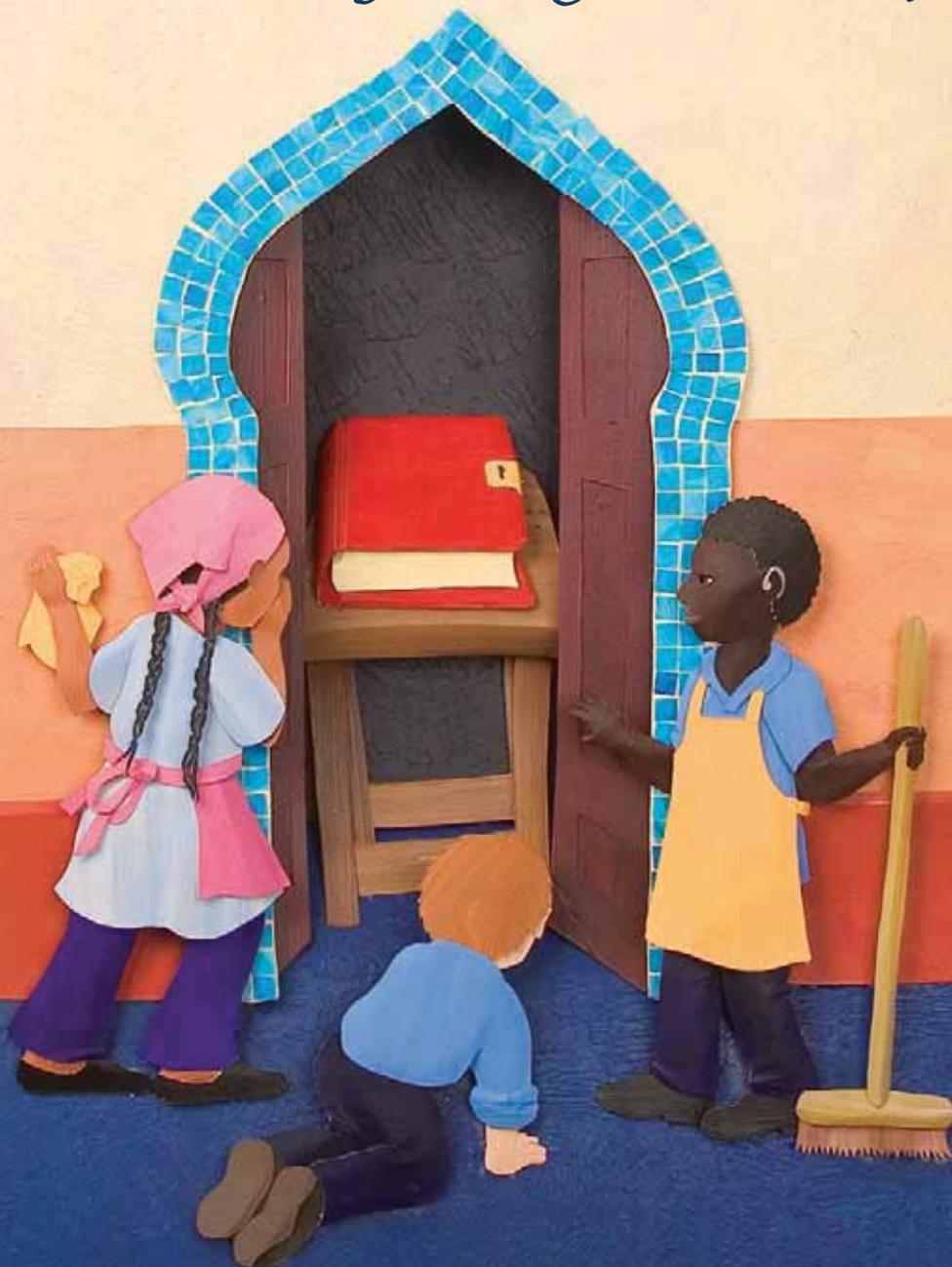


# Covering the Curriculum with Stories

*six cross-curricular projects that teach  
literacy and thinking through dramatic play*



**Sharon Ginnis and Paul Ginnis**

**Foreword by Dorothy Heathcote**

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# Contents

Foreword .....	1
What is <i>Covering the Curriculum with Stories</i> ? .....	3
<b>Part 1 Reasons, Benefits and Teaching Tools .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Why Work Like This? .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Delivering the power of play through drama .....	7
How stories can develop learners .....	10
Why bother? .....	16
<b>The <i>Play Write</i> Framework .....</b>	<b>19</b>
Putting literature into literacy .....	19
The seven basic plots .....	22
<b>Dramatic Conventions – the tools for the job! .....</b>	<b>27</b>
Pupils in Role .....	27
Teacher in Role .....	29
Meetings .....	34
Scene Drawing .....	37
Map and Plan Making .....	38
Drawing and Writing in Role .....	39
Role on the Wall .....	40
Hot Seating .....	41
Costuming .....	42
Freeze Frame .....	43
Still Image .....	44
Thought Tracking .....	45
Forum Theatre .....	45
Soundscape .....	46
Ritual .....	47
Role Reversal .....	48
Reflection .....	48
<b>Part 2 Projects for 3–5 year olds .....</b>	<b>53</b>
How the Projects are Laid Out .....	55
Mrs Hope’s Shop .....	57
The Incredible Shrinking Machine .....	79
The Magic Book Adventure .....	101
<b>Part 3 Projects for 5–7 year olds .....</b>	<b>129</b>
How the Projects are Laid Out .....	131
The Remedy Rocket .....	133
The Quest .....	159
The Big Factory and River Trouble .....	189
Appendix A Professor Howard Gardner’s Multiple Intelligence Theory .....	221
Appendix B Dr Anthony Gregorc’s Mind Styles™ Analysis .....	225
Index .....	229

## What is *Covering the Curriculum with Stories*?

*Covering the Curriculum with Stories* is the first in the *Play Write* series of books.

As literacy involves much more than a set of technical exercises, the *Play Write* series is designed to provide structured opportunities for the emotional and imaginative engagement that is required for pupils' future development as readers and writers. *Play Write* does this through creative activity using dramatic techniques to explore a selection of stories.

*Covering the Curriculum with Stories* provides six story-based projects (with two additional projects available on a Supplementary CD, *Covering the Curriculum with Stories: Supplementary Projects for Foundation and KS1*). The book will also help you deliver much of the Foundation and KS1 curricula in ways that the pupils will find meaningful, enjoyable and memorable.

You will find tales of adventure and daring (*The Incredible Shrinking Machine* and *The Quest*), of comedy (*Mrs Hope's Shop*), of unleashed and uncontrollable supernatural forces (*The Magic Book Adventure*), of dilemmas in outer space (*The Remedy Rocket*) and of complex life-threatening problems (*The Big Factory* and *River Trouble*).

Each project has a central story that is used as the starting point to develop a range of activities that cover many areas of the curriculum. The stories are brought to life through the use of the teacher and pupils working in role. Each project has detailed guidance notes that suggest how the activities can be developed to deliver cross-curricular material, literacy skills, thinking skills, as well as emotional intelligence and the foundation of independent learning.

All you need to know to teach the projects successfully is explained in the project sections. At your fingertips, for each project, you have:

- a clear overview with precise learning outcomes
- simple, clear, step-by-step instructions
- in some cases, the very words to say
- details of pupil activities, including Optional Extras
- lists of resources (some of these resources are on the Resources CD inside the back cover)
- worksheets (also on the Resources CD)
- references to QCA programmes of study.

References to the worksheets and other resources on the Resources CD are given in the text. In addition, the original artwork by Sue Hagerty is available in a Poster Pack and Artwork set, available separately, so that you can easily make your own customised paper-based or hi-tech resources to extend project activities.

The projects cover a lot of the curriculum but not all of it. Not every potential cross-curricular link is pursued with activities; if we'd tried to do this the book would have run into several volumes! The Optional Extras within the projects give you examples of activities you can carry out to cover additional curriculum content and a table at the back of each project gives you further pointers so that you can create more opportunities of your own.

So, the complete set of resources for *Covering the Curriculum with Stories* comprises:

- this book, with the worksheets and other classroom resources on the Resources CD inside the back cover
- a Supplementary CD, which can be bought separately, containing two further projects complete with resources: *Little Bo Peep* (for 3–5 year olds) and *The Giant Pet Escape* (for 5–7 year olds)

- a Poster Pack containing posters of the original artwork and illustrations that can be used as visual aids for all the projects and an Artwork Memory Stick containing all the artwork that you can then print, customise and project onto your whiteboard to your heart's content. This set can also be bought separately.

*Covering the Curriculum with Stories* is in three parts.

**Part 1** provides the rationale for the methodology and explains the teaching techniques you will need.

**Part 2** presents three outstanding story-based projects for children aged 3–5:

- **Mrs Hope's Shop** Customers tidy up Mrs Hope's disorganised shop as a surprise for her, but find that the surprise is on them! What will they do when she doesn't react as expected?
- **The Incredible Shrinking Machine** Mrs Leszczyk's friends are shrunk to the size of ants and have fun and adventures in the garden with a giant-sized spider and an enormous caterpillar. Can they outwit the spider and save the garden from the giant caterpillar?
- **The Magic Book Adventure** In a dusty tower, the King's new cleaning staff discover a magic book that no one has opened for a very long time. The book can make good things happen, but at a very high cost to the local villagers. What should they do?

**Part 3** provides a further three original projects for children aged 5–7:

- **The Remedy Rocket** When a rocket full of newly-trained astronauts and boxes of medicine is forced to land on a strange planet, there are issues to be faced. Should the local inhabitants be trusted? Should the astronauts share their resources? What are they prepared to sacrifice to care for others?
- **The Quest** The people of The Pastures must wake the Queen of Golden Towers who has been put into an enchanted sleep. Time is running out. The great monster of Bad Land is about to break through the Great Wall and threatens to spoil everything in Good Land for ever. What can they do?
- **The Big Factory and River Trouble** Factory workers are making a special secret medicine that will stop worldwide disease for all time. The trouble is that people who live near the factory keep getting sick. Is there a connection? What should they do?

Two more projects can be found on the Supplementary CD:

- **Little Bo Peep** (for 3–5 year olds)
- **The Giant Pet Escape** (for 5–7 year olds).

By following the *Play Write* series, you will provide your young students with a curriculum that is personalised, flexible and creative. You will be astonished at how much material you cover through these story-based projects. They will take you away from fragmented, subject-based teaching towards thematic, cross-curricular, integrated schemes of work of the kind currently favoured by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England and the Department for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DELLS) in Wales. You will embed literacy within a variety of contexts, just as you are being encouraged to do by 'the powers that be'. In other words, your methodology will be completely up to date.

Across the UK, teachers and policy-makers are in the mood for creativity and for active, play-based experiential approaches that deliver essential skills. Through *Covering the Curriculum with Stories*, your pupils will become good authors, good thinkers and good learners; they will become personally aware and socially skilled. Along the way, they will have lots of fun and will lay down important conceptual frameworks in readiness for the 'heavier' content of Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. In fact, you will have built for them a true foundation for life-long learning.

## Why Work Like This?

The books in the *Play Write* series provide teachers and their pupils with a creative approach to the Foundation and KS1 curriculum. They show you how to cover a great deal in a short time through cross-curricular projects. As a teacher, you can achieve lots of learning outcomes by following these step-by-step project plans. In addition to this, using *Play Write*'s fiction-based approach will provide pupils with a series of coherent and engaging contexts that will help them to make more *sense* of the curriculum. Being engaged in enjoyable physical and imaginative learning will give them the motivation and confidence to do some challenging thinking.

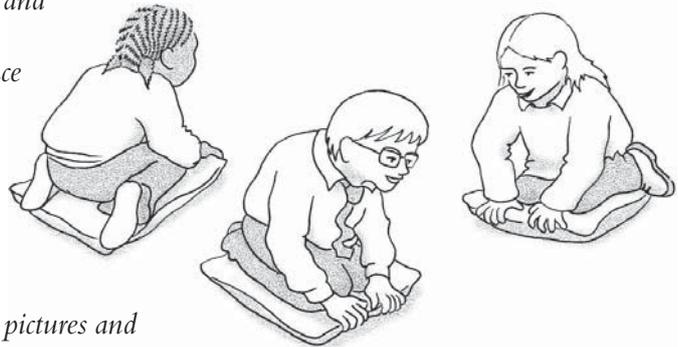
As this book's title suggests, *Covering the Curriculum with Stories* is designed to help you teach much of the current curriculum, particularly literacy and thinking, entirely through stories. This is in line with the trend for more thematic, as opposed to fragmented, teaching.

Your children can achieve learning outcomes beyond those generally expected at Foundation and KS1. They can reach levels of skill, levels of personal and social awareness, and depths of conceptual understanding that go well beyond the standards to which we have become accustomed. All of this is achievable with young children by following some relatively simple guidance. The methods advocated in this book are the result of 20 years of classroom experience. Everything has been tried and refined several times over. Nothing is conjecture.

A prime aim of this book, and the others in the *Play Write* series, is to meet the growing demand from teachers, and government, for effective ways to teach literacy that are creative and embedded, and simultaneously develop the qualities of thoughtfulness and independence. Here you will find an approach that sits comfortably alongside more formal techniques. The *Play Write* series focuses on the art of *story making* (and as children get older, *story writing*) and *story reading*. It shows you how young children can understand the literary qualities of stories, and can create their own genuine literature with artistic merit.

## Delivering the power of play through drama

*'In play, children are given the chance to imagine and recreate experience. As they explore situations, events and ideas ... they improve their competence with language through social interaction ... As they play, children will practice doing and saying things that they are not really able to do, such as making a journey in space. They can capture their actions in drawing, early writing or painting, and retell events to friends, practitioners and parents. They are learning that pictures and words are symbolic ways of presenting meaning.'*

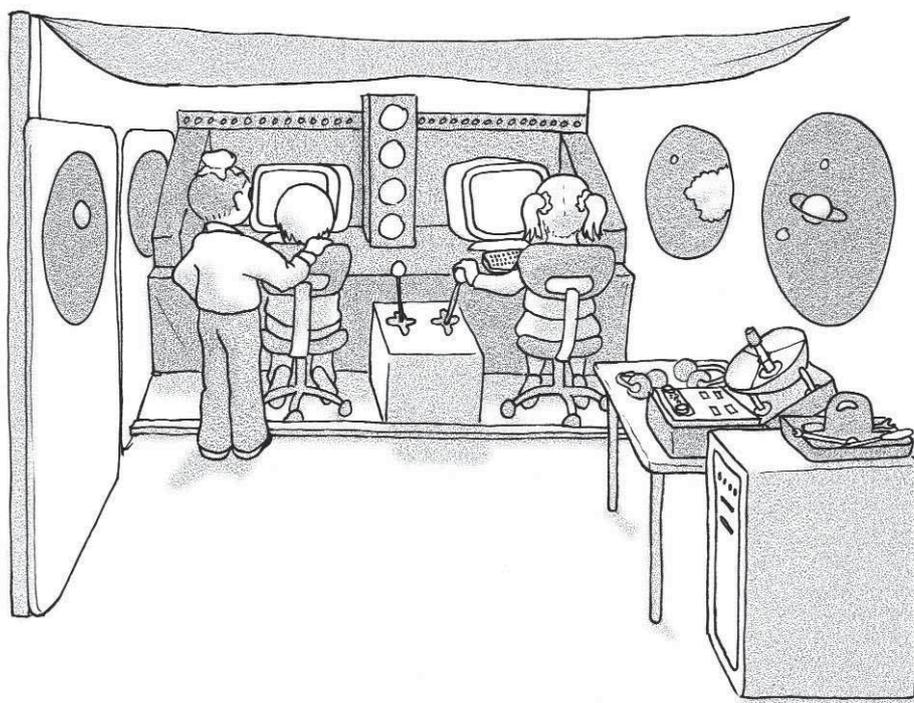


(QCA Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage)

*'Children learn through first hand experiential activities with the serious business of "play" providing the vehicle. Through their play, children practice and consolidate their learning, play with ideas, experiment, take risks, solve problems and make decisions individually, in small and in large groups. First hand experiences allow children to develop an understanding of themselves and the world in which they live.'*

(Jane Davidson, Welsh Assembly Government's Education and Lifelong Learning Minister)

All children are innately driven to play and in playing their learning develops naturally. Imaginative play is such a powerful tool for learning because it allows children to go beyond the limitations of their physical world. In imaginative play, they can be who they want to be: adults; other children; superheroes; even villains!



The medium of imaginative play allows children to practice attitudes, skills and speech patterns that they don't use in 'real life'. For example, their play activities might involve being a fearless adventurer with lots of running, shouting, jumping and fighting. It's common for children to import into imaginary situations the language and behaviours that are modelled in ordinary scenarios around them. In a game, children will use fragments of speech, or styles of speech, that have been overheard in the house or come from the TV or story books. This copying helps them to work out what words and registers mean, as well as what effect they have in certain situations and, therefore, when it's appropriate to use them.

Likewise, children often copy the behaviours of the grown-ups around them (we all know how embarrassing this can be!) as they test out more sophisticated ways of going about things. They watch, they copy and they project what they see and hear into their own fictional contexts. In particular, they examine 'cause and effect' in relationships; they observe what seems to make people happy, sad, furious and stressed – and watch how these situations are handled. Then they replay them back to us with telling accuracy.

The use of drama at Foundation and KS1 is very closely related to play, so please do not feel that using drama with very young children is beyond them. In following the projects in this book, you will be adding a degree of structure and challenge that will guide and enrich the play experience.

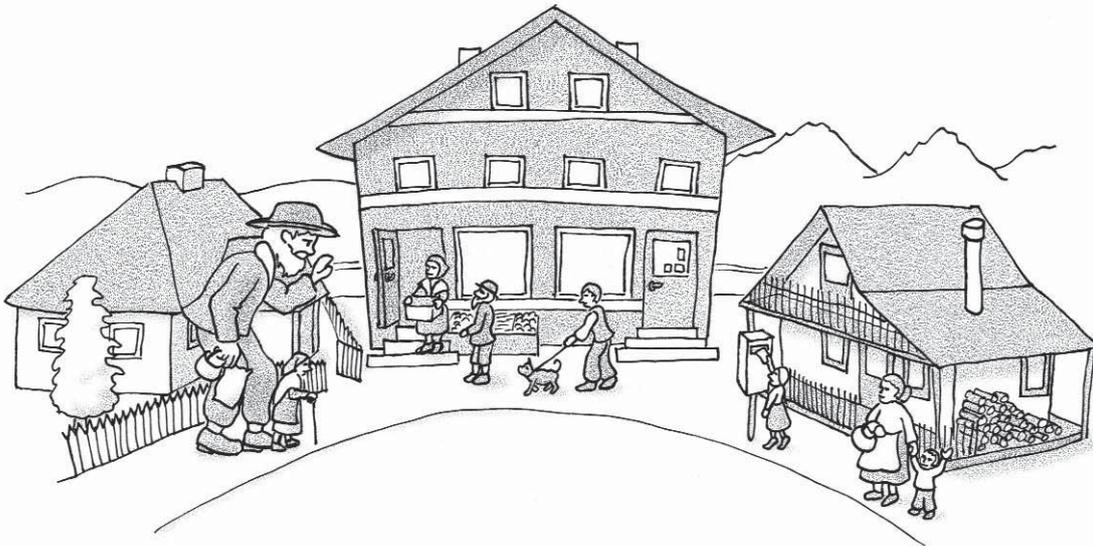
Dramatic fictions deliver further benefits. Nowadays, there is some consensus about the kind of qualities (sometimes called 'attitudes', 'dispositions' or 'attributes') that learners need to 'learn how to learn' in order to move towards genuine independence. Conveniently, they all begin with R!

Conflating these ideas from Alistair Smith, Bill Lucas and Guy Claxton, the qualities can be summarised as:

- Resilience
- Reciprocity
- Resourcefulness
- Responsibility
- Reflectiveness
- Responsiveness.

The *process* of devising a drama will, sooner or later, confront children with the need to demonstrate these various qualities. They will be required to co-operate in groups and make democratic decisions (Reciprocity); to work things out for themselves and explore alternatives when things don't work (Resourcefulness); to keep going when it gets tough (Resilience); to draw on their (limited) experience, making connections with real life and reflecting on the process once it's finished (Reflectiveness).

The *content* of many dramas (the fictional situations pupils find themselves in) also provides opportunities to further their senses of Responsibility and Responsiveness, in that they are often asked to make tough decisions and face the consequences, as well as to monitor and evaluate situations and react to changing circumstances. The building of these 'learning-to-learn' dispositions is a key feature of personalised learning and goes to the heart of true transition.

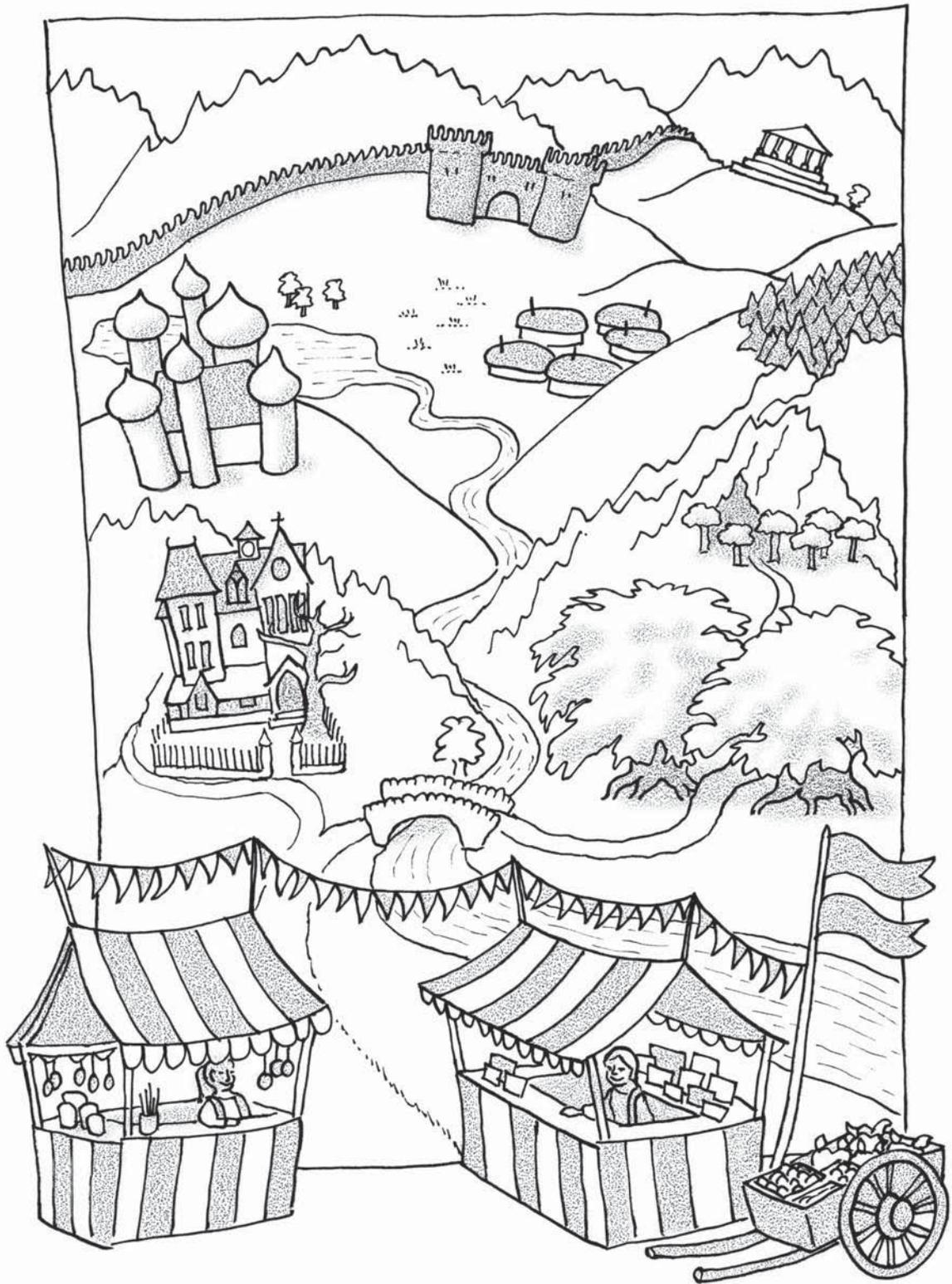


In addition, devising stories collaboratively and taking part in dramas provides the foundations of good citizenship:

- first-hand experience of team-work
- experience in managing personal emotions and behavioural choices
- practice in deferring gratification
- being required to listen to and value other people's viewpoints
- a chance to practice collaborative decision-making, compromise and conflict-resolution
- increased awareness of the impact of one's own behaviour on others.

However, some teachers fear that pupils might get carried away by drama, leading to facts being exaggerated, distorted or ignored. It is true, sloppily done classroom drama might result in material

# The Quest



# Planning checklist

<b>Subject matter</b>	A quest to recover a precious item; rural life; a range of different landscape features such as fields, mountains, caves, a lake, a town and a village
<b>Themes</b>	Loyalty; trust; secrets; the threat of war; good versus evil; heroism
<b>Key resources and equipment</b>	<p>Costume item to sign TIR as Keeper of the Rules, such as a cloak or draped cloth</p> <p>Costume items to sign TIR as Talgorn, such as a cloak and back pack</p> <p>Costume item to sign TIR as the Mayor, such as a hat, cloak, mayoral chain</p> <p>Costume item to sign TIR as The Lady of the Living Lake, such as a head-dress or flowing watery coloured cloak</p> <p>Costume items to sign TIR as Lord Grimlac, such as a gentleman's tie and handkerchief</p> <p><b>Worksheet</b> (in folder The Quest on the Resources CD) Supplies worksheet (Supplies Worksheet.pdf)</p> <p><b>Props include</b></p> <p>Map of Good Land (Map.pdf)</p> <p>Silver and gold cardboard coins</p> <p>Pictures of fields, pastures, rivers, lakes, caves and farms (Landscapes.pdf)</p> <p>Picture of the mysterious house (House.pdf)</p> <p>Root and Top Supplies (Supplies.pdf)</p> <p>Letter (Letter.pdf)</p> <p>Castles Pack (Castles.pdf)</p> <p>Glass pebbles</p> <p>Junk to make model castles</p> <p>A Rules Scroll for TIR as Keeper of the Rules</p> <p>Equipment for TIR as Talgorn: rope; lantern; water bottle; purse with coins in</p>
<b>Organisation</b>	<p><b>Time</b> Without Optional Extras: 8–10 hours With Optional Extras: 12–14 hours</p> <p><b>Teaching space</b> Preferably a hall or large space</p> <p>Possible themes for the role-play area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a market</li> <li>• a camp in a wood</li> <li>• a shop selling supplies for adventurers</li> <li>• a farm</li> <li>• a castle.</li> </ul>
<b>Main dramatic devices used</b>	<p>Teacher in Role</p> <p>Pupils in Role</p> <p><b>Basic plot</b> Quest</p> <p><b>Basic problem</b> Good Land is threatened with invasion because an enchanted sleep has been imposed upon the Queen (a friend needs rescuing; being tricked and trapped; threat of being invaded)</p> <p><b>Basic tensions</b> Having great responsibility for the welfare of others (not knowing who to trust; lack of knowledge; running out of time; changes of plan; fear; threat of being outnumbered)</p>

## Teacher's overview

*The Quest* is an epic adventure, which means that it's long! In fact, it is the longest project in this collection. The story has many twists, turns, characters and settings that make it seem quite complex. Don't be put off. Actually, the dramatic activities are very simple, depending largely on TIR, PIR and Scene Drawing. The plot, however, contains all the ingredients needed to make a compelling story for young children. It resonates strongly with films they will have enjoyed, such as *Lord of the Rings* and perhaps *Star Wars* and *Troy*, all of which contain quests, along with stories that will probably have been read to them such as *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Hans Christian Andersen's *The Snow Queen* and Rupert Bear stories, which are not quests but set in a fantasy world. *The Quest* also draws on many elements of folk tales such as *Snow White*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Hansel and Gretel*. The pupils will readily identify with the idea of a castle, an object with special powers, with fantasy settings and rural life in olden days, with enchantment (sleeping without waking), with imprisonment, with 'goodies' versus 'baddies' and with last-minute rescues. In common with many children's adventures, nobody is really hurt in *The Quest* (despite overwhelming threats) and the heroes achieve their goal without a fight! Good overcomes evil and the world is saved. There's even an intervention of the gods, which connects the story to Greek myths (the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, for instance) and Biblical history (the Exodus is a classic case).

Other 'quests' in literature and film include *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Watership Down*, *Treasure Island*, *Tales of the Holy Grail*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, *The Great Escape*, *The Guns of Navarone*, *Moby Dick* ... The list goes on. This is an important and busy genre within the library of classic literature. Undertaking this project will help pupils, as they get older, to appreciate such works fully. There is also a strong connection with real historical quests such as black slaves travelling the 'Underground Railroad' from the Southern to the Northern American states aided by 'conductors' such as Harriet Tubman. You could also make a connection with the historical story portrayed in the Australian film, *The Rabbit-Proof Fence*.

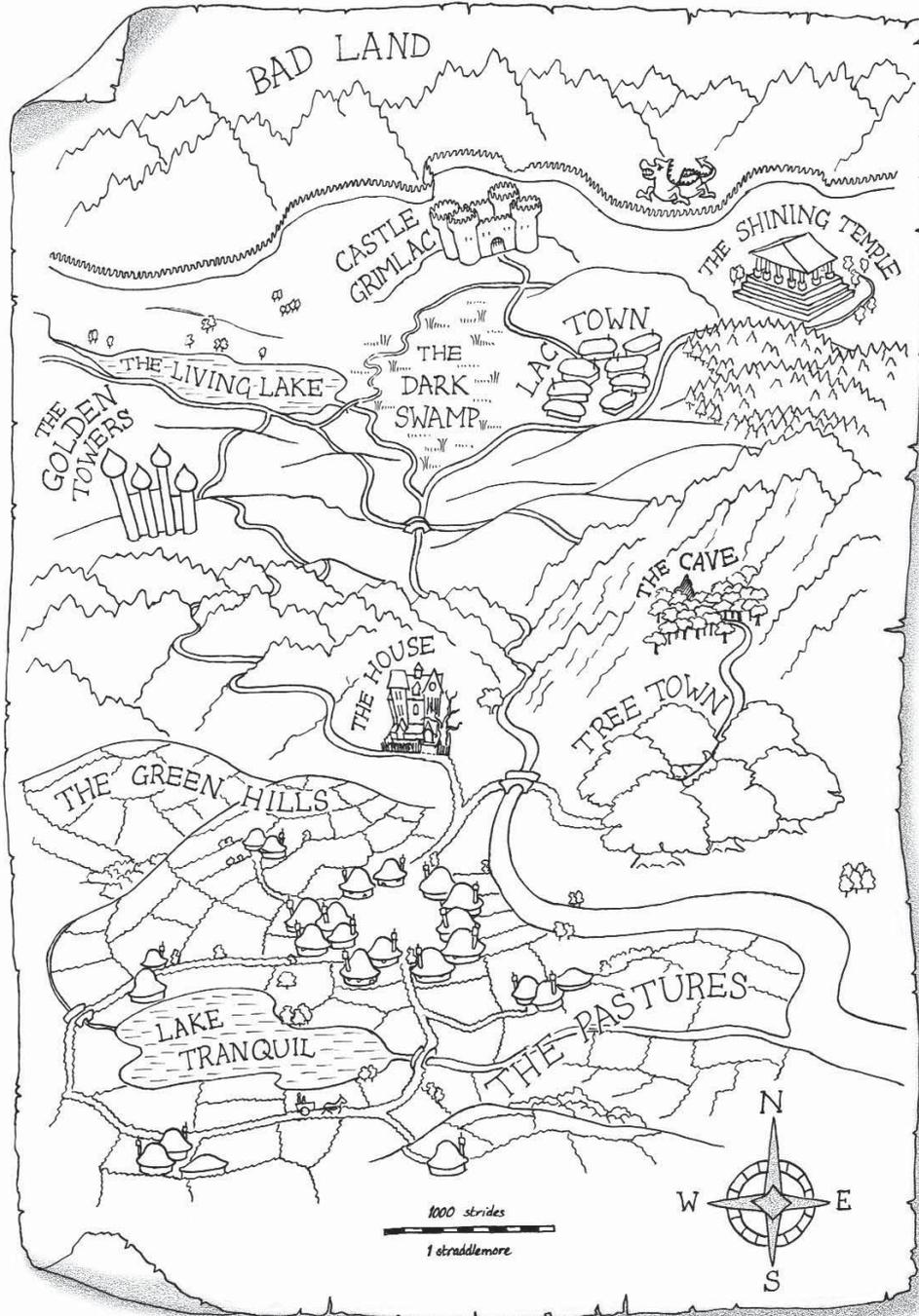
For young children, there are the Sir Quinton Quest stories in the Jumbo Jets series, such as *Sir Quinton Quest Hunts the Jewels* and *Sir Quinton Quest Hunts the Yeti*; *Cyril's Woodland Quest* by Eugene McCabe; the Deltora Quest series and, for sheer fun, Captain Pugwash in *The Quest of the Golden Handshake*, which we suspect may be enjoyed more by some adults than by the target audience! A serious and also charming quest tale is *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of Nimh*, which is also a well-known children's film. There is also a children's version of *Around the World in Eighty Days* titled *Around the World with Phineas Frog*.

The themes in quest stories are heroism, trust, loyalty and good versus bad. The characters face situations that challenge their sense of right and wrong and require them to endure and be brave. Events determine who are the great leaders and who will be the loyal servants. So, for example, in *Mrs Frisby and the Rats of Nimh*, the meek and mild Mrs Frisby finds the courage to administer a sleeping powder to a fierce cat's dinner dish in order to rescue the rats. She has many difficulties to overcome as she works to do the right thing for her poorly son and for the rats, and as a result, little by little, she changes and becomes a stronger character.

Given the length of this project, it is recommended that you play it out in stages, perhaps over half a term. This is the kind of time you would take to read a book of this kind to the class. In

fact, this makes an exciting alternative to that and would make an excellent introduction to the genre (ready for the study of Greek myths in KS2).

In order to prepare yourself for the adventure, here is all the information you need: the map; a list of the characters (many of whom you will play yourself) and a summary of the plot.



*Covering the Curriculum with Stories* is an exciting and unique resource, presenting a set of six delightful, cross-curricular play-based projects that deliver outstanding learning experiences. Designed for children aged 3-7, these projects will make major contributions to your pupils' literacy and literary skills, teach a whole repertoire of thinking skills and deliver many features of the Foundation and KS1 Curricula in an integrated, cross-curricular way.

Each project:

- is based on an original story
- uses dramatic and kinaesthetic techniques
- capitalises on children's natural instinct to play
- lays down important conceptual foundations for later learning
- promotes emotional intelligence, learning-to-learn and citizenship.

The book provides everything you need to know to teach the projects successfully, including:

- clear overviews with precise learning intentions
- simple, clear, step-by-step instructions
- details of pupil activities
- indications of cross-curricular links
- references to QCA programmes of study.

In addition, you will find extensive worksheets and learning materials on the Resources CD inside the back cover.

**nasen & TES Special Educational Needs Book Awards** Shortlisted – **Book for Teaching and Learning Award**

*Covering the Curriculum with Stories* is a delightful resource for all those who want to ensure that children learn effectively through dramatic play and that they have fun too. **Steve Munby, Chief Executive, National College for School Leadership**

*Covering the Curriculum with Stories* is a marvellous resource. **Alistair Smith, Chair of Alite and best-selling author**

Sharon and Paul have captured the power of storytelling but have added the impact of drama, the disciplines of literacy and, crucially, underpinned everything with strategies for effective learning.

**Professor John West-Burnham, Honorary Professor of Educational Leadership, University of Hull**

If only the entire school curriculum were built around such imaginative and engaging resources and activities as these ...

**Professor Guy Claxton, Visiting Professor of Education, University of Bristol and creator of Building Learning Power**

This must surely be the most comprehensive approach to using stories to explore almost every nook and cranny of the school curriculum. **Bill Lucas, best-selling author and Chairman of The Talent Foundation**

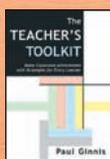
Here are the experts, Sharon and Paul, offering a fabulous resource to enable all Foundation and KS1 teachers to re-energise their teaching. **Jenny Mosley, Education Consultant and Trainer**



**Sharon Ginnis** has over 25 years experience in education and youth theatre and has taught in all phases, from Early Years to F.E. She specialises in the creative use of drama to promote thinking, literacy and cross-curricular learning. Nowadays, much of her time is spent in primary school classrooms, helping teachers to implement these innovative ideas. Apart from her freelance work, Sharon is Teaching and Learning Consultant to the Island of Jersey and an Associate of the Education Development Unit of St. Martin's College, Lancaster.



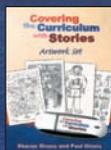
**Paul Ginnis**, author of the famous *Teacher's Toolkit*, is one of the country's most experienced and respected trainers in the field of teaching and learning. Over the last 20 years he has worked with over 1200 schools, helping teachers to translate modern ideas about learning into effective classroom practice. He has provided training on four continents and is renowned for his down-to-earth, pragmatic approach to current trends such as personalised learning, thinking skills and learning-to-learn, which all come together in this book.



Also available:

### **Covering the Curriculum with Stories: Supplementary Projects for Foundation and KS1**

This supplementary CD contains two further projects complete with all the worksheets, photographs and illustrations required. ISBN 978-184590045-8



### **Covering the Curriculum with Stories: Artwork Set**

This poster pack and memory stick set contains all Sue Hagerty's wonderful illustrations from the eight projects contained in *Covering the Curriculum with Stories* and the Supplementary Projects CD. ISBN 978-184590046-5

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9