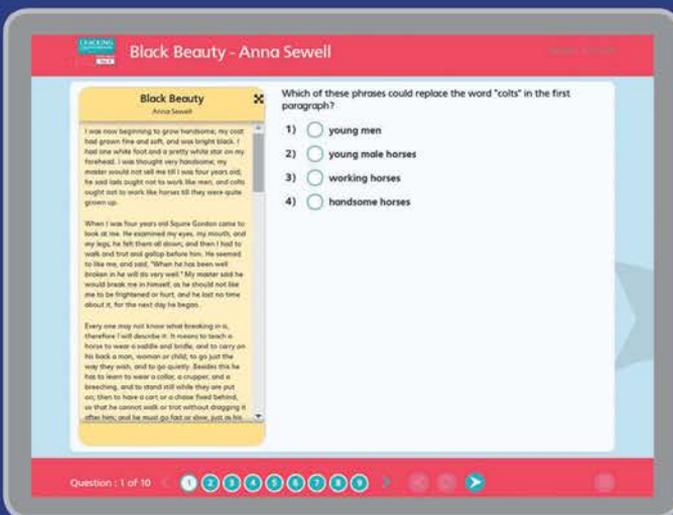
## CRACKING COMPREHENSION



- ★ Step-by-step strategies and teaching notes
- ★ Front of class whiteboard software to tackle questions together



- ★ Allocate assessments to measure and track individual and class progress



Images taken from the digital software for *Cracking Comprehension Fourth Edition* Year 2 and Year 5

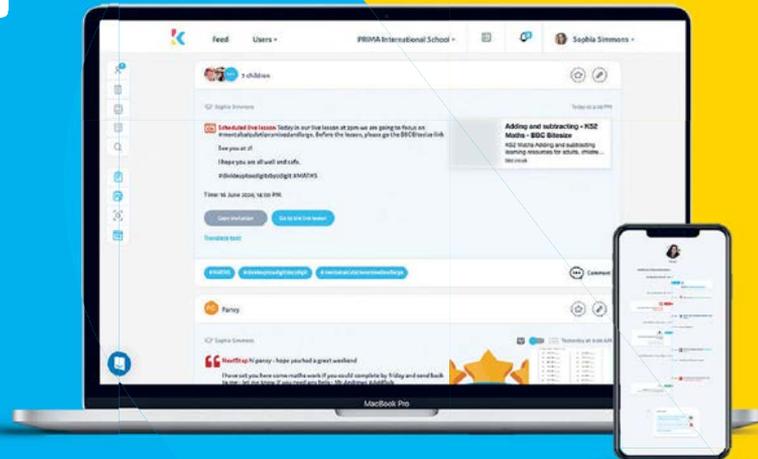
Find out more or request a free trial at [risingstars-uk.com/Cracking20](http://risingstars-uk.com/Cracking20)



Kinteract

# Helping teachers to plan, assign and assess

ALL PROGRESS IS IMPORTANT.  
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HOMEWORK  
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ASSESSMENTS



CLASS  
COLLABORATION

**One connected platform, multiple uses, online learning software that saves teachers time and schools money.**

Find out more at  
[kinteract.com](https://kinteract.com)

To book your free demo simply email [sales@kinteract.com](mailto:sales@kinteract.com) today or call us at 0207 078 3277 and you can be up and running in no time!

