Using stories in the classroom

The purpose of this booklet is to gather together for you activities and resources to get you up and running in your classroom. Very little of this material is my original work. I would like to acknowledge here any work that I have not attributed to its author.

Contents

1 Why story telling is important

2 Some ideas to think about

3 How to tell stories

4 Choosing stories

5 Stories for the classroom

6 Some Welsh stories to look at

7 Using stories as a stimulus for cross-curricular work

8 Models of cross-curricular learning

9 References

10 Websites

11 One hundred best books

Why story telling is important

- Good stories engage and motivate pupils;
- Pupils enjoy stories and become really involved in them—they become fully involved in the language of the story too;
- Stories help pupils become familiar with language;
- Stories help pupils develop their vocabulary;
- The material in stories can be used as a stimulus for oracy, listening and writing; stories give teacher and pupils something they share to talk about;
- Stories can be used as a stimulus or a “hook” to get children interested and can stimulate cross-curricular work;
- No matter what we are talking about, whether it is about a science experiment or a funny incident, we tend to tell it as a story. Telling a story is a basic skill which underlies all other forms of language, so it is important that pupils are very familiar with it;
- Stories help us to empathize with other people. They are important in our development as human beings.

- Stories give us a window on the world; through stories we can access ideas and bodies of knowledge that we otherwise would not know about;
- As pupils think about stories, they are developing their thinking skills.

Some ideas to think about

Being a character in a story is a dominant feature of children's play in the culture. Children fictionalise themselves as they play and they create the world where fiction allows them to explore both the world they know and the one they 'make-up'.

Margaret Meek (1991), On Being Literate p.109

'Stories re-assert a kind of conventional wisdom about what can be expected , even (or especially) what can be expected to go wrong and what might be done to restore or cope with the situation.'

Jerome Bruner (2002) Making Stories. Law, Literature, Life. P. 31

'Experience which is passed on from mouth to mouth is the source from which all storytellers have drawn. And among those who have written down the tales, it is the great ones whose written version differs least from the speech of the many nameless storytellers.'

Walter Benjamin (1936) the Storyteller,

We more often tell stories to forewarn than to instruct. And because of this, stories are a culture's coin and currency. For culture is, figuratively, the maker and enforcer of what is expected, but it also, paradoxically, compiles, even slyly treasures, transgressions.

Jerome Bruner (2002) Making stories. Law, Literature, Life. P.15

For we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticise, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative. In order really to live, we make up stories about ourselves and others, about the personal as well as the social past and future.'

Barbara Hardy, 1977 Narrative as a primary act of mind, In Meek et al. *The Cool Web. The Pattern of Children's Reading*. P. 13

How to tell stories

Here is an extensive list, but if you work on a few of these areas your story telling will become far more effective.

Personalization: Tell the pupils how you feel about the story.

Sharing enjoyment: Tell the pupils why you enjoy the story and show them that you enjoy the story.

Scene setting: Talk about what might have happened before the story begins, or the place, or the people.

Body language: Use your body to help you tell the story by explaining the meaning of words through gesture, showing characters' feelings by changing you posture, and so on.

Facial expression: Look scared, happy, sad in accordance with the story, or express a character's feelings through expression.

Voice tone and volume: Use an angry voice, or a happy voice and so on: varying the volume to gain attention and add expression and interest.

Changes of pace: The story will dictate this to some extent; if it moves quickly, for instance, you can increase the pace at which you are telling the story.

Vocal expression: This can make a huge difference to children's understanding of the text, and their enjoyment too. Think about the meaning of each word, or phrase, and how you can convey that meaning.

Anticipation: Make it exciting, think about the way you turn the pages over.

Prediction: Get the pupils to think about what might happen during the next part of the story.

Props: If a particular object is mentioned in a story it may be worth getting hold of a similar object to use as you tell the story.

Familiarity with the story: You need to have gone through the story before you start reading.

Using illustrations: Good quality children's books usually have excellent illustrations which help tell the story. Draw pupils' attention to this because it will help them understand, make the words more memorable and increase their enjoyment of the story.

Sound effects: You can make these yourself and get the children to join in.

Actions: This makes the story more memorable for the children and reinforces the meaning of words.

Ad-libbing: You can add bits to the story, if you wish. Don't be afraid to change the words either if you think your pupils will find the vocabulary too hard.

Character development: This is worth doing because it's important that pupils can identify how characters are different and how they develop during a story. The easiest way to develop characters is by using a different voice when the characters are talking.

Choosing Stories

· Tell the stories that you like and enjoy.

· Choose stories that will appeal to your pupils. Take time to find out what their interests are.

· Good illustration are important. Think about the size of the illustrations too; will pupils be able to see the pictures if they are further away?

· For younger children particularly, choose stories that children can join in with, whether by making sound effects or by doing some action.

· It doesn't matter too much if the level of the language in the story is above the language level of the pupils, stories are a good way of extending pupils' vocabulary and knowledge of English. You can always modify the language a bit if you think it's too difficult.

Choose stories that introduce children to different times, places, feelings and ideas. However, the story must grip and enthuse the children.

Stories for the classroom

English has a huge, rich and varied selection of stories to choose from. In fact, choosing stories is a daunting task. So here is a list of some of the types material you may like to use:

Fairy Stories

There are two main sources of fairy tales; there are those written by Hans Anderson and those written by the Grimm Brothers.

The Mabinogion

The oldest and most famous Welsh legends.

Tales from 1001 Arabian Nights

The best known of these is Aladdin.

Traditional Tales / Stories from Around the World

Traditional tales are stories handed down, usually by word of mouth, over years and years. Each country/culture has its own collection of traditional tales, but it is remarkable how similar these stories can be even though they started out in different parts of the world.

Bible Stories

These provide a rich source of and give children the background to many of the festivals we celebrate in Britain. Similarly, stories from other faiths can be used.

Aesop's Fables

These short stories that generally feature animal characters. They are stories with a moral. They are useful for classroom use as they are quite short.

Myths & Legends

The most well-known of these are Greek Myths. These are exciting stories that will appeal to older pupils.

Classic Stories

There are many, many longer stories that have been read and loved by generations of children. Here are just a few:

Treasure Island

Peter Pan

Wind in the Willows

Alice in Wonderland

The House at Pooh Corner

Heidi

Tom Sawyer

Charlotte's Web

The Railway Children

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Modern Stories

There are hundreds of great stories that you can tell or read in the classroom; the list gets longer every day. Keep adding to your own personal repertoire of stories that you can use.

Some of the stories from Wales you may want to use

The Story of Gwenllian

Rhys and Meinir

The Story of Gelert

The Lady of the Lake

Owain Glyndwr

Cantre'r Gwaelod

Gerallt Gymro

The Lady of Ogmore Down

Rebecca's Daughters

The Story of Pwyll

Mary Jones's Bible

Twm Sion Cati

Dic Penderyn

Lord Rhys ap Gruffudd

Using stories as a stimulus for cross-curricular work

What should learning look like?

Principles of curriculum design – the curriculum should be:

- **authentic**: rooted in Welsh values and culture and aligned with an agreed set of stated purposes
- **evidence-based**: drawing on the best of existing practice within Wales and from elsewhere, and on sound research
- **responsive**: relevant to the needs of today (individual, local and national) but also equipping all young people with the knowledge, skills and dispositions for future challenges as lifelong learners
- **inclusive**: easily understood by all, encompassing an entitlement to high-quality education for every child and young person and taking account of their views in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and those of parents, carers and wider society
- **ambitious**: embodying high expectations and setting no artificial limits on achievement and challenge for each individual child and young person
- **empowering**: developing competences which will allow young people to engage confidently with the challenges of their future lives
- **unified**: enabling continuity and flow with components which combine and build progressively
- **engaging**: encouraging enjoyment from learning and satisfaction in mastering challenging subject matter
- **based on subsidiarity**: commanding the confidence of all, while encouraging appropriate ownership and decision making by those closest to the teaching and learning process
- **manageable**: recognising the implications for and supported by appropriate assessment and accountability arrangements.

Using stories in the classroom provides great opportunities to meet these aims.

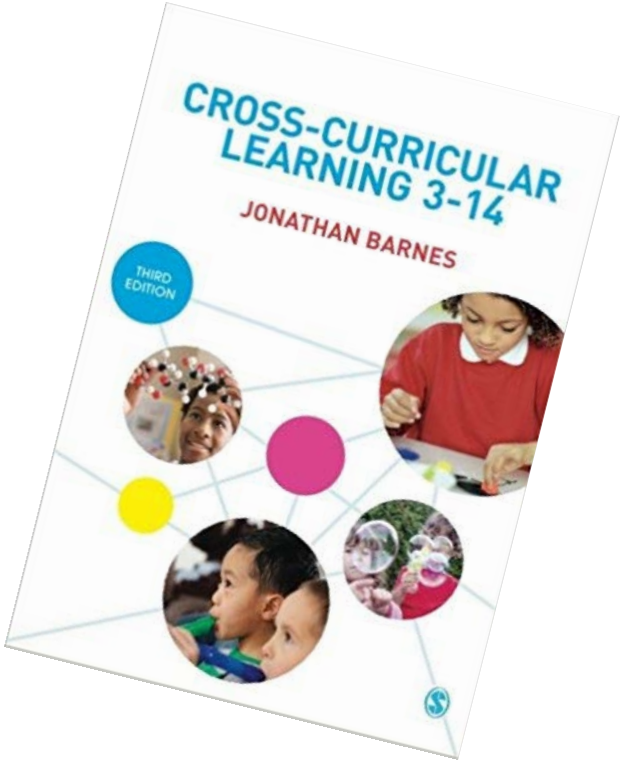
Models of cross-curricular learning

"Essential to any consideration of a more thematic or cross-curricular approach towards curriculum opportunity is the idea that one theme may offer wide opportunities for quality learning in several subject areas, thus supposedly saving time and repetition, while allowing for wider and more cohesive learning experiences, with greater consideration of how children learn."

Rowley & Cooper (2010)

You may like to read more about cross-curricular learning. Barnes (2015) is a good book to look at. He talks about 8 different models of cross-curricular learning.

1. *Tokenistic*
2. *Hierarchical*
3. *Single transferable subject*
4. *Theme-based*
5. *Multi-disciplinary*
6. *Inter-disciplinary*
7. *Opportunistic*
8. *Double-focus*



Things to Think About:

Areas of Learning & More

“Say something in Welsh!”

Have you ever been in the situation when someone finds out that you speak Welsh and they say, “Say something in Welsh then”, and your mind goes blank and you can’t think of a thing to say?

We can all feel like that from time to time, even in our first language, but if you want to practice speaking a second-language it can be even worse because not only do you have to think of the right words but you also have to think about what you are going to say. This is where stories become useful in the classroom because they provide a great vehicle for teaching a second-language because they provide that all important “something to say”.

So, when we think about planning to use a story, let’s think about how we can incorporate the use of Welsh.

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http://wordsforlife.literacytrust.org.uk/?gclid=CjwKCAjwztL2BRATEiwAvnALciJ1RCzBDflYURRTCiuUT10oYuPC1VfMHAmsguQtLUUGogq4yegTwBoCc1gQAvD_BwE

https://www.booktrust.org.uk/books-and-reading/our-recommendations/100-best-books/

https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/

100 Best Books

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TES and the National Association for the Teaching of English ran a survey to find teachers' top 100 fiction books all children should read before leaving primary school. Here are the results.

1 *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl

2 *Goodnight Mister Tom* by Michelle Magorian

3 *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll

4 *Matilda* by Roald Dahl

5 *The Gruffalo* by Julia Donaldson

6 *The Chronicles of Narnia* by C S Lewis

7 *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

8 *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen

9 *Dogger* by Shirley Hughes

10 *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak

11 *Stig of the Dump* by Clive King

12= *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell

12= *The Iron Man* by Ted Hughes

14 *Flat Stanley* by Jeff Brown

15 *Winnie the Pooh* by A A Milne

16 *Funnybones* by Allan and Janet Ahlberg

17= *Owl Babies* by Martin Waddell and Patrick Benson

17= *The Hobbit* by J R R Tolkien

19 *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr Seuss

20 *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo

21= *Grimm's Fairy Tales* by The Brothers Grimm

21= *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* by Judith Kerr

23 *Peace at Last* by Jill Murphy

24 Artemis Fowl series by Eoin Colfer

25 *Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy* by Lynley Dodd

26 *Not Now Bernard* by David Mckee

27 *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney

28 *The Twits* by Roald Dahl

29 *I am David* by Anne Holm

30 *The Highwayman* by Alfred Noyes

31 The Paddington series by Michael Bond

32 *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman and Caroline Binch

33 *Esio Trot* by Roald Dahl

34 *Five Children and It* by E Nesbit

35 *Clockwork* by Phillip Pullman

36 *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett

37 *The Magic Far Away Tree* by Enid Blyton

38 *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell and Helen Oxenbury

39 *Swallows and Amazons* by Arthur Ransome

40 *The Silver Sword* by Ian Serraillier

41 The Worst Witch series by Jill Murphy

42 The Alfie and Annie Rose series by Shirley Hughes

43 *Shakespeare Stories* by Leon Garfield

44 *Journey to the River Sea* by Eva Ibbotson

45 *Six Dinner Sid* by Inga Moore

46 *Sad Book* by Michael Rosen

47 *The Borrowers* by Mary Norton

48= *A Dark, Dark Tale* by Ruth Brown

48= *The Jolly Postman* by Allan Ahlberg

50 *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief* by Rick Riordan

51 *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman

52 *Zoo* by Anthony Browne

53 *Treasure Island* by R L Stevenson

54 *Voices in the Park* by Anthony Browne

55 *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault, illustrated by Roberto Innocenti

56 *Pig Heart Boy* by Malorie Blackman

57 *The Railway Children* by E Nesbit

58 *Cloud Busting* by Malorie Blackman

59= *Kidnapped* by R L Stevenson

59= *The Sheep Pig* by Dick King-Smith

61= *Beegu* by Alexis Deacon

61= *The Wind in the Willows* by Kenneth Graham

63= *Eragon* by Christopher Paolini

63= The Mr Men and Little Miss series by Roger Hargreaves

65= *Gentle Giant* by Michael Morpurgo

65= *Just So Stories* by Rudyard Kipling

67 *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams

68 *Pinocchio* by Carlo Collodi, illustrated by Roberto Innocenti

69 *Eagle of the Ninth* by Rosemary Sutcliff

70 *Theseus and the Minotaur* by David Orme and Wendy Body

71= The Just William series by Richmal Crompton

71= *On the Way Home* by Jill Murphy

71= *Pumpkin Soup* by Helen Cooper

71= *Street Child* by Berlie Doherty

71= *The Happy Prince and Other Stories* by Oscar Wilde

76= *Angelo* by Quentin Blake

76= *The Day the Crayons Quit* by Drew Draywalt and Oliver Jeffers

76= *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs

79 *My Mum* by Anthony Browne

80= *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery

80= *The Tunnel* by Anthony Browne

82= *Face* by Benjamin Zephaniah

82= *The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tyler* by Gene Kemp

84 *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

85= *Click Clack Moo: cows that type* by Doreen Cronin and Betsy Lewin

85= *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster

85= *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter

88= *I Will Not Ever Never Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child

88= The Skulduggery Pleasant series by Derek Landy

88= *The Early Years at Malory Towers* by Enid Blyton

88= *Wolf Brother* by Michelle Paver

92= *Birds Beasts and Relatives* by Gerald Durrell

92= *The Weirdstone of Brisingamen* by Alan Garner

94 The Mrs Pepperpot series by Alf Proysen

95= The Asterix Series by Rene Goscinny and Albert Uderzo

95= *The Fib and Other Stories* by George Layton

97 *The Giant's Necklace* by Michael Morpurgo

98 The Kipper series by Mick Inkpen

99= The Milly-Molly-Mandy series by Joyce Lankester Brisley

99= *The Suitcase Kid* by Jacqueline Wilson