

**Mrs Ockleton's
Rainbow Kite
and Other Tales**
**Thinking Through Literature
Teacher Resource Book**



Garry Burnett
Music by
Gordon Giltrap

Mrs Ockleton's Rainbow Kite and Other Tales

THINKING THROUGH LITERATURE

Teacher Resource Book

Garry Burnett



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 The icon shown here indicates the stories that can be found on the audio CD accompanying this book.

Track list for accompanying CD

- 1 A Yuletide Tale
- 2 The Man in Black
- 3 Filthy Lucre
- 4 Twenty-six Baboons
- 5 Mrs Ockleton's Rainbow Kite



Introduction

Mrs Ockleton's Rainbow Kite and Other Tales: Thinking Through Literature is an English resource primarily written for teachers of students aged 11–14, i.e. Key Stage 3. The stories and their accompanying activities deal with a wide variety of themes, including emotional intelligence, death and bereavement, bullying, friendship, family relationships and growing up.

The activities and assignments are designed to enhance the development of thinking skills and intelligence using texts as a basis and to draw upon original stories, poems, newspaper extracts etc in order to deliver this.

At the beginning of each section introducing the activities that accompany the stories is a series of teacher's notes that give insights into and suggestions for how the stories could be used. They also give details of clear and specific links to the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy and relevant Thinking Skills and English National Curriculum levels.

Underpinning the activities is the tireless quest to raise standards of attainment in critical and creative thinking. When constructing tasks for developing responses to each of the stories the questions and activities were partly drawn from an understanding of the following hierarchy of skills developed by Lorin Anderson in *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* (2001, Allyn & Bacon):

- 1 Remembering
- 2 Understanding
- 3 Applying
- 4 Analysing
- 5 Evaluating
- 6 Creating.

They hopefully reflect the increasingly sophisticated demands suggested by the taxonomy and work by 'step' to create a progressively more challenging reading of the stories. For further details of the taxonomy see page 115.

There has also been a conscious attempt to introduce activities based on the model of multiple intelligences proposed by the celebrated Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner. Gardner's work since *Frames of Mind* (1983, Basic Books) has been to expand our understanding of intelligence by proposing nine (and there could be more) areas of talent and predisposition. Human beings, he claims, have developed 'multiple' intelligences to enable them to solve problems and to represent the world around them, with talents ranging from the following domains:

- linguistic
- logical
- visual
- musical
- interpersonal
- intrapersonal
- existential
- physical
- naturalist.

To concentrate too heavily on one mode, Gardner claims, is to limit the individual's potential or possibly even neglect ways of differentiating material to students that might hitherto have remained inaccessible. A healthy intellectual development, he concludes, will include the cultivation of all of the intelligences and not stereotype children into being a particular learner 'type'.

Further details of how teachers can use Multiple Intelligence Approaches to Reading Texts (MIARTS) with any story or text-based activity can be found in Section 2, pages 110–114.

References to the National Curriculum for English

The activities that accompany the stories in Mrs Ockleton's *Rainbow Kite and Other Tales* can also contribute to the delivery of the following Key Stage 3 National Curriculum for English levels.

En 1 (Speaking and Listening)

Pupils will have opportunities to demonstrate speaking and listening skills at the following levels:

At level 5a

- a To match talk to different situations
- b Use vocabulary precisely and organise communication clearly
- c Contribute, evaluate others' ideas, vary participation

En 2 (Reading)

Pupils will have opportunities to demonstrate reading skills at the following levels:

At level 5a

- a To show understanding
 - Develop inference
 - Select appropriate evidence
- b Identify key features, themes and characters
- c Pick out supportive evidence, quotes to support a point of view
- d Understand how texts are organised (and use similar organisational strategies in own work)
- e Compare and contrast texts
- f Discuss the degree of success the author has achieved literary objectives

At level 6a

- g Read and discuss a wide range of texts
- h Identify *layers* of meaning
- i Identify the effects and significance of texts
- j Express a personal response to texts with reference to language, structure and themes

At level 7a

- k Select and synthesise information

En3 (Writing)

Pupils will have opportunities to demonstrate writing skills at the following levels:

At level 6a

- a To write to engage the reader's interest
- b To use appropriate form and structure

At level 7a

- c Show clear sense of purpose and audience
- d Express a clear and coherent point of view
- e Write confidently using a range of sentence structures

In the teacher's notes section immediately preceding the activities there are references to the above levels.

Thinking Skills

The following guide to thinking skills in the National Literacy Strategy is adapted from the DfES Leading in Learning programme. The thinking skills are organised under the following headings:

- Information Processing
- Reasoning
- Enquiry
- Creative Thinking
- Evaluation.

Through speaking and listening, reading, and writing activities relating to *Mrs Ockleton's Rainbow Kite and Other Tales* students will have the opportunity to exercise and develop these important thinking skills. Whereas the activities can be seen as integral to an English programme, they are clearly transferable into thinking and learning contexts across the curriculum.

The references 'S&L' for speaking and listening, 'Wr' for writing ('Wd' for word level, 'Sn' for sentence) or 'R' for reading denote the main emphasis of the activity.

A key to the references for the stories are as follows:

YT	(<i>A Yuletide Tale</i>)
MrG	(<i>Mr Gorman</i>)
MiB	(<i>The Man in Black</i>)
UK	(<i>Uncle Kevin</i>)
FLuc	(<i>Filthy Lucre</i>)
Mar	(<i>The Mariner's Tale</i>)
Egging	(<i>Egging</i>)
26	(<i>Twenty-six Baboons</i>)
Billy	(<i>Billy the Cat</i>)
MrsO	(<i>Mrs Ockleton's Rainbow Kite</i>)

Year 7

Information Processing

Wr19	collect, select and assemble ideas in a suitable planning format, e.g. flow chart, list, star chart	FLuc Billy Egging
Wr8	explain a process logically, highlighting the links between cause and effect	MrG FLuc
Wr11	organise texts in ways appropriate to their content, e.g. by chronology, priority, comparison, and signpost this clearly to the reader	YT FLuc
S&L8	listen for and recall the main messages of a talk, reading or television programme, and record these systematically using abbreviation	MiB 26
S&L13	compare different points of view that have been expressed, and identify underlying differences and similarities	MiB Billy

Pupils will have opportunities to attain at the following Key Stage 3 National Curriculum levels:

En 2 (Reading)

Pupils will have opportunities to demonstrate reading skills at the following levels:

At level 5a

- b Identify key features, themes and characters
- d Understand how texts are organised (and use similar organisational strategies in own work)

At level 6a

- g Read and discuss a wide range of texts
- h Identify *layers* of meaning
- i Identify the effects and significance of texts

There is a strong PSHE element to the work included in this unit, most of it dealing with aspects of emotional intelligence. In exploring relationships pupils will develop insights into qualities and skills for impulse control, coping with 'put-downs' and verbal 'bullying'.

The Dylan Thomas 'found' poetry assignment invites pupils to exercise linguistic intelligence through exercises relating to consideration of vocabulary and descriptive prose, as well as exploring features of how texts are organised. Dylan Thomas's work has been an enormous influence on my own, particularly *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* and his various *Memories of Christmas*.

This particular story was written during a very sad time of personal loss and finished following the death of a close relative and serious illness of another early in December 1995. One Saturday night I couldn't sleep and got up at 3 a.m. to scribble notes and give shape to various ideas I had for a Christmas story. My wife was wrapping Christmas presents and I worked to the wonderfully evocative *A Midnight Clear* CD of Christmas hymn tunes by my good friend Gordon Giltrap. I actually wrote 'A Yuletide Tale' to 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel', and the concluding paragraphs work almost as lyrics written to the rhythm and pattern of that tune.

It was as if writing the story 'surfaced' all the poignant and frustrating emotions of the last few months and when I finished it I just sat and cried. I had never experienced the cathartic release of writing in that way before and as a result I think this has remained a favourite among my own stories ever since.

'A Yuletide Tale' is also available on the audio CD and considering the influence of Gordon's music on my writing, it might be useful to listen to the CD recording in order to reflect on the use of emotional and atmospheric music on this particular track.

- Ⓞ This story can be found on Track 1 of the audio CD accompanying this book.



First impressions



Listen to the story carefully and follow the words in your book.

As you listen be prepared to:

- Attempt to 'visualise' scenes from the story 'in your mind's eye'.
- Think about the use of music.
- Discuss your favourite parts of the story.
- Write a list of questions you would like to ask the author in the box below.

Try to answer each other's questions for the author or email them via www.garryburnett.com.

? Discuss (with your group)

- Which were your favourite parts of the story?
- Which parts made you sad?
- How did the boy cope with the verbal bullying by his dad and Uncle Kevin?
- How could he have coped?



Impulse control



The boy in the story ran away from home 'on impulse'. This means he didn't really think through what could have happened to him when he did so. 'Acting on impulse' means 'on the spur of the moment', 'without planning'.

? Discuss

- What could he have done to cope with the situation?
- Have you ever done anything 'without thinking' that, had you thought about it, you might never have done?
- What kind of 'impulses' do people have that cause them to act without thinking?

✍ Write

- Write about a time when someone really lost their temper – it could be you or someone you know.
- Write a letter to a newspaper about something that really makes you angry and that you would like to see changed. For example, bullying, school dinners and so on.
- Make a list of ways of coping with impulses in the box below. For example, counting to ten and so on.

Top tips for coping with impulsive behaviour



Put-downs and put-ups



People often give us useful *feedback* on the way we have performed or behaved.

A teacher might write 'That was a good story, but I think you should have more description in the opening paragraphs' on a piece of your writing.

Sometimes, however, feedback can be insensitive and can come across as *personal criticism*.

Sometimes we take criticism badly, even when it is offered with the best of intentions, that is, to help us improve what we are doing.

A good guide is to 'never criticise the person, criticise the act'. For example:

'That wasn't a very thoughtful thing you said because ...' would sound much better than '**You are** thoughtless' because you are criticising the act, not the person.

Or

'I didn't agree with the way you lost your temper then because ...' rather than '**You are** bad tempered'.

People often use personal criticism to put other people 'down', usually in order to put themselves 'up'. Bullying of any kind, including verbal bullying, is something we should not tolerate.

Try doing the following:

- Make your class a 'put-up zone' and design posters that illustrate this.
- Praise someone every day. Make a real effort to congratulate someone on what they have done, on how they look, on something they have said and so on. Avoid saying negative things that put others down.
- Come up with a set of class rules banning certain words and phrases. Try to find ways in your class of 'putting-up' people who have low self-esteem.



Newspaper article: types of reporting



Read the following article written by the columnist W.F. Deedes from the *Daily Telegraph* (June 10th 2004).

Country Diary

A man appeared in court the other day, charged with taking the eggs of rare wild birds and was warned that he might go to prison for it.

What folly, I thought, and then turned my mind back to the days of my boyhood when I was addicted to raiding bird's nests and kept my spoils in the drawers of a small cabinet. There were, let me add, plenty of these little cabinets on sale. So I was not a solitary miscreant.

But what was the attraction of searching for a bird's nest, taking an egg or two and keeping a collection? Today I suppose, the motive would be mainly commercial. The egg of a very rare and protected bird is marketable. Between the ages of 8 and 12, when my Easter holidays were given over to this strange hobby, I can declare at least that my motives were not commercial, I never sold an egg in my life – nor found an egg worth selling.

My parents indulged my pursuit, usually in company with a chum from a neighbouring farm, reckoning, I suppose that it provided fresh air and healthy exercise and kept me out of more damaging mischief, but my mother laid down the rules. No more than one egg should be taken from a nest, otherwise it might be deserted. If the bird was sitting, it was not to be disturbed. I was not to climb trees above a certain height.

We lived near heavily wooded areas in those days in which birds abounded. So there were rewarding takings. Eggs of our more common birds have beautiful colouring. Jackdaws are not pretty birds, but their speckled eggs have a great charm. The two white eggs laid by the wood pigeon are dull, but pigeons build high, so under mother's rules were out of bounds.

The delicate art was blowing a captured egg. This called for a very small hole at one end of the egg and a slightly larger hole at the other end. Then, with lips to the smaller hole, you blew the contents,

leaving an empty shell for the drawer in the cabinet.

There were always eggs beyond reach, just as one finds with life itself. I dreamed of finding a kestrel hawk, kingfisher or plover. All three eluded me. But just before I gave up bird's nesting, I procured the egg of a mistle thrush – such exciting colouring.

These days I walk through the woods at this season watching the birds in nesting mode, but feeling no guilt for stealing their eggs all those years ago. It was after all a relatively harmless indulgence. Neither I nor my chum endangered any species of rare bird and I learned a lot about the countryside and its ways.

Put to it, I could still dam a stream, a task my friend and I practised when bored with the search for nests. The secret of that was making a sufficient stockpile of the material you need before tackling the stream. And why did that prove of value in later life?

I learned that both in peace and war it is wise before starting any undertaking to make sure you have the material required to do the job close at hand. Bird's nesting? It was a part of growing up. I feel sad for boys denied the harmless thrill of it.

W.F. DEEDES

- 1 What is the name of this column? What type of writing can you expect from this writer then?
- 2 What similarities are there between the way each author talks about the pursuit of eggging?
- 3 He writes, 'my motives were not commercial. I never sold an egg in my life – or found one worth selling'. Are there any similarities between this feeling and the boy's feelings about why he collects eggs in Burnett's story?
- 4 Why did the writer's mother lay down rules? How is this similar to the boy's experience in 'Egging' by Garry Burnett?
- 5 Does W.F. Deedes think it was an innocent activity?
- 6 Does he think the man who appeared in court should go to prison?

(continued)



Newspaper article: types of reporting (contd.)

Write

First ...

Write a short factual newspaper report about a man arrested for stealing rare birds' eggs.

You must create a list of facts before you write the report including:

What? Where? When? How? Why?

Then ...

Write a different type of newspaper article. This one should not just be factual but also describe what the different opinions might be on this subject.

Which type of newspapers would you find such articles in?

Pupil research project

Look up the story 'Spit Nolan' by Bill Naughton (1992, Creative Education, Incorporated).

What similarities are there between the way the boys describe making a kart and the process of preparing eggs in 'Egging'?

What specific 'kart-racing' terminology is used in this story?

'Spit Nolan' talks of using a 'knob of margarine' for the brakes. What kind of experiment or instruction does this sound like?

Pupils will have opportunities to attain at the following Key Stage 3 National Curriculum levels:

En 2 (Reading)

Pupils will have opportunities to demonstrate reading skills at the following levels:

At level 5a

- a To match talk to different situations
- b Use vocabulary precisely and organise communication clearly
- c Contribute, evaluate others' ideas, vary participation

At level 6a

- j Express a personal response to texts with reference to language, structure and themes

I always view this story as a 'performance piece', one I use to 'end the show' in order to 'send the audience away with a smile'. I was once paid a huge compliment by a girl who had heard the CD recording and asked 'who did all of the other voices?' I actually concocted the 'eavesdropping' story theme following an excursion to the bar at the interval of *Les Miserables* in Manchester when my wife and I overheard two utterly convincing very upper class accents articulating complete nonsense about the performance they had just seen.

I was very conscious of not being over-descriptive in this piece, so the reader might note that it does rely heavily on internal and external dialogue, rather than detailed descriptions of characters and scene. The whole notion of 'internal' commentary is one I assimilated from the first person narrative persona Scout Finch in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* – the idea of the 'wise' child deconstructing the madness of the world around her really appealed to my own sense of perspective. Naturally I could have added much more but the humour, I think, is better contained and communicated in its brevity.

As a boy I was a fan of the comedian Les Dawson, and particularly of his two character creations the lecherous 'Cosmo Smallpiece' and the drunk 'Happy Harry Merryweather'. There is certainly something of Cosmo in the character of Tom. My friend Peter Thomas asks me to perform this story to his PGCE students at Hull University annually and then completely distracts me by laughing all the way through it. He says it's partly due to my gurning in the first section – I have obviously missed a vocation.

- © This story can be found on Track 4 of the audio CD accompanying this book.

Through the various activities in this fully photocopiable book, teachers will have the opportunity to develop their students' thinking skills and multiple intelligences in relation to the use and understanding of English literature. Linked closely to the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum for English, the activities are designed to exercise a range of individual learning styles and are described with clear learning objectives for the teacher and student.

The activities are based on ten charming short stories by Garry Burnett. These illustrated stories provide an exciting and accessible opportunity to develop emotional and intellectual responses to fiction; to analyse, select and organise information; and to read, write and think imaginatively. Particular attention has been paid to ensure that the stories appeal to boys as well as girls. Five of these stories are included on the accompanying CD narrated by Garry with music by Gordon Giltrap.



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Garry Burnett is an advanced skills teacher at Malet Lambert School in Hull. A former Head of English and LEA Adviser, he is also the author of the best-selling *Learning to Learn: Making Learning Work For All Students* (Crown House Publishing, 2002) and *Parents First* (Crown House Publishing, 2004). He lives in Kirkella, East Yorkshire. www.garryburnett.com



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Critically acclaimed from 1968 to the present time, guitarist **Gordon Giltrap** has released 22 albums plus numerous compilations. He has collaborated with such diverse names as the London Symphony Orchestra, Brian May, Midge Ure and Cliff Richard. www.giltrap.co.uk

“Garry Burnett really knows how to engage and inspire students, and his latest book/CD is a triumph. I only wish he had been my English teacher!”

Colin Rose, Accelerated Learning Systems

“I am not an English teacher and probably never will be, but this book leaves me with a nagging feeling that I'm missing out on something. Garry Burnett's love of language, of words, of images and imagery is contagious and makes you desperate to get together with a group of young people and work through these charming and engaging stories using the clear and detailed ideas and strategies from the workbook. There is a personal, almost cathartic, nature to his stories – vignettes of Northern life – that will resonate with teachers as much as the children. And more than just a useful addition to a literacy lesson, the author draws from his experience in thinking and learning to show the teacher how to use the stories as a starting point for exploring issues including family, bullying, identity, creativity and even bereavement.”

Ian Gilbert, Author of *Little Owl's Book of Thinking*

Also available:

Mrs Ockleton's Rainbow Kite and Other Tales

An illustrated anthology of all ten stories designed especially for students

ISBN 1845900200 Price £4.99

Mrs Ockleton's Rainbow Kite and Other Tales: Thinking Through Literature CD

The accompanying CD in this book can be purchased separately

ISBN 184590026X Price £9.99



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