

Language activities

Text level work

A magic adventure

Paint one side of an old key with gold paint and keep it in a box. Open the box to show the key 'glowing'. Tell the children it is time for you to have a magic adventure. Take groups of children for a walk around the school but change the names of everyday places to imaginative ones. A corridor becomes a secret passage, every doorway needs a password (let a different child invent each one), the cloakroom becomes a cave. Manhole covers or doormats become swamps – walk carefully around the edge and be quiet or the creature may wake! Paving stones become stepping stones across a deep river; listen carefully and make no noise – is something watching you? Are there tiny people looking down from the branches of trees or hiding in the long grass? What are these tiny people called? Flowers and weeds have special powers: 'If you smell the flower you ...'; 'If you touch a leaf ...'; '... but never pick the flower or break a branch because ...'.

Tell the children they may bring back one tiny thing from the adventure – a seed from a magic plant, an unusual pebble, a tiny magic wand, a shiny piece of gravel. Children may change their choice during the walk, but may only bring one magic thing back to the classroom. When you return, sit in a circle and ask the children to say what is special about their choice and what the magic can do. If you begin it helps the children to become involved and gives them an example: 'My stone is special because it has a hole in it. It is magic because it makes the person carrying it feel happy when they are a bit fed up.'

Label a scarecrow

Labelling, using Sheet 5.1

Use the picture of Fred on Sheet 5.1 as a demonstration to show how labelling lines are drawn. Ask the children for further descriptive labels to fit the picture, such as 'face painted on paper bag', 'hair made from wool'. You could write the labels the children suggest and draw more lines as necessary. Ask the children to draw and name their own scarecrow and label it in the same way. Alternatively make a large scarecrow by stuffing old clothes with newspaper and write explanatory labels for a class display.

The rescue

Background discussion

After reading the story of *Mum to the rescue*, discuss the sequence of the actual rescue incident with a group: the boat was sailing towards the weir; a lady called for help; Mum got into the dinghy; Mum climbed on to the big boat; Mum drove it away from the weir; everyone was pleased. Ask the group to decide among themselves which pictures each person will draw so that they can tell the story to the rest of the class and show their pictures.

What a fright!

Talking about feelings of characters, using big book Pirate adventure

Look at the pictures on pages 16-17 of *Pirate adventure*. What do you think the children are thinking? Cut out thought bubbles and add them to the picture in the big book using Blu-tac. Is someone thinking 'I want to go home.'; 'How can we escape?'; 'Help!'; 'I wish we had never found the key.'?

Frightening stories

Talking about children's own feelings, using Sheet 5.2

Do the children remember when Biff was frightened by a different story (*The dream*)? What was the frightening part of that story? Have the children ever been frightened by a story? Use a Circle time discussion to talk about being frightened of things in books. Biff doesn't like stories about dragons and pirates, but she does like dolphins. Gran doesn't like nasty witches. Sheet 5.2 asks children to draw pictures to complete the sentences: 'I like stories about ...'; 'I do not like stories about ...'. You might like to use this sheet with a group in the library. Ask children to find books they like and copy the covers, then find books they do not like and copy those covers.

Gran

Knowing about a character, using big book Gran and Sheet 5.3

Share the big book of *Gran* with the children. What do they think of Gran? Use Sheet 5.3 with the picture of Gran to write down their ideas: 'Gran is ...'; 'Gran likes...'

- ◆ Do the children like having Gran to stay? Why?
- ◆ Does Mum like having Gran to stay?
- ◆ What does Gran keep in her handbag? How do you know it is heavy?
- ◆ What did the Jumping Castle man think about Gran? Did he think she was good fun?
- ◆ Why did Gran start dusting?
- ◆ What did Gran think when the key began to glow?

Read *Castle adventure* with the children. Can they add to the list of words about Gran? (Gran is brave, strong, clever, not frightened of witches, etc.)

My gran and grandad

Talk about grandparents and when children see theirs. Do they live nearby, or faraway? What do the children call them? What is the best thing about grandparents? Ask the children to draw a large picture of their own gran or grandad. Help them write sentences around the picture: 'My gran is/likes ...'

Do the children know that grandparents are their parents' mum and dad? If possible ask a grandparent to come and talk to the children about their memories of school.

Witches

Sheet 5.4

Read *Castle adventure* and talk about witches the children have met in other stories, such as *The wizard of Oz*, *Meg and Mog*, *The worst witch*, the witch in *Snow White* and other traditional stories. What do they know about witches? Use the pictures on Sheet 5.4 and complete the sentences: 'Witches have ...'; 'Witches can ...'; 'Witches fly ...'; 'Witches wear ...'; 'Witches sometimes ...'.

Story starters

Sheet 5.5

How do stories usually begin? Use a library time, or books from the reading corner to look at the first sentences of stories: 'One morning ...'; 'Once upon a time ...'; 'A long time ago there was ...'.

Take turns for children to show or read the story beginning which they have found. Decide whether the beginning would be useful to have in the classroom to help with story writing. Write the chosen story starters on Sheet 5.5 to keep a record, or enlarge it to make a poster.

Three witches

Story writing

Castle adventure does not tell us how the three witches came to be in the castle. Did they need somewhere to live? Was one of the royal family unkind to them? Where did they live before? Decide which of the suggested beginnings to use for this story. You scribe the story on large sheets of paper as each part is agreed by the group. When did Gran and the children arrive? The next day? The next year? Rewrite the rest of the story in the children's own words. Ask children to choose different parts of the story to illustrate. Does the story need a new title? Should it be called: *The three witches?* *The three frogs?* *The frog spell?* or *Gran to the rescue?*

Type the story on the computer or rewrite to match the pictures. Mount as a big book and keep in the reading corner.

What's it all about?

Big book *Village in the snow* and Sheet 5.6

Read the story using a big book to share the text and the pictures with a group or the class. At the end of the story, ask the children to recall the main events. Is the village the most important part of the story? Do the children think the story could have a different title? What is the story about? What would they call the boy? What would they call the story?

You could use the frames on Sheet 5.6 and ask children to draw the four most important parts of the story. Use a second copy of the frames for children to write a sentence to match each picture. These can be used by other children for sequencing activities.

How well do you listen?

Read *The whatsit* to the children and ask the following questions:

- 1 Who was painting the ceiling: Mum, Dad or Biff?
- 2 Who was painting the walls: Mum, Dad or Chip?
- 3 When did Mum find the trap door? When she moved the cooker? When she pulled up the carpet? When she looked behind a cupboard?
- 4 Who went into the cellar first: Mum, Dad or Biff?
- 5 Who pretended to be a ghost: Dad, Kipper or Chip?
- 6 Why did Dad say the thing they found was a whatsit: because that's what it is called? because he didn't know its name?

- 7 Who took away the whatsit: two men? or a lady?
- 8 The lady wanted the whatsit: for herself? for a junk shop? for a museum?
- 9 In the museum they could see the whatsit was: for winding wool into balls? to tie string around? a table ornament?
- 10 Dad bought the children a whatsit. Was it a fish tank? a snooker table? a computer?

How much do you notice?

An observation activity

Read *Underground adventure* with a group. Children should each have a copy of the book so that they can see the pictures. Afterwards find out if they have noticed:

- 1 What was Biff using to tap the walls with?
(a baseball/ rounders bat)
- 2 In the cellar, who was in the picture?
(an old man wearing glasses and a hat)
- 3 What were all the children wearing on their heads?
(hard hats)
- 4 What were most of the elves wearing on their heads?
(pointed hats)
- 5 Where were the elves hiding?
(behind the stalagmites)
- 6 What was the elves' mining company called?
(L. Finn & Co)
- 7 Do you remember what was written on any of the new notices? (pages 18–19)
- 8 How did the elves change the caves for the visitors?
(lights, guides, safety railings)
- 9 What else did the elves do besides guiding visitors around the caves? (serve teas, collect entrance money, sell souvenirs)
- 10 How much was Chip going to charge for visitors to his cellar? (10p)

Spot the mistakes

Reading for meaning, using Sheet 5.7

Read *Vanishing cream* with a group or an individual. Then read Sheet 5.7 together. This retells part of the story but makes some changes. Are the children aware of the changes? Can they remember what the story said?

Sentence level work

The great race game

Making sentences, using Sheets 5.8, 5.9 and 5.10

This game for two players uses the road for *The great race* as a track game. The baseboard is on Sheet 5.8. Cards

to go with this game are on Sheet 5.9. The cards have half sentences. The cards on this sheet can be cut out and used as playing pieces. The object of the game is to make the most whole sentences from cards collected along the way. The sentences need not be the same as those in the story, but they must make sense. Notices on the board tell players how many cards to take or put back. Rules for the game are on Sheet 5.10.

First and last

Noticing punctuation, using Sheet 5.11

Remind children that a sentence always begins with capital letters and ends with a full stop. Sheet 5.11 has sentences from *It's not fair* with the first and last words missing. The missing words are at the bottom of the sheet. Children could write them or stick them in the gaps.

Sort them out

Making sentences, using Sheets 5.12 and 5.13

Sheets 5.12 and 5.13 each have three short sentences from *The dragon tree* and *Gran*. There is a picture clue for each sentence but all the words have been muddled up. Remind the children that the first word in each case will have a capital letter, and the last word will have a full stop. This should help them sort out each sentence. Encourage the children to cut out the words and try ordering them in different ways until they make sentences which match the pictures, then paste them in the space provided.

Monsters

Making sentences, using Sheet 5.14

Sheet 5.14 is the base for children to make sentences in the same way as they used the van at Stage 4. There are word cards to cut out at the bottom of the page. Choose sentences which include words you want the child to practise. Write the words for the sentences on the word cards. Cut out the words and ask the child to sort them out into sentences and place them on the monsters. The child then pastes the words in place and colours the picture. You might like to enlarge the sheet, colour and mount it, and keep it in an envelope with a supply of words as a class resource.

Why was that?

Introducing longer sentences, using Sheets 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17

Sheets 5.15, 5.16 and 5.17 have half and half sentences

which include 'because'. For example, 'Gran was upset ... because Mum was cross.' They are taken from *Underground adventure*, *The great race* and *It's not fair*. Cut the sentences into strips and ask children to put the sentences back together again. Children could paste them on a large sheet of paper and draw a picture to match each sentence.

Lost letters

Introducing apostrophes

This activity is suitable for more able children. Read *The whatsit* and explain that 'whatsit' is short for 'What is it?' Ask children to identify the lost letter. Look at the cover of *It's not fair* and ask children if they can tell you what the lost letter is this time. Write *It's*, *I'm*, *don't*, *that's*, on a board or a large piece of paper. Find these words in *The whatsit* and read the whole sentences aloud. Ask the children if they can tell you which letter has been lost each time. Can they tell you what has been put into the word instead? Tell them that it is called an apostrophe.

Look for apostrophes in other stories. They should find *couldn't*, *there's*, *let's*, *you've*, *didn't*, *I'll*, *can't*, *we'll*, in Stage 5. Make a poster for classroom reference with the short and longer versions side by side.

Word level work: Word recognition

Close the gap

Missing words, using Sheets 5.18 and 5.19

This game is played in the same way as Sentence lotto, except that only one word is missing from each sentence. There are two baseboards and a set of word cards for *The magic key*. (See Sheets 5.18 and 5.19.) The caller has the word cards in random order in a bag or box. Two players each have a baseboard. The caller takes a card from the bag and shows it to the players. The first one to identify a suitable gap claims the word. Play continues until all the gaps have been filled. Both players then read their cards to the caller.

Which little word?

Missing words, using Sheets 5.20 and 5.21

Sheets 5.20 and 5.21 have excerpts from *The Whatsit* and *Vanishing cream*. Some two and three letter words have been omitted. Ask children to read the sentences to you and predict the missing word. Then ask the

child to cut out the words at the bottom of the sheet and paste them in the right gaps. Alternatively, enlarge the sheet, cut out and mount the words from the bottom of the sheet and ask children to place the right word card in each gap.

Pictures and words

Matching activities, using Sheets 5.22 – 5.27

Sheets 5.22, 5.24 and 5.26 have pictures which illustrate the nouns from Stage 5 trunk stories. Sheets 5.23, 5.25 and 5.27 have the word cards to match. Use these cards to play games such as those described in Stage 4 on pages 63 and 64, for example, 'Against the clock' and 'Treasure hunt'.

If you do not wish to cover the silent 'k' at this stage, leave out the 'knight' word and picture cards and 'kn' letter card (Sheet 5.33).

Word lotto

Word matching game, using Sheets 5.28 and 5.29

This game is for four players and a caller. Enlarge the baseboards on Sheet 5.28 so that each quarter is A4 sized. Provide a supply of counters. Four children each have a baseboard. A fifth child or an adult is the caller. The caller has the words on Sheet 5.29 cut up into individual cards and kept in a bag or box. When the caller shows a word, every player with that word covers it with a counter. Play continues until one player has covered all the words on his board. The caller asks this player to read back all the words.

Scanning

Practising word recognition, using Sheet 5.30

Sheet 5.30 has sentences containing given key words and a 'word box' where the words appear in random order. Enlarge the sheet and ask the child to look for the given word, circling it every time it appears on the sheet.

Lots more

Drawing attention to plurals, using Sheet 5.31

Sheet 5.31 has pictures of nouns from Stage 5 with space for children to draw some more of each item. There is also space for them to write the plural word by adding an 's'.

Which one?

Drawing attention to forms of verbs, using Sheet 5.32

Sheet 5.32 has sentences from *A monster mistake* with missing verbs. Three forms of the verb are given as a multiple choice. You can do this activity as a group, trying out different possibilities and listening carefully to decide

Word level work: Graphic knowledge

upon the right answer. Alternatively, give the sheet to individuals and ask them to cut out and paste the word in place, or copy the right word in the space provided.

More initial sounds

Sheet 5.33

Sheet 5.33 has cards with five initial sounds which are different from those suggested in Stage 4. It also has seven consonant blends which are relevant to Stage 5 vocabulary. (The consonant blend 'kn' has been included because of the context word 'knight' in *It's not fair*. If you do not wish to cover the silent 'k' at this stage leave out the word, picture and letter card.) You can use these cards with pictures from Sheets 5.22, 5.24 and 5.26 for the games described in the Stage 4 Language activities on page 65, such as 'Matching sounds' and 'Odd one out'.

Word level work: Phonological awareness

In the car or in the tent?

Looking for letter patterns, using Sheet 5.34

Sheet 5.34 is to encourage children to look for common letter patterns. There are pictures of a car for '-ar' words and a tent for '-ent' words. Ask the children to look at each word in the list in the box and decide whether it belongs in the car or in the tent, or in neither. Write the '-ar' words on the car and the '-ent' words on the tent.

Alphabetical order

Word and picture cards, on Sheets 5.22 – 5.27

Use the word and picture cards on Sheets 5.22 – 5.27 to organize words in alphabetical order. Ask children to use *Oxford Reading Tree Table Top Alphabet* or *Alphabet Frieze* as a way of checking. If you display these words together with those from Stage 4 they can become the basis for a class word bank.

Inside words

Looking for spelling patterns, using big books

As an oral activity when looking at a big book with the class or a group, draw the children's attention to the way that smaller words may be found within longer ones. For instance, in *The magic key*:

something – some, so, me, in, thin, thing
 into – in, to
 glowing – glow, in, wing
 opened – open, pen
 smaller – small, all
 everything – ever, every, very, thin, in, thing
 slipper – slip, lip
 pushed – push, us, she, he, shed

Write these on a large sheet of paper and ask children to look out for more in other words. Add new 'inside words' to the list.