

- Challenge the children to write a short story about a character who overcomes his or her fear to achieve something positive.
- Ask the children to reread the description of the dragon. Invite them to write a detailed description of some other imaginary beast. They might invent their own or write about a traditional mythical creature, such as an ogre, a mermaid, a griffin or the minotaur.

The woman of water (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 3 (page 28)

Genre: Classic poem


Author: Adrian Mitchell

Introduction

The first verse of this chilling story of damaged pride, spite and revenge is told in the form of a recipe as a spell is prepared for the woman. The second verse may offer a challenge to the children's previous perception of what a smile indicates, and is worth discussion. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading. As an extension activity, invite the more able children to write a review of the poem; space is provided in the box below the questions. Discuss the reviews in class later.

Answers 1. *she has refused to marry him* 2. *they are (abstract) things that would be impossible to collect* 3. *e.g. (one of:) 'dark', 'thunder'* 4. *revenge* 5. *she drinks the wizard's poison* 6. *it emphasises the extreme depth* 7. *not really: the old woman gets the final revenge – the 'last laugh' – but both are destroyed* 8. *(any of:) 'squeezed', 'drained', 'charmed'; look for recognition of the reader's ability to visualise these actions and how their meanings reflect the nature of each 'ingredient'.*

Further activities

- Ensure that the children know what a well is and that they understand that 'giving one's hand' to someone means agreeing to marry them.
- Draw attention to the opening phrase, 'There once was ...' and ask the children what other genre of writing it reminds them of. Explain that this is a story, or narrative, poem. Like stories, it has characters, a plot, a setting and a situation to be resolved. It also has a beginning, a middle and an end.
- Ask the children to identify the language devices that make this piece of writing into a poem (rhythm, rhyme, repetition, alliteration – such as 'woman'/'water'; 'drained'/'dark' – and assonance – such as 'weight'/'grain'; 'height'/'cypress').
- Ask the children to identify the effects of the repetition of the word 'And'. (It adds to the sense of single-minded determination on the part of the wizard. At the same time, the repeated simple word does nothing to distract from the list of amazing ingredients.)
- Invite suggestions as to how the telling of this story would differ in prose narrative. Would more time be spent on describing the woman's daily trips to the well, for example, and the wizard's noticing and watching the woman of water and becoming obsessed by her? (Consider whether, if he really loved her, he might still want to destroy her when she turned him down?)
- Ask the children to retell the story in prose, embellishing the characters and adding detail and direct speech. Ask them to imagine how the wizard proposed, what was the passage of time before he punished her, how she felt when she became a well and what her thought processes were in planning to trap the wizard.
-  Explain that cypress trees are often planted in graveyards. Discuss how this knowledge might have influenced the poet's choice of tree and how this adds to the

atmosphere and implications of the poem. Compare other trees' attributes and how differently they would work in a spell recipe – such as the sap of an oak, in a potion to give someone strength, or the sap of a willow, to make someone weep. Share ideas to create a class 'spell' poem.

Respected relative (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 3 (page 30)

Genre: Letter


Author: Robert Louis Stevenson

Introduction This is a genuine letter that the Victorian children's poet and author Robert Louis Stevenson wrote to his father in 1866, when he was aged 15½. It will strike a chord with any child who has tried to sweet-talk a parent into giving them extra pocket money. Its formality is tongue-in-cheek but is nevertheless typical of the era. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading.



Other texts by Robert Louis Stevenson appear in **Key Stage 2 Comprehension Book 2** (page 26, 'The arrival of a rugged seaman', which is an extract from *Treasure Island*), **Book 3** (page 24, the poem 'Keepsake Mill') and **Book 4** (page 24, 'Our toilsome journey', which is an extract from *Kidnapped*).

Answers 1. the address and the date 2. his father 3. doctor 4. one month/the next month 5. 'enormous', 'elephantine' 6. 'moderate' 7. strong winds, tempests 8. money 9. *to have stated his case; to have won sympathy* 10. 'My sense of generosity forbids the receipt of more – my sense of justice forbids the receipt of less than half-a-crown.'

Further activities

- Invite comments on the layout and content of the letter. What is and isn't there that the children would expect to find. (A specific date; the address aligned to one side; the absence of 'Dear' at the beginning.)
- Ensure that the children understand any unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Explain that Robert Louis Stevenson was a sickly youth and spent long periods confined to bed as a young child. Discuss the location of Torquay (on the Devon coast). His health was doubtless benefiting from the fresh sea air.
- Challenge the children to write a similarly tongue-in-cheek request to their parent for money, but using twenty-first century formal parlance, at the same time creating a fresh scenario, such as a school field trip or skiing holiday.
- Challenge the children to create a conversion table of old money (pounds, shillings and pence) to new decimal coinage, as introduced in 1971. Note: there were 12 old pence to a shilling and 20 shillings to a pound, so 2/6 – two shillings and sixpence (or 'half a crown', a crown being five shillings) – is 12.5 new pence; a crown is 25 new pence; a shilling is five new pence, and so on.
-  Read and discuss with the children any of Stevenson's poems that refer to his ill-health as a child – for example, 'The land of counterpane', or 'The sick child'. Ask them if they can identify with the feelings he expresses.

Answers 1. Jupiter 2. a tortoise shell, stems, reeds and slender strings 3a. rang out 3b. sweet-sounding, tuneful 4a. he was too busy playing his flute 4b. he was supposed to be looking after the herd 5. he was distracted by the sight and sound of the lyre 6. a shepherd's pipe 7a. two snakes entwined around a wand (later with added wings) 7b. the Caduceus 8. myth 9. Apollo.

- Further activities**
- Check that the children understand any unfamiliar vocabulary: for example, 'absorbed', 'abyss', 'entwined'.
 -  Ask the children what the names Jupiter and Mercury have in common. (Both are the names of Roman gods; both became the names of planets.) Invite the children to investigate the characters of Mercury and Apollo. What other stories can they discover about either of these mythological characters? What were the Greek names for these characters? (Jupiter was Zeus; Mercury was Hermes; Apollo was Phoebus.)
 - Ask the children to categorise the instruments referred to in the story. (The lyre is a stringed instrument; the pipe is a wind instrument.) What present-day instruments fit into these categories? What other types of musical instrument are there? (Woodwind, brass and percussion.) Invite the children to discover how the instruments are arranged in an orchestra. Challenge them to design a musical instrument and write instructions on how to make and play it.
 - Introduce the children to Gustav Holst's orchestral composition, 'The Planets', composed between 1914 and 1916. Play the third and fourth movements – titled 'Mercury, the winged messenger', and 'Jupiter, bringer of jollity'. Discuss how well the music reflects the characters. Can the children identify any of the instruments they hear?
 -  Encourage the children to invent their own brief story describing an incident in which music brings peace – quelling, for example, an argument, disagreement or fight. Challenge them to tell their story to the rest of the group using expression, varying tone, pace and volume, and adding musical sound-effects if appropriate.

Pyramus and Thisbe (Level 5 text)

Contained in: Book 3 (page 36)

Source: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Genre: Playscript


Author: William Shakespeare

Introduction This extract is from one of the most accessible and popular of Shakespeare's plays, and it has particular appeal for children. The humour involving the artisan-players demands to be read aloud and the children may well enjoy reading more of this scene from Act I Scene 2. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading. Explain that 'Ercles' (line 8) is Bottom's way of pronouncing Hercules – the great hero of Ancient Greek mythology.

Another text by William Shakespeare appears in **Key Stage 2 Comprehension Book 4** (page 38, 'From father to son', which is an extract from *Hamlet*).

Answers 1. celebrating a wedding 2. carry on 3. they will be moved to tears 4. a cruel or oppressive ruler 5. (one of:) 'raging rocks', 'shivering shocks', 'shall shine', 'make and mar', 'foolish Fates' 6. to demonstrate his skill 7. equipment for blowing air (to start a fire, for example) 8a. 'I have a beard coming' 8b. he tells him he can wear a mask 9. a 'wandering knight' 10. he says 'Thisne' to sound more weak or pathetic 11. 'monstrous' suggests the complete opposite of a 'little' voice.

Further activities

- Read through the text together, ensuring that the children fully understand each line – since Shakespearean language will be unfamiliar to most of them.
- Allocate the parts of Bottom, Quince and Flute to three individuals and ask them to read the scene aloud with expression in their voices, changing the tempo, volume and tone as if they were performing a radio play.
- Discuss why Flute is being asked to play the part of a woman. (Plays were often played either by guilds of workers, or by members of a church community, and members of both these groups tended to be male. Therefore it became a tradition, for a time, for men to play both male and female roles in the theatre.)
- Remind the children of the Roman gods who featured in the story 'How music made peace' on page 34. Explain the phrase 'Phibbus' car' – the chariot of Phoebus, which is the Greek name for the Roman god, Apollo (god of the sun). Invite the children to research the names of other Greek gods, such as Phoebe (Roman god, Artemis): goddess of the moon.
- Invite the children to research 'the Fates' – three mythical figures of Greek legend, sometimes called 'Moirae'. They are three sisters, all robed in white, who decide on human fate. Lachesis speaks of the past, Clotho of the present and Atropos of the future.
-  Group the children in threes and ask them to plan and write a script for the three Fates, as if they were addressing a familiar fictional character, such as Cinderella, Dick Whittington or Little Red Riding Hood. Each in turn will tell the chosen character, respectively, how things were, are now and will be in the future. For example, Lachesis' script could tell Cinderella what a beautiful and much-loved girl she was; Clotho could describe her life since her father remarried; Atropos could warn her to expect a visit from her fairy godmother and advise her to follow her counsel and so become a princess.

Laws affecting women (Level 5 text)

Contained in: Book 3 (page 38)

Genre: Persuasive text

Author: Emmeline Pankhurst


Introduction

Assisted by her daughters, Sylvia and Christabel, Mrs Emmeline Pankhurst (born in Manchester in 1858) led the Women's Suffrage Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her campaign for women's legal rights and equality with men was aided by the outbreak of World War 1 in 1914, forcing women to take on the jobs of men, who were away fighting. When many men lost their lives in the war, the status of women in society was, by default, altered. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading.

Answers

1. 'suffrage' 2. the home, child-rearing 3. *decisions on how money is spent* 4. 'she ought to give up her employment' 5. shelter, food, clothing 6. *allowing women adequate clothes and food and/or control and choice over spending: 'equality'* 7a. 'legal' 7b. 'sufficient' 8. (two forfeited rights and/or responsibilities, such as:) *control over all decisions, including where she lives; money matters, including how and when to spend or save; how she dresses; whether she works; what she eats.*

Further activities

- Check that the children understand the words 'just', 'security', 'obliged' and 'conscientious'.
-  Ask the children to imagine that they are living 100 years ago and have just