





# CATS



Children and Teenagers  
The Young Learners SIG Newsletter

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## Editorial

This story-telling issue was a surprise to me – and a very welcome one! In April, as it was my turn to edit the newsletter, I had started to badger people for their conference papers when a strange thing happened. The Young Learners SIG internet discussion list started take on a life of its own and some wonderful stories began to appear. Sandie Mourao started it all off with two stories she had worked on with groups of teachers in Portugal. They were so delightful that inspiration struck other members to send in stories and a publication was suggested. I had a quick consultation with fellow members of the Young Learners SIG Committee and we decided to give this issue over to story-telling, so as to lay the ground for a more permanent publication.

We worked out some suggested guidelines so that the presentation of ideas would be consistent and put out a call for stories and attached teaching ideas. Each story is different in its potential and each teller has worked in an individual way. This variety, for me, is the wealth of this issue. All good teachers of children and teenagers are story-tellers, but sometimes we forget how many kinds of story we can tell and how many ways we can use them.

The collection begins with some good reasons for telling stories. Andrew Wright, in his inimitable way, likens listening to stories to eating cornflakes – read his introduction to find out why! Helen Paul looks at the place of story telling within topic work and Wendy Superfine discusses the value of traditional tales.

The stories are aimed at different age groups and are very different from each other. Wendy Superfine and Sandie Mourao give us three traditional stories for very young learners – with practical, hands-on activities. Alfonsina Denegri and Beatriz Lupiano's version of an Argentinian folk-tale is a wonderful mixture of the familiar and the startling. My story is adapted from a part of the great Indian epic *Mahabharata*, a mine of complicated characters and adventures. Marisa Gonzales has had the interesting idea of writing her own topic-related story to be told by older children to younger children. Linda Huggett's adaptation of *The Pied Piper* is full of language teaching opportunities and is followed by some great cross-curricular ideas. Finally, we have two very well-known story-tellers. Melanie Williams's subtle tale from China sets off important questions for discussion and Andrew Wright's urban legend for all ages rounds off the collection with a classic sting in the tail.

But we hope the collection will not end here. Many of our members do not have access to the internet, but must have favourite stories which have initiated learning of all kinds in the EFL classroom. So may some who read the initial invitation on the discussion list, but were too busy or too diffident to send them in. So if you have a story – and teaching ideas to go with it – please write it (preferably on *Word for Windows*), following the pattern in this newsletter. Send the material to me by email or on disk to my address, 64 South Hill Road, Gravesend, Kent DA12 1JZ, UK before the end of April 2001. We will then publish a bigger and more permanent collection. The profits will all go to YLSIG and will therefore benefit us all. Happy reading!

Eleanor Watts

Email: <wattsele@cs.com>

## A Note from the Joint Co-ordinators

Chris and I would like to welcome you to this issue of CATS with the exciting theme of story telling. We would once again like to thank everybody who helped to put this issue together. These thanks go to members for contributing ideas and articles and committee members for their hard work in getting it to press.

What I have found fascinating about this issue is the involvement of SIG members via the discussion list. It has been fantastic to watch ideas for story telling being contributed and developed on the list ready for inclusion in the newsletter. Congratulations to everyone. If you haven't yet joined the discussions you can do so at (<http://ylsig.listbot.com>).

In the Spring 2000 issue in 'News from the Net 4' Chris mentioned how the net has entered our daily lives at all levels including teaching. The number of sites providing helpful hints, lesson plans and ideas is increasing daily. The SIG website (<http://www.countryschool.com/younglearners.htm>) has a listing of as many of these sites as we know about. However we would like your help to keep this list updated. If you know of any useful sites then please send us the address and a short description of what the site offers to [etchells@countryschool.com](mailto:etchells@countryschool.com). By the way, a big thank you to Beatriz Lupiano in Argentina for all her contributions so far.

Events for 2000 and 2001 are taking shape now. The SIG Symposium in Madrid in September promises to be one of the key ELT events of the year. Herbert Puchta will be the key speaker for the YL SIG and we have an array of interesting workshops for the YL track. Preparations for the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual International IATEFL conference in Brighton in 2001 are well under way and just a reminder to get your speaker proposal form in before 20<sup>th</sup> September 2000. We look forward to meeting as many of you as possible there.

Finally I would just like to invite you to sit back, put your feet up and enjoy the rest of the newsletter.

Best wishes

Debbie Smith  
Chris Etechells

# Using stories in the classroom

Andrew Wright

## Why use stories?

Stories are the cornflakes of language learning! Stories offer such a broad range of valuable nutrients!

- motivation
- language associated with meaning that matters to the child
- fluency development in all four skills
- a natural means of integrating all kinds of different activities
- a way of introducing language new to the children

## Where can I find stories?

- Traditional stories from all the cultures of the world
- Traditional stories from the child's own culture: Most people want to be able to talk about themselves and their country when they meet other people... so why not be able to tell stories from your own culture?
- Your life and the children's lives: Children are fascinated by the most ordinary 'story' from a teacher's life, for example, about losing a cat.
- Contemporary fiction both written and oral. Apart from the wealth of written literature for children, there are many stories told as true which fascinate children as well as adults. These stories are known as urban legends.
- The children's own created stories in oral or in written form.

Most publishers offer rich lists of readers for children as well as for adults

## Telling or Reading?

Telling and reading have their advantages and their disadvantages:

### Reading

- You don't have to learn the story!
- You don't have to worry about your English!
- The children can see that books have value
- There might be pictures in the book you can use.

### Telling

- The children feel that you are giving them a present.
- You can use mime more easily to help understanding.
- You can keep eye contact better.
- You can modify the language for your listeners, more naturally.

## **How to choose a story**

Your criteria for choosing a book might include:

- a story you like (because your enthusiasm will be communicated).
- a story the children will probably like
- a story which you think you can help them to understand enough of to enjoy it. (That is not the same as saying that the children know all the words already.) You will be able to tell stories to children in their first weeks of language learning if you follow this principle.
- a story which links language and content with other work you have been doing or intend doing.
- a story which leads to relevant associated activities.
- a story which is a convenient length or can be divided into convenient bits.

## **This edition of the Young Learners' Newsletter**

In this edition of the Young Learners' Newsletter we are sending you a selection of stories and associated activities which we hope you will enjoy and find useful.

To make it easier for you to skim through to find stories which might be OK for you and your particular children we have presented them all in a similar way.

### **The story**

The story... please feel free to pull it around to make it yours

### **Suitable age-range**

This really can only be very approximate. In the foreign language, children are much less likely to reject a story because they feel it is beneath them.

### **Level**

Again this must be approximate...the higher the level the more they will get out of it...but it doesn't mean that it isn't useful to the lower levels.

### **Language focus**

Stories are primarily about fluency in which the children learn to use their immense ability to predict meanings. However, some stories might offer a rich contextualisation of particular language forms.

### **General educational ideas**

As teachers of young children we are responsible for their overall development as much as the development of their English. The content is therefore extremely important. All stories manifest values and perceptions of ideas, feelings and behaviour. Do we agree with the values in the story? Do we want to change the values as they have been changed again and again in all traditional stories to make them acceptable to the changing views of society?

What connections can we find in the content which the children might like to explore and which would be of value to them, for example, the practical topic of foods or the moralistic focus on right and wrong. In this role stories can link the child's language development with his or her overall conceptual development.

### **Teaching ideas**

Under this heading our contributors have described ways of actually using the story. The contributors have arranged these in their own ways to suit the possibilities of their stories.

### **Further reading**

In the field of English as a second or foreign language there are not so many books on the subject of using stories. However, the books below will certainly launch you into this important topic.

- **Ellis, G. and Brewster, J. 1991. *The Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers*. Penguin**

*The title is misleading... it is really the best book on the market offering ways of integrating the use of particular published story books into the whole curriculum. It is not really a book about storytelling.*

- **Garvie, E. 1990. *Story as Vehicle. Multilingual Matters***

*Of all the books in EFL and ESL available, this book places the use of stories in a broad framework with more of an extensive rationale than the other books offer. It also has many practical ideas.*

- **Rinvoluceri, M. and Morgan, J. 1983 *Once Upon a Time*. Cambridge University Press**

*This was the first book in EFL or ESL on the subject. It remains rich, practical and useful. The stories are not specifically for the younger learner but it is a book worth having for anyone interested in the use of stories.*

- **Wright, A. 1995. *Storytelling with Children*. Oxford University Press**

*This book contains over 30 stories and lesson plans and 94 different activities related to ways of using stories.*

- **Wright, A. 1997 *Creating Stories with Children* Oxford University Press**

*This book concentrates on ways of helping the children to make stories.*

- **Zarro, J.J. and Salaberri, S. 1995. *Storytelling*. Heinemann**

*This is, physically, the slimmest of all the books but extremely rich in its practical suggestions.*

### **Now you!**

We hope you will find these ideas useful and that you will develop your own ideas. Please send us the stories you use and the activities you develop to go with them. Don't wait until you do something totally brilliant! Send us what has worked for you... that is what we have done in putting together this collection for you.

# Storytelling

No topic is complete without a story

Helen Paul

**The role of storytelling within the in-service programme for primary school teachers in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany**

## **The teachers & their knowledge of English**

The in-service teacher training programme for state primary teachers who want to teach English is now in its sixth year. Primary school teachers with some knowledge of English and who would like to teach English in primary schools have been given the opportunity to attend a two and a half year in-service training course. Most of the teachers teach full-time and attend the course for three time hours a week.

These teachers have some knowledge of English but not as much as their colleagues in the older federal states of Germany. Mecklenburg, being part of the former East Germany, had, like many other eastern European countries, Russian as its first language until a few years ago. This of course has implications for the training course in terms of the teachers' fluency and confidence in using the language.

## **The model of language teaching laid down in the guidelines**

The type of syllabus and the general contents have been laid down by the Ministry of Education for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Children in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years of schooling receive one (and hopefully in the near future two) English period(s) of 45 minutes a week. The aims are that these 8 to 10 year-old children are introduced to the language in a playful, active way without much reading and very little writing. Grammar explanations are not part of the primary school syllabus. This syllabus is topic-based as in many other countries.

## **Stories within the syllabus**

As mentioned above, the syllabus is topic-based. That means that a framework for teaching a topic is worked on in the methodology section of the course. This includes looking at the lexis and phrases that belong to each unit as well as how they can be introduced, practised in a communicative way and which games can be used to support this learning. Last but not least they decide upon which songs and stories fit in with any particular topic or topics. All the teachers are practising teachers and very aware of the value and necessity of reading and listening to stories in the early years. In this way each teacher builds up a file for all the topics they hope to teach.

## **How stories are used in the training course**

Story-telling is a main part of the methodology course in the third semester. This does not mean that books and stories are completely new to the teachers. Some will already have been presented in the weekly warm-up/tips session which is an integral part of the course.

There are different aspects which are concentrated on in the story-telling section, namely, the WHAT, the HOW and the WHEN

### **The WHAT**

Here different kinds of story are considered. By far the most popular are printed story books for children. This is very much influenced by which books the trainer presents. A way of trying to offset this is the two-week English course in an English-speaking country which is an integral part of the course. This course is usually in Britain. When there, the students are encouraged to browse around bookshops and to bring back books which they feel are suitable for the 8-10 year-olds they teach. This helps to encourage independent judgement amongst the teachers. This is very important as Mecklenburg is not very multi-cultural (about 1% are not German) which means that availability of international literature is extremely limited. Most of the books which the teachers buy are used as they are printed. The most popular are those which the children are familiar with in their own language, e.g. 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle and 'Something Else' by Kathryn Cave and Chris Riddell. Some teachers use popular stories which are part of the German lessons. These are then 'translated' into simplified English and then usually checked by the trainer for correctness and appropriacy.

Fairy stories which are printed in English are simplified to an appropriate level. The group chooses one fairy story. This is then divided up into sections and small groups work on simplifying it. After the whole story has been put together, amendments and editing are done as a whole group.

The teachers write their own stories. This is the least popular because the teachers often feel that they do not have creative enough ideas or do not feel confident enough about their own knowledge of English. There are exceptions and the ones produced are usually excellent.

### **The HOW**

**How to present the story** Different presentation skills are developed. Practical issues are important. If the teacher uses the book and presents the story while holding the book, they need to know how to do this in a foreign language. Only when they try it out, do they realise how different and difficult it is. They need to practise reading out loud. This has been 'banned' from English courses for many years. In this case it is a skill which they really need. Reading out loud includes working on the correct speed, the intonation and the fluency. They also need to learn how to hold the book and read upside down... or to get a pupil to do the holding and page-turning

Some teachers who use books printed in German have written the story in English on the back cover and used this as an aid. Some have used a book which was originally in Russian i.e. 'The three little cats' by W. Sutejew. They had no text but blew up the pictures and used this as the basis of the story which they wrote themselves.

Other teachers prefer to learn the stories off by heart. This skill was well-trained in the German Democratic Republic and many teachers still make use of it.

**How to prepare the pupils** The teachers also develop the skills of pupil involvement and prediction. The pupils enjoy guessing not only what is going to happen next but also which words are coming next. The value of this repetition which comes in stories should not be underestimated.

### **The WHEN**

A story is often used at the end of a topic to round it off. Here a lot of the vocabulary and structures are familiar and so not much needs to be pre-taught – especially as the learners do not need to understand every individual word. This aspect of pre-teaching is discussed in the course and to what extent activities need to follow the story presentation. Is it just for fun or is an activity appropriate? For example one teacher who translated a story called ‘The Best Season’ from German to English, created a short play which was then acted and videoed (on my visit). This play was then part of open day at the end of the school year. It should not be forgotten that according to the syllabus, the pupils should not read texts – only individual words and that they should write even less. Techniques such as putting the pictures of the story in the correct order are looked at and tried out.

The story can be used as the presentation of a new topic. One teacher told the story of ‘The very hungry caterpillar’ to introduce different kinds of fruit. She was amazingly creative in the use of aids. She used a little plastic ‘egg’ where the fat caterpillar went in and later a much larger one where a self-made butterfly emerged. The whole blackboard was full of applications of different kinds of fruit. The children were totally enthralled and caught up in the story as it unravelled.

Before the end of the storytelling course, each member presents a different story with pre- and post-listening activities. Other teachers give advice and suggest other activities which could be tried out.

### **Winding down**

As a conclusion, here is a review and some comments from a current group of teachers in Schwerin, Mecklenburg.

The most popular books are the ‘Spot’ series by Eric Hill. This is because the language is simple and repetitive. These are particularly popular with the eight-year-olds who do not think they are too babyish. The children like the element of surprise. The length is just right so the children’s span of concentration was long enough. Next in popularity is ‘The very hungry caterpillar.’ The repetition is also appreciated in this book as well as the interdisciplinary aspects. ‘Winnie the Witch’ by Korky Paul and Valerie Thomas has also been used successfully.

Most important of all for the teachers was that nearly all the children enjoy the storytelling sessions. One teacher said the children want a story for every topic.... which is how this article started.

*Helen Paul is a trainer of primary school teachers and a teacher in a state secondary school in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany.*

## Using traditional fairy tales in primary EFL

Wendy Superfine

Using story to teach English as a Foreign Language gives many opportunities for both the teacher and the pupils to explore the language and its meaning. Traditional stories have always provided material for teaching and learning in the mother tongue. Children hear stories from an early age in their own culture and these stories can be used to provide effective ways to motivate young children to learn English.

### Why use story activities for EFL?

There are a number of reasons for using story in the EFL classroom:

- For enjoyment and relaxation: Most children enjoy having stories read to them.
- For motivation: Stories help children understand the meanings of new language and give a purpose to learning.
- For interest: Stories can be chosen to link with the language topic and extend the course book activities.
- To provide opportunities to link with cross-curricular activities e.g. Science, Maths, Music, Art, History.
- To help learners understand by giving language in context.
- To expose learners to a wider range of language and knowledge than that provided in the course book.
- To recycle and repeat language in a natural way.
- To develop the feelings and imagination.
- To focus on the sounds and rhythms of the language in a meaningful way.

### How do you choose a story for Young Learners?

- The story should be short enough to be told in one lesson.
- The story should have a simple and memorable story line.
- The story should contain dialogue.
- The language level of the story should be suitable for the class. It is necessary for 75% of the language to be understood by the class. The remaining 25% of the language will provide exposure to new vocabulary and structures.
- The story should contain repetitive phrases and possibly be linked to a song or rhyme.
- The story can be a traditional tale which they know in their own language.

An example of all the above is *The Little Red Hen* which is told in this issue. The teaching ideas are taken from *Fun and Games in English*, C. Chaves, A. Graham and W. Superfine, Delta Publishing 1999

*Wendy Superfine is the joint events co-ordinator for the YL SIG. She is a primary teacher trainer and author of primary materials.*

# The Little Red Hen

A story from Britain

Re-told and discussed by Wendy Superfine

Little Red Hen lives on a farm with the duck, the cat and the dog.  
Little Red Hen is having a party.

“Can you help me?” Little Red Hen asks the duck, the cat and the dog. “Have you got any ice cream?”

“No, I haven’t,” says the duck.

“No, I haven’t,” says the cat.

“No, I haven’t,” says the dog.

“Then I’ll get some,” says Little Red Hen.

“Have you got any cakes?” asks Little Red Hen.

“No, I haven’t,” says the duck.

“No, I haven’t,” says the cat.

“No, I haven’t,” says the dog.

“Then I’ll get some,” says Little Red Hen.

“Have you got any cola?” asks Little Red Hen.

“No, I haven’t,” says the duck.

“No, I haven’t,” says the cat.

“No, I haven’t,” says the dog.

“Then I’ll get some,” says Little Red Hen.

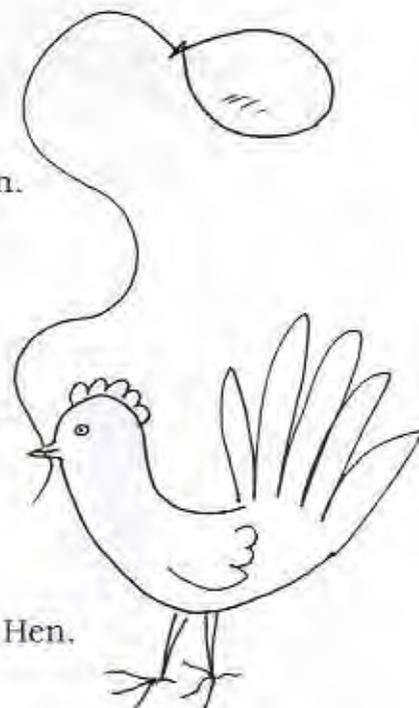
“Who can come to my party?” asks Little Red Hen.

“I can,” says the duck.

“I can,” says the cat.

“I can,” says the dog.

“No, you can’t,” says Little Red Hen, and she has the party with her chicks!



The story and following suggestions are taken from *Fun and Games in English*  
C. Chaves, A Graham, W. Superfine 1999 Delta Publishing  
ISBN 900783 355  
Cassette: ISBN 900783 355

## Suggested Teaching Ideas

**Age range:** 3-6 years

**English level:** Beginners- very young learners

**Language focus**

**Repeated language:** Have you got any ?

No I haven't.

Can you ?

Who's this ?

This/that is These /those are

I've got

**Functions :**

Asking for help and food.

Having a birthday party

**Lexical fields:** Farm animals . Party food

**Main story idea:** Little Red Hen asks her friends for help and food but they refuse so she does not invite them to her party

**Suggested Teaching**

**aids :**

coloured pencils or crayons

Scissors and glue / sellotape

Lollipop sticks

- 6 Read the story while the pupils say the animals' speech, for example:  
Little Red Hen: *Have you got any ice cream.* Each group: *No, I haven't.*
- 7 Repeat the story with a different pupil as the Little Red Hen.
- 8 Optional: give out the copies of the story and play the cassette while pupils follow the written version.
- 9 Ask the pupils to colour the pictures on photocopiable page 3 and then to complete the words.

### Warm up

Revise animal vocabulary and talk about the animals you can find on a farm.

### Procedure

- 1 Read the story to the children.
- 2 Give out the copies of photocopiable page 3. Point to each of the characters and ask, *Who's this?* Pupils can ask each other in pairs.
- 3 Play the cassette of the story, pointing to the picture of each animal as it speaks. Explain any difficult words in their own language.
- 4 Play the cassette of the story again. Stop the cassette at any difficult point and ask *What is he saying?*
- 5 Divide the class into three groups and give them the name of one of the animals, e.g. ducks, cats or dogs. Ask one pupil to be the Little Red Hen.

### Follow up

- 1 Put pupils in groups of 4 and give each pupil one animal.
- 2 They each cut out their animal and make a stick puppet (see fig 1).
- 3 Pupils practise telling the story in their groups, holding up their puppets when they speak. They can refer to the story on their photocopy if necessary.
- 4 Get groups of pupils to come out and perform to the rest of the class.

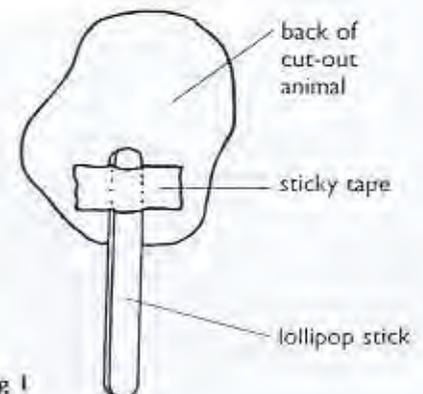


Fig 1



Little Red Hen



duck



cat



dog



chicks

# Little Red Hen's Party



## Language

- party food (*pizzas, cakes, biscuits, sausage rolls, hamburgers, sandwiches, sweets*)
- *this/that is, these/those are*
- *I've got*

## Materials

- one copy of page 5 per pupil

## Warm up

Ask the class *What can we eat at a party?* Get them to tell you about a party they have been to recently and what food/drinks they had, what games they played, etc.

## Procedure

- 1 Ask the pupils to look at photocopyable page
- 2 Point to singular items in the foreground and ask *What's this?* Pupils reply, e.g. *This is a pizza.* Repeat with plural items, asking *What are these?* Pupils reply, e.g. *These are cakes.*
- 3 Point to singular items in the background and ask *What's that?* Pupils reply, e.g. *That's a hamburger.* Repeat with plural items, *What are those?* *Those are sandwiches.*

- 4 Ask pupils to join the words to the item with a line.
- 5 They then read the sentences below, look at the corresponding number and write in the word. Do an example first if necessary, e.g. *number 1 refers to cakes, These are cakes.*
- 7 Go through the answers with the class.

### Answer key

- 1 These are cakes.
- 2 This is a pizza.
- 3 Those are sweets.
- 4 That is a hamburger.
- 5 This is a cake.
- 6 Those are sandwiches.



1 These are

2 This is a

3 Those are

4 That is a

5 This is a

6 Those are

# The Little White Rabbit and The Beetle

Two stories from Portugal

## The Little White Rabbit (O Coelho Branco)

Re-told and discussed by Rosário, M<sup>a</sup> João, M<sup>a</sup> José  
and Sandie

Once upon a time, there was a little white rabbit.  
He was in his house and he was hungry!  
"I'll look for a cabbage," he thought.  
So he went into his garden.  
When he got back there was a goat in his house!

Knock, knock, knock. "Let me in!" said little white rabbit.  
But the goat said: "I'm Goatie Gajive!  
I'll jump on you and break you in five!"  
Poor little white rabbit!

Along came an ox.  
"Please help," said little white rabbit.  
So the ox knocked on the door.  
Knock, knock, knock. "Let me in!" said the ox.  
But the goat said: "I'm Goatie Gajive!  
I'll jump on you and break you in five!"  
And the ox ran away!

Along came [several more animals in decreasing size until ...]

Along came an ant.  
She didn't knock on the door. She went under the door!  
"Go away!" said the ant.  
And the goat said, "I'm Goatie Gajive!  
I'll jump on you and break you in five!"  
But the ant said, "I'm ant Nelly!  
I'll jump on you and bite your belly!"  
And Goatie Gajive ran away as fast as he could!

"Hooray!" said the rabbit, the ox, (name all the other animals who  
tried to help) and the ant!



## Suggested Teaching Ideas

**Age range:** 3- 8 years

**English level:** Beginner

**Language focus:**

**Repeated patterns:** "Please help."

"Let me in!"

And the ... .. run away.

**Functions:** Giving orders: *Open the door!* *Go away!*

**Lexical items:** Farm animals (*ox, horse, pig, sheep, dog, goose, cat* etc.)

Body parts (*belly, back, shoulders, head, legs, arms, feet*)

House (*door, window, roof, garden, vegetable patch*)

Size adjectives (*big, little, tiny*)

**Grammar points:** Prepositions: *under the door, on the door, in the house*

**Rhymes:** "Goatie Gajive" - "five" "Nelly" - "belly"

**General education ideas:** Sequencing in size, Sequencing from memory

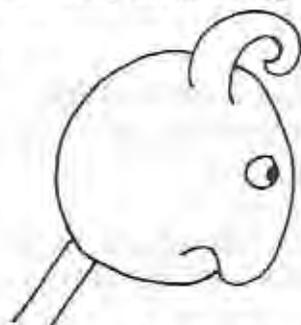
Socialising, turn taking and sharing

**Main story idea:** Size doesn't matter!

**Teaching aids:** Animal masks

This is a well-known Portuguese pre-school story. Visual supports when telling a story are very important, but I feel it is enough to have the animal pictures or masks as the dialogue is so simple, and easy to understand, once it has been explained in the mother tongue. Any animal can in fact be used, even jungle ones! Why not change the scene and have the story set in a deep dark jungle!

### Art and craft



- 1) Make masks, using any of the well-known techniques, but a really effective method is using a paper plate or a paper bag, and getting the children to cut and stick the relevant bits of the animal. You can review face vocabulary and colours whilst doing this activity.
- 2) Make animal puzzles. The children could colour one of the animals (like the ox), stick it on card and then cut it up into five pieces. They have to remake the puzzle, and will have great fun saying the rhyme and breaking up the puzzle again!
- 3) Make a storybook. Get the children to draw a part of the story each and then put all the pictures together to make a book for their library corner. There are lots of ways of making books, check out the storytelling book by Andrew Wright, published by OUP. If they are old enough, they can write some words as a gap filling activity. If they are too little, the teacher can write the story under their drawings.

## Maths

Once the children have made the masks, get them to order their animal characters from biggest to smallest, helping them with a mathematical concept and reminding them of the story sequence.

## Movement and Drama

Once the children know some animals in English, this is perfect for a role-play activity. They will have heard the story several times before doing the role-play and should be quite confident at saying: "Please help," (said little white rabbit). Knock, knock, knock. "Let me in!" (said the ox.) "I'm Goatie Gajive! I'll jump on you and break you in five!"

## Language work

Try getting older children to find rhyming sounds for other numbers. The original is "Goatie Gajive ... break you in five". What about Goatie Gabor ... break you in four"; "Goatie McGee ... break you in three"; "Goatie Badoo ... break you in two".

## The Beetle (A Carochinha)

Adapted and discussed by Teresa, Camila, M<sup>a</sup> João  
and Sandie

One day, a little beetle was sweeping her kitchen floor when she found a big, gold coin. She quickly went to the shop and bought a new red dress and a yellow ribbon for her hair.

When she got home, she opened her window and sang sweetly,  
"Who wants to marry me? I'm very rich. Please come and see!"

"I do, I do, I do," said the donkey.

"Speak to me," said the little beetle.

So the donkey went "EE AW, EE AW, EE AW!"

"But, I can't understand you," said the beetle. "I can't marry you!"

"Who wants to marry me? I'm very rich, please come and see!"

"I do, I do, I do," said the pig.

"Speak to me," said the little beetle.

So the pig went "OINK, OINK, OINK!"

"But I can't understand you," said the beetle, "I can't marry you!"

[This continues with other farm animals until ...]

"I do, I do, I do", said Mat the Rat.

"Speak to me," said the little beetle.

So Mat the Rat went, "Squeak, squeak, squeak."  
"I can understand you", said the little beetle. "Let's get married!"

The next day, near the church, the little beetle said, "Oh, I've forgotten my gloves, please get them for me, Mat the Rat."

Mat the Rat went to her house, he opened the door, and ... "Umm, UMMM, a lovely smell!" Beans and carrots and cabbage and bacon ..." [any food the children know!]

Mat the Rat saw a large vat of soup.  
He put his nose in the vat.  
He put his head in the vat.  
He put his shoulders in the vat.  
Oh no, and then his toes!  
Mat the Rat fell in the vat!  
That was the end of Mat the Rat.



Poor little Beetle, she cried and cried, "My poor rat, Mat, who fell in the vat."

## Suggested Teaching Ideas

**Age range:** 3 - 8 years  
**English level:** Beginner & lower intermediate  
**Language focus**

**Repeated patterns:** Who wants to marry me?  
I'm very rich. Please come and see!  
Speak to me!  
I do, I do, I do!  
I can't understand you! I can't marry you! (can / can't)

**Functions:** Making suggestions: *Let's ...*

**Phonic patterns:** *mat, rat, vat, hat, cat, fat, sat*

**Lexical items:** Farm animals and their sounds (*cow, horse, pig, sheep, dog, goose, rooster, cat, duck, rat*)  
Clothes (*dress, bow, gloves, hat*)  
Body parts (*head, shoulders, knees, toes, nose*)  
Food (*cabbage, carrots, beans, onions, sausage, bacon, soup* etc.)  
House (*hall, living room, bedroom, bathroom, kitchen*)

**General education ideas:** Sequencing from memory  
Socialising, turn taking and sharing

**Main story idea:** Being different doesn't matter. (A beetle marrying a rat!)

**Teaching aids:** Pictures of the animals involved, or puppets,  
a large coin, a broom, a bow, a large box for the vat.

This story is another well-known Portuguese pre-school story. The children need to know the animal names and body parts, especially good if they know the song 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes'. This gives them lots of opportunities to contextualise their learning, deciding which animals come next and making their sounds.

## **Art and craft**

- 1) Make masks. (See ideas for the previous story.)
- 2) Make a storybook. (See ideas for the previous story.)
- 3) Dress the Beetle and Mat the Rat for the wedding. A cut and stick activity. The beetle wears a bow, a dress, gloves, socks and shoes. Mat wears a top hat, a jacket, a bow tie, socks and shoes.
- 4) Draw Beetle's house with a window which opens and shows Beetle inside.

## **Maths and Role-play**

Older children can make pretend money and go shopping: "How much is it? It's 20p etc." Adding and subtracting: "You have 50 p. Buy a bow for 20p. How much change do you get? Colour the coins which add up to 20p."

## **Games with a dice**

Using the dressing activity above, each number on the dice represents an item of clothing and the children see who is able to dress their character first.

## **Geography**

Older children could map the route Beetle and Mat take to get to church. They pass the baker's, the butcher's, the shop, the town hall, the market, the park etc. They go up the hill, through the park, around the market ...

## **Movement and drama**

Once the children know some animals in English, this is perfect for a role-play activity. They will have heard the story several times before doing the role-play and should be quite confident at saying: "Who wants to marry me? I'm very rich, please come and see!" "I do, I do, I do." "Speak to me!" "EE AW, EE AW, EE AW" (etc) "But, I can't understand you." "I can't marry you!"

Pretend to have the wedding. Who would go? Beetle's family and Mat's family! A family photograph outside the church. Which animal would be the vicar?!!

## **Language work**

Do phonic work with *at* words.

*Sandie Mourao has worked in Portugal for 13 years and worked in primary schools and pre-schools since 1993. As a teacher trainer, she is involved in foreign language projects with generalist pre-school and primary school teachers. The above stories emerged from two of her workshops.*

# Koonek and the Birds

## A Story from Argentina

Retold and discussed by Alfonsina Denegri and Beatriz Lupiano

Long ago, in the mountains, there lived a tribe of Indians. They liked summer.

[Ask: *What is it like in summer?* Hot, sunny, the leaves/trees all green, lots of fruit (strawberries, apples, etc.)]

But winter in the mountains wasn't so nice: it was very windy, very, very cold and it snowed all day long, so they couldn't go out to work or play. Food was a problem, too. The trees had no fruit; the animals were hidden... The Indians didn't like winter there. They said:

"I don't want to be here in winter."

"No, not again!"

"It's too cold."

"It's too windy."

"Let's leave."

"Yes! Let's go where there are no mountains!"

So they decided to leave. It was a long way, so they had to start very early, at the end of summer. Finally, the day came.

They didn't live in a village, so they just picked up their "kaus".

[Show the picture.]

"Come on."

"Let's go. We're ready."

"But... Where's Koonek?" She was a very old lady, very nice and helpful. Some people said she could do magic...

"Look! There she is! Behind that rock!"

"I don't want to leave," said Koonek. "I'm too old, and this is my home. Don't worry, I'll be OK. Come back next summer and you'll see."

The Indians were worried, but they left. Koonek stayed in her "kau" and waved goodbye. She was smiling.

The next day, she started to gather some food for the winter. She picked up herbs, roots... [Ask: *What else?*] Suddenly, she heard something: "Tweet, tweet!"

"The birds are here!" said Koonek.

A little one was looking at her. He took two little steps and stopped. Then two more. He wanted to say hello, but he was afraid. Koonek knew this, so she didn't move. Then the little bird flew away. He was too scared. Back at home, he told his parents.

"You should be more careful, Shehuen!"

"It's OK, Mummy. She's nice."

The next morning, Shehuen went back to see Koonek. Soon all the other birds went too. By now, it was autumn!

[Ask: *What is it like in autumn?* Brown and yellow leaves, colder, shorter days, etc.]

Every afternoon, the birds visited Koonek: they talked and played, and she fed them (ask what). They were friends.

But winter was near, and the birds had to leave. It would be too cold for them and there would be no food. Koonek was sad.

"Goodbye, little birds."

"Goodbye, Koonek. See you next summer!"

But...Shehuen came back. He was lost.

"I'm afraid!"

"Don't worry, I'm here."

"But Mum and Dad! They can't find me! They must be very worried!"

Koonek was worried too: "I have no bird food. What can I do?"

She saw some bushes: "Oh, why can't birds eat you?" She was very sad. She cried. One tear touched the bushes. And right there, a small purple fruit appeared. [Show picture.] And another one. Lots of them. Food!

The other birds came back, too. They wanted to be with Shehuen. Suddenly, it started to snow. It was winter.

[Ask: *What is it like in winter?* Cold, snowy, leafless trees, short days etc.]

"We can't fly now!"

"Let's stay here."

Koonek was happy. In summer, the Indians visited Koonek. She told them the story. They named the bushes "calafate", and even today, people say that if you eat calafate, you always go back to those mountains.

## Suggested teaching ideas

**Age range:** 5-10 years

**Level:** Good beginner

**Language focus:**

**Repeated Patterns:** Let's...  
It's / He's / I'm too...

**Functions:** Suggestions (Let's...)

**Lexical fields:** The four seasons

The weather

Summer fruits

**Main story idea:**

Thinking about sharing and friendship

**General educational idea:**

What animals or other people do in winter (migrations and nomadic habits)

**Suggested teaching aids:** a picture of "calafate" (purple berries)

a picture of a "kau" (similar to a tepee)

sets of simple sketches of the main parts of the story (one per child)

Ask children to bring: (1) a paper bag each and coloured papers (2) cut-outs (from magazines, etc) illustrating the four seasons.

### Formal language work

- 1) Give each child one of the sets of sketches and ask them to put them in the correct order. Then they can use them to retell the story.
- 2) The teacher pretends that it is too cold/hot/windy/snowy etc using mime, and elicits from one half of the class "It's too..." and from the other a suggestion, "Let's..." Then it can be done as a pair-work activity

### Cross-curricular work

Mini research: After drawing the children's attention to the Indians and the birds moving in the story:

- Younger children (5-7) can find out basic information (from parents, encyclopaedias, other school subject teachers) about the migration of birds and then share their findings with the rest of the class and perhaps make a class poster
- Older children (8-10) could form small groups, each focussing on one of the following: migration of birds, nomadic habits, other animals' winter habits (e.g. hibernation) The groups then report to the class.
- (Teachers can help with language for the reporting stage.)

### Activities fostering social development

The story can be used as a springboard for talks on different topics (teachers will decide whether to use L1 or L2, or mix them).

**Parent-child relationship:** Discuss with the children Shehuen's and his parents' reactions when a) he first met Koonek, b) he got lost. Relate it to their lives.

Ask: *Have you ever been lost? What must(n't) you do when you get lost? What did your parents say? Were you afraid/worried?* etc.

**Friendship and sharing:** *Was Koonek a good friend? Why was she worried? Were the birds that came back at the end good friends? What does/doesn't a good friend do? Is sharing an important aspect of friendship?* etc.

### Craft Work

1. Children are divided in four groups to make a collage using the cut-outs they brought. Each group illustrates a different season. Older children may write simple descriptions.
2. A bird: children make a puppet using the paper bag as the body and coloured papers for the beak and the wings. If possible, the teacher will have one ready to show first.

### Role play

Children can use the puppets and simple costumes and props (e.g. a blanket for Koonek's "poncho", tables and chairs as mountains and kaus). The size of the class will determine the number of Indians and birds.

*Alfonsina Denegri and Beatriz Lupiano live in La Plata, Argentina. They are in their mid-twenties and have been teaching English, mostly to children, in language schools in Argentina for about 5 years.*

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# Arjuna and the Clay Bird

## A story from India

Re-told and discussed by Eleanor Watts

Long ago, in India, there lived five princes. The middle prince was called Arjuna. He had two older brothers and two younger brothers. The five princes had a hundred cousins. They all lived together in a huge palace.

[Ask: *Have you got any brothers sisters/cousins? How many? Are they older or younger than you? Do you all live together or do you live in different houses?*]

The five princes and their cousins had lessons every day, just like you!  
They learned how to run and jump.  
They learned how to throw and catch balls.  
They learned to make clay models.  
They learned how to fight with swords.  
They learned how to shoot with bows and arrows.

[Show the children a home-made bow and arrow and show how it works, without endangering anyone! Also make a quick clay model of a bird and ask the children to guess what it is. Ask: *What do you learn to do at school? Do you learn how to run, jump, fight with swords, throw balls, make clay models, catch balls, shoot with bows and arrows (etc)?* Elicit the answers, *Yes, we do* or *No, we don't*. Then introduce the question, *What else do you learn?* eliciting the response, *We learn how to read, draw pictures, write, do sums etc.* ]

One day, the teacher took all the children into the garden. He made a bird out of clay. Then he put it on the branch of a big tree.

"Now I'm going to teach you how to shoot with a bow and arrow," he said. "I want you to hit the clay bird. Who wants to go first?"

"I do," said the oldest prince.

"All right," said his teacher. "Take the bow in your hand. Put the arrow to the string. Now, what can you see?"

"I can see the bird," replied the oldest prince.

"What else can you see?" asked his teacher quietly.

"I can see the branch and the tree," said the oldest prince.

"What else can you see?" asked his teacher even more quietly.

"I can see the palace and the sky and my brothers and my cousins and you," he answered.

"DONKEY!" shouted his teacher. "You'll never learn to shoot."

The oldest brother was frightened and ran back to the other boys.

[Exaggerate the difference between quiet and loud so that the children jump when the teacher shouts!  
Ask: *What can you see in our classroom? What else can you see?* Use this to revise common classroom objects (eg door, window). Then ask a few yes/no questions, mentioning some familiar objects which the children can see and some other common objects (eg spoon, cup) which the children can't see – to practise the responses *Yes, I can* and *No, I can't*.]

"Now," said the teacher. "Who wants to go next?"

"I do," said the oldest cousin.

"All right," said his teacher. "Take the bow in your hand. Put the arrow to the string. Now, what can you see?"

"I can see the bird," replied the oldest cousin.

"What else can you see?" asked his teacher quietly.

"I can see the branch and the tree," said the oldest cousin.

"What else can you see?" asked his teacher even more quietly.

"I can see the palace and the sky and my brothers and my cousins and you!" he answered.

"NUTCASE!" shouted his teacher. "You'll never learn to shoot."

The oldest cousin was frightened and ran back to the other boys.

Many of the princes and their cousins came up to their teacher, but he shouted at all of them. "Who wants to go next?" asked the teacher.

Most of the boys were frightened, but Arjuna said, "I do."

"All right," said his teacher. "Take the bow in your hand. Put the arrow to the string. Now, what can you see?"

"I can see the bird," replied Arjuna.

"What else can you see?" asked his teacher quietly.

"Nothing," replied Arjuna.

"Can you see the branch?" asked his teacher.

"No, I can't," said Arjuna.

"Can you see the tree?"

"No, I can't," said Arjuna.

[Pause for the children to supply each question, ie *Can you see the palace / the sky etc?* Arjuna replies, *No* each time.]



"So what *can* you see?" asked the teacher.  
 "I can see the bird's eye," replied Arjuna.  
 "WELL DONE!" said his teacher. "Hit it."  
 Arjuna pulled the string of his bow and let go. The arrow went straight through the bird's eye.

The clay bird fell from the tree.

## Suggested Teaching Ideas

- Age range:** 3-11 years  
**English level:** Good beginner  
**Language focus:**
- Repeated patterns:** What can you see? What else?  
 Can you see .....? Yes, I can / No, I can't.  
 Do you learn how to ... at school? Yes, we do. No, we don't.
  - Functions:** Turn taking (Who wants to go next?)  
 Giving blame (Donkey! Nutcase!) and praise (Well done!)
  - Lexical fields:** Family relationships (brothers, sisters, cousins)  
 Relative age (older/younger/middle, oldest, youngest)  
 Common objects (eg tree, branch, window, door, cup)
  - Main story idea:** The importance of concentrating on one thing at a time
  - General educational ideas:** What we learn to do at school  
 Different teaching styles: Does a stern teacher frighten children out of learning or insist on high standards for their own good?
  - Suggested teaching aids:** a simple bow and arrow made with string and a stick  
 a handful of clay for each child  
 two white pillow-cases per child, if you perform it as a play

This story can be told to beginners in the mother tongue or to good beginners in English. It lends itself to a lot of class discussion during the telling of the story, both to clarify the meanings of words and to stimulate talk in English. This is why I have interrupted the story below with suggestions for oral work. In my view, there is no harm in breaking into a story at times, as it helps the children to make sense of it and to relate it to their own lives. However a good story should be told many times. Once the meanings of the story have been discussed during a first telling, it can be told again without a break, perhaps the next day, which will help it to flow. In my experience, children often ask for their favourite stories to be told again and again – and in exactly the same words. This is an advantage for beginners, as repeated tellings help them to internalise the language.

### Discussion in the mother tongue

After the telling of the story, much discussion in the mother tongue can take place, if there is a common language. This might include questions such as: Why didn't the teacher let the first boys shoot at the clay bird? What was different about Arjuna? The children could suggest, again in the mother tongue, what other tasks need complete concentration. You may also wish to discuss the methods of the teacher in

the story. Do your pupils think that they learn better if they are frightened of their teachers? Talk about the advantages and disadvantages of having a very strict teacher. Their views (and yours!) will of course vary according to the culture in which you teach, but encourage them to see both sides of the questions.

### Formal English language work

The story can form the basis of much formal English language teaching:

1. The children can be given a picture full of familiar objects and answer a number questions following the pattern, *Can you see a ... in the picture? Yes, I can. No, I can't.*

2. The children can write sentences about their families:

	no		brother / brothers
I have	one	Older	sisters / sisters.
	two	Younger	cousin / cousins.
	three		

3. The children can write sentences about the things they do and don't do at school following this pattern:

		draw pictures.
	do	fight with swords.
At school, we	don't	read books
		do sums.
		shoot with bows and arrows

### Craft work

Informal activities like craft work are great for language teaching because they provide a meaningful context. After telling this story, you might draw a simple bird on the board, teaching the English words for its parts and labelling them in English. You may wish the children to draw and label their own pictures. Then give each of them a handful of clay. Ask them to make clay birds. As you walk round, ask the children in English to show you the eye, head, beak, tail etc. If possible, paint the birds and display them.

Straight, flexible sticks and pieces of string are all you need to get your class making bows and arrows. However, some teachers may feel this activity is altogether too risky! Alternatively, just make one yourself in front of the children. Then go into an **empty** playground, put a clay bird (or other target) on a chair and give each child a turn at archery, practising the use of the formula, *Who wants to go next?* If you know the children well enough to have a joke with them, shout, *Donkey!* Or *Nutcase!* if they miss. Otherwise stick to *Well done!* if they hit the target. Needless to say, remind them that *Donkey!* and *Nutcase!* should never be used seriously.

### Role play

Children love acting out a story when they have heard it two or three times. If you use the same language each time, they will probably internalise the sequences of

questions and answers. You may wish to be the narrator the first time you act it out, letting the children take the acting roles. It is probably safest to act this story without arrows. This also saves Arjuna embarrassment if he misses the clay bird! One child can act the part of the tree, holding a clay bird in one hand. When Arjuna lets the string go, the "tree" can drop the bird. It may be as well to make a spare clay bird, as it will almost certainly break and you wouldn't want to upset the child who made it.

If the children really enjoy it, you may wish to polish up your role play so that it can be acted in a school assembly. Since you can have up to a hundred cousins, everyone can have at least a walk-on part. Costumes are fairly simple. Chests should be bare (or simple white, long-sleeved shirts can be worn, untucked, by those who want to be modest). Two white pillow cases can be tucked into the top of shorts or knickers so that they hang down to knee level. The ends can be pleated at the front and back so that walking is easy. As there are no girls in the story, the girls can all act boys' roles. If they have long hair, it can be tied in a pony-tail on top of the head as this was the fashion for boys in Ancient India.

*Eleanor Watts writes textbooks for primary schools in South Asia and Africa, teaches part-time in a British multi-ethnic primary school and does free-lance teacher training.*

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One day, Mandeep was going down the stairs.

Ganesh, Sai and Madan were eating sweets.

'Hello, Mandeep,' said Sai.  
'Do you want a sweet?'



Mandeep wanted to make friends, but she felt shy.

She ran down the stairs and said nothing.

'She's not very nice,' said Ganesh.

'Wah!' shouted Amit.  
'Amm! You've got my marble!  
(You!) You naughty girl!  
Said their mother.  
Give Amit back his marble.'



'I haven't got his marble,' said Ivo.  
'He is angry because I can hit the big marble and he can't.'

(1)

# I like recycling!

## A story from Spain

**A story-based workshop devised and discussed by Marisa Gonzales**

This is .....

[Ss or teachers (taking part in the workshop) decide if the protagonist is a boy or a girl.]

S/he is very clean and tidy. S/he goes to school everyday.

Look at .....’s school. Oh! The playground is very dirty.

The papers are on the floor.

The bottles are on the floor.

The sandwiches are on the floor.

The sweet wrappers are on the floor.

The kitchen foil is on the floor.

The cartons of milk and fruit juice are on the floor.

The chewing gum is on the floor.

The banana skin is on the floor.

They look very sad. They cry a lot.

They say: “Excuse me. Where’s our home, please?”

..... notices that the waste-paper bin is empty.

The glass bin is empty, the dustbin is empty, the carton bin is empty.

S/he picks up the papers and puts them into the waste-paper bin.

S/he picks up the cartons of milk and fruit juice and puts them into the carton bin.

S/he picks up the bottles and puts them into the glass bin.

S/he picks up the foil, the sweet wrappers, the banana skin, the

chewing gum and the sandwiches and puts them into the dustbin.

They all say:

“Thank you .....!

I’m in the dustbin.

I’m in the glass bin.

I’m in the waste-paper bin.

I’m in the carton bin.

Thank you .....!

Thank you .....!”

..... thinks that recycling is very important.

..... doesn’t like his/her school dirty.

## Suggested teaching ideas

### Age range

**Story telling:** 4-12 years

**Workshop:** 10-12 years

**English level:** Beginner or good beginner

### Language Focus:

#### Repeated language patterns:

*Where's our home, please?*

*S/he picks up ...*

*They look very sad.*

*They cry a lot.*

*S/he doesn't like ...*

**Functions:** Asking for help and information

**Lexical fields:** Containers: *waste-paper bin, dustbin, glass bin, carton bin.*

Objects you can find on the school's playground: *sandwiches, foil, sweet wrappers, chewing gum, paper, bottles, banana skins, cartons*

Verbs: *pick up, recycle*

Classroom language: *cut out, colour, stick, laminate...*

**Main Story idea:** Learning to recycle

Learning to be clean and tidy

**General Educational idea:** Education for consumption: appropriate use of containers

Education for a healthy life: Keep the school clean and tidy;

feel the school as their own.

**Suggested teaching aids:** Published materials: dictionary

Cards: instruction cards, description cards

Class materials: worksheets, OHP, blue-tack, felt-tip pens, alphabet stamps, stamp pad, crayons, wax crayons, frieze paper, glue, adhesive paper, pencil, scissors, A3 / A4 card, foil

I set up this workshop whilst in our school we were starting a campaign called *My school - more beautiful*. I thought this was a good way for my students to participate in this campaign, practising their English at the same time.

Students learned some strategies in order to help the teacher to prepare the drawings, to make up the story and to tell the story to their peers and also to the very young at school. At the end of the workshop, the students noticed that they had been able to work independently of the teacher and at their own pace.

The story made children aware of some important attitudes related to values, such as respect and a lively participation in preserving and improving our environment, but in a creative way.

I told the story at the end of the workshop, using the drawings my pupils made during the workshop and all the school children were involved in it.

At the time I told the story, music was played; music helped students understand the story language.

## Preparing the workshop

The teacher plans the workshop and prepares the materials:

Instruction cards: Each card explains the work to be done.

Figure 1



### INSTRUCTIONS

- READ THE CARD
- USE A4 PAPER cut in a half
- USE THE DICTIONARY
- DRAW
- COLOUR IT USING: WAX CRAYONS, FELT-TIP PENS OR CRAYONS,
- CUT OUT
- WRITE THE NAME, USING THE STAMPS AND THE STAMP PAD
- PUT THE DRAWING ON THE TEACHER'S TABLE.

Description cards: Physical description of the characters of the story. Objects you can find on the school's playground.

Figure 2



All cards are placed inside an envelope.

Games: Learners need to be able to recognise and respond to the instructions which appear in the cards. This language is reinforced with the games.

- SNAP:** Cards: Play 'snap' matching the visuals and the verbs
- DOMINO:** Prepare a domino amplifying the snap cards (A3). Play dominoes, matching the visuals and the verbs.



### The workshop

<u>Teacher's work.</u>	<u>Students' work (6<sup>th</sup> form of Primary)</u>
Explains the work	Make groups
Hands out the envelopes with the cards. (1 instruction card and 1 description card per group)	Read the cards. Use the dictionary.
Helps the students.	Draw, colour, cut out, laminate, stamp the character's name and put the drawing on the teacher's table. Draw the school playground using a big piece of frieze paper.
Tells the story, using the objects Ss have drawn and the big school playground.	Listen to the story.

Tell the story to other primary students.
Stick the poster onto the school's corridor walls and tell the story to other primary students and also to the very young (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> forms of primary) 'in English' (they do not study English).
Below the drawings, the teacher sticks the story script.

Teacher's work + 6 <sup>th</sup> form students	Students' work (3 <sup>rd</sup> 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> forms of primary)
Tells the story using the drawings 6 <sup>th</sup> form students have drawn and the big school playground.	Listen to the story.

Teacher's work.	Students' work (4 <sup>th</sup> form of primary)
Tells the story using the drawings 6 <sup>th</sup> form students have drawn and the big school playground.	Listen to the story and perform it.
Prepares short sentences with blanks	Fill in the blanks.

Teacher's work.	Students' work (5 <sup>th</sup> form of primary)
Tells the story using the drawings 6 <sup>th</sup> form students have drawn and the big school playground.	Listen to the story and perform it.
Gives instructions to prepare the poster. Explains that the poster is going to be stuck onto the school's corridor walls.	Draw the pictures in order to prepare the poster. Stick the drawings onto big pieces of cardboard in order to make the poster.
Helps students think about advertisements related with the theme (recycling and tidiness).	Write advertisements and stick them onto the school walls.

In my opinion, teaching a foreign language is not only transmitting lots of contents, but it is working a communicative approach in which contents and tasks are related to students' daily life. They are more motivated and responsible for their own process of learning. This workshop shows students different strategies to help them become more effective and independent learners.

*Marisa González is an EFL Primary teacher and educational adviser at Cefire València, València, Spain.*

# The Pied Piper of Hamelin

A story from Germany

Translated and adapted from the German version of Lemieux  
by Linda Huggett

A long time ago, the people of Hamelin on the River Weser had everything they needed.

The poor were not hungry and the rich had more than enough. But they were mean and selfish and they complained:

“Our children take up too much time, make too much noise and cause too many problems.”

The children were not happy because their parents spent too much time and money on food and drink, and not enough time on them.

But in 1283 something very strange happened in the town of Hamelin.

It was Christmas Eve and everyone in the town was getting ready for the Christmas festivities. Delicious Christmas smells came from every corner of the town – cheese, ham, apples, sweets, honey biscuits, cake, wine, beer, juices and lots more.

Nobody saw the one rat creep slowly into the town. Suddenly there were ten, then a hundred, and then thousands of them in every corner of the town! They were in the baker’s, the butcher’s, the greengrocer’s, the dairy and even in the candle maker’s.  
EVERYWHERE!

They ate the cheese, ham, apples, sweets, honey biscuits, cake and lots more!

They drank all the wine, beer and juices and lots more!

The people begged the mayor to do something – anything!

The town council decided to place lots of mousetraps in the streets and houses, but the rats just laughed at them. They’d seen it all before!

They put a lot of poison on the food, but the rats just ate it like sweets and did not even get stomach-ache. They’d eaten it all before! Soon there wasn’t any food left and the rats started to eat the cushions, chairs, carpets, curtains and even the people’s clothes.

At last the mayor said:

“I will give one golden coin to anybody who can free our town of the rats.” But nobody could.

The next day he offered:

"I will give ten golden coins to anybody who can free our town of the rats." But nobody could.

The next day he declared:

"I will give a hundred golden coins to anybody who can free our town of the rats." But nobody could.

The next day he pleaded:

"I will give a thousand golden coins to anybody who can free our town of the rats." But nobody could.

The following day a stranger came into the town. His coat was of many colours - red, orange, pink, blue, green, purple and yellow and he was carrying a small wooden pipe in his hand.

"I hear you've got a problem," he said to the mayor. "I'll free your town of the rats for a thousand golden coins."

"You're on!" answered the mayor, relieved that at last something was going to be done.

The piper went to the market place and began to play a strange tune on his pipe.

The rats stopped eating and ran into the street. First one, then ten, then a hundred, then thousands and at last all the rats came to the market place. They followed the piper out of town, across the bridge and into the River Weser and were swept away.

Much rejoicing took place in Hamelin that night.

The following day the piper returned to collect his reward.

"Here are fifty golden coins," said the mayor. "Your pipe concert was not worth any more. If you had chased the rats out one-by-one, then that really would have been something!"

"I did as I promised," answered the piper. "You'll be sorry!" he warned as he left the town.

The people of Hamelin returned to their life of enjoyment, eating, drinking and ignoring the children.

They were pleased that their town was free of rats and that mayor had cheated the piper of his money.

Some time later, the piper returned to Hamelin. He went to the market place and started to play a wonderful tune on his pipe. The children stopped playing and ran into the street. First one, then ten, then a hundred and at last all the children came to the market place. They followed the piper, laughing and dancing across the bridge over the River Weser and up into the hills behind the town. The more the parents shouted for the children to return, the louder the piper played his magic tune.

The Pied Piper and the children were never seen again. But sometimes when the wind blows in the hills behind the town of Hamelin, it is said that the sound of the children laughing can still be heard.

### **Appendix**

According to history, in 1284, 130 children disappeared from the town of Hamelin on the River Weser. Nobody really knows what happened to them. Historians believe, however, that the town of Hamelin was over-populated at this time, and that the children were offered an opportunity to colonise another area of Germany. Although the truth behind the story is still uncertain, many writers and poets have used this historical event as a basis for their writings.

## **Suggested Teaching Ideas**

- Age range:** Teenagers (adaptable for younger learners)
- English level:** Intermediate to good intermediate, but easily adaptable for good beginners
- Language focus:** Multiple tenses, repeated language patterns, reported speech, "traditional" spoken English phrases, use of qualifiers, alliteration.
- Lexical fields:** Shops, food and drink, colours
- Social education:** Seven sins: selfishness, meanness, cheating, lying, Parent/child relationships
- General educational ideas:** Decimal block counting, problem solving
- Suggested teaching aids:** Flash cards, models, shadow puppets, period flute/pipe music, back-up materials and information for background / follow-up work.

This idea has been based on the following principles:

1. Teachers (mainstream or EFL) should choose the activities according to the age and ability of their pupils.
2. Teachers can adapt the suggestions according to the time / facilities / materials available.
3. The story can be re-written, by the teacher or more advanced pupils, to an appropriate level.

The following activities can be adapted to be used in a wide range of teaching situations. A few suggestions:

- As a workshop
- As a theme for a school project week
- As supplementary class room work
- As an end of study course project for the more advanced pupils.
- Cross curricular EFL studies in Primary Schools

## Optional supplementary work: A cross-curriculum approach

### History:

Medieval life

A visit to a market town

A comparison of life then and now

A day in the life of a child then and now

The Plague

### Geography:

Where is Hamelin? Draw a map of Germany and/or the area surrounding Hamelin.

Draw a diagram showing your town centre/village.

My route to school

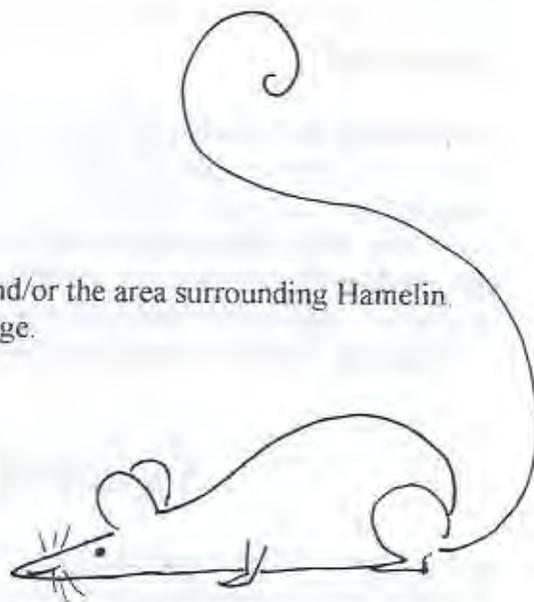
### Biology:

The life cycle and habits of rats

Genus: "Rat / Rodent" (Old English roet)

Friend or foe? Rats as pets

Food and personal hygiene



### Art and craft:

Design a "WANTED" poster for a "RAT KILLER".

Make a medieval model village.

Make a medieval wall "tapestry".

### Maths:

Text calculations:

If one pair of rats can produce..... how long would it take for.....?

A pair of rats can produce.....

### Music and sport:

Play traditional games.

Play medieval music.

Invite a medieval band of musicians/ jesters to perform at the school.

Attend a concert of traditional medieval music

### Additional "original English" texts

*The Wind in the Willows* (for a different view of rats!)

Further versions of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* in prose and poem form.

Read /study traditional nursery rhymes where the original texts depict or have their origins in medieval town and country life

### Video:

*The Wind in the Willows*

*Basil the Mouse Detective*

*The Mouse Trap* - a comedy released in 1997 - great fun to watch and offers many discussion topics.

## **Suggested topics for surveys / questionnaires / discussions**

Using qualifiers: Pocket money

Free-time activities: What do you do and with who?

What do you consider are the "seven worst sins"?

Traditional Christmas celebrations around the world

The following is a translation of a German saying: *Little children - little problems. Big children - big problems!* Do you agree?

## **Further Project Work:**

### **1. A Medieval Market Day at School:**

- a. Produce goods to sell on the stalls.
- b. Pupils/ teachers wear period dress.
- c. Play traditional games which would also have been played by children in medieval times.
- d. Play traditional medieval music.

### **2. Class elect a town council and mayor.**

Hold open forums with the "people". Suggested discussion points:

- a. Prevention is better than cure!
- b. Improving free-time activities for children/teenagers in our town
- c. What is the difference between a thriving population and overcrowding? Relate to the human as well as animal world. Our children take up too much of our time, make too much noise, and cause too many problems. What can we do?
- d. How can we free our town of "rats"? Literally or metaphorically.
- e. The environmental/social issues of using poisons/traps/culling.

### **3. A Christmas Market: "Christkindmarkt"**

The "Christkindmarkt" is a traditional annual German market which takes place any time during the four advent weeks leading up to Christmas. It often has the atmosphere of a Medieval Market as the stalls are usually wooden and set up outside in the main shopping streets or market place and the stall keepers often dress in medieval clothes. In larger towns and cities it stays open throughout the entire advent period. Decorations, small presents and food and drink are the most popular goods which are sold.

Glühwein is a favourite with nearly everyone! It is a hot mulled red wine drink. For children, use a red fruit juice i.e. grape or blackcurrant.

### **4. Public performance of the Pied Piper of Hamelin**

- a. As a stage play.
- b. As a charade with narrator.
- c. As a shadow- screen play.

*Linda Huggett has taught in Britain and Germany, where she now lives. She runs an English club for Young Learners in Solingen. It's called "The Best of British" or the BOB Club. She is also moderator for an innovative teacher training scheme in Cologne.*

# Friends

## A story from China

Re-told and discussed by Melanie Williams

### Part One

This story happened a long time ago in China. There was once a man whose wife had died and he lived all alone. He worked very hard at his job. But his house was always very untidy. One morning he got up and found the house very tidy. His shoes were clean, the kitchen tidy and his breakfast was on the table. The next day he got up and it was the same. His shoes were clean, the kitchen tidy and his breakfast was on the table.

And the next day was the same too! His shoes were clean, the kitchen tidy and his breakfast was on the table. So that night he didn't go to bed but waited to see who was helping him. He saw a beautiful woman come into his house. She cleaned and tidied everything. Then she walked out of the house into the garden and disappeared.

The next night he spoke to her:

'Who are you?' he said.

'A friend who has come to help you,' she said.

'I will always help you but don't tell anyone about me.'

'I promise I won't tell anyone,' the man said. 'It's a secret.'

### Part Two

One night, the man was talking to his friends.

'How are you?' they said.

'Oh, I'm fine,' he said. 'I've a friend who helps me.'

Too late! He had told his friends and broken his promise.

That night he waited for the woman to arrive.

'You broke your promise,' she said. 'I will never come back.'

She turned and walked out of the house into the garden. He followed her.

'I'm sorry,' he said. 'Please come back'.

But she didn't look round. Then, she came to the pond at the end of the garden. There was a flash and a bang and she disappeared. He looked around. She was nowhere. He looked on the ground and there, in front of him, was a beautiful, tiny snail.

He picked it up carefully and took it into the house. He looked after it, feeding it every day, hoping that the beautiful woman would come back.

Perhaps she did. But we don't know, because it's their secret.



This story is adapted from a story in *The Virago Book of Witches* (1993)

## Suggested Teaching Ideas

- Age range:** 10+
- Language Level:** Pre-Intermediate. This is a listening and speaking activity for the pupils. They do not have to understand all the words in the story. They do not have to read or write the story.
- Language Focus:** Narrative tenses
- Vocabulary:** *keep a promise, break a promise, secret, pond, snail, alone, disappear* / listening and speaking practice
- Social Ideas:** Thinking about friends and making / breaking promises, keeping secrets and how they feel if their friends have a secret from them, jobs around the house and who does them
- General Educational Ideas:** Sequencing a narrative, turn-taking, loneliness
- Suggested teaching aids:** an empty snail shell, simple drawings of the following: a tidy room, an untidy room, teacher's miming skills.

1. Tell the children you are going to tell them a story.
2. Pre-teach: *keep a promise* and *break a promise*. This might be best done through mime or by using a story or situation they already know. Pre-teach *pond, snail* and *alone* if necessary.
3. Put the following words on the board: *pond, promise, alone, snail, beautiful, garden*.
4. Put the pupils in groups of about 4 and give them 5 - 10 minutes to make up a story around these 6 words. They might use the mother tongue to work out the story, but tell them that they are going to tell it to the class in English.
5. Ask 4 or 5 groups to tell their story to the class. It's fine if they use a mixture of English and mother tongue. Emphasize that no story is the correct one. \*
6. Now tell them you are going to tell them your story and that they are going to listen to see if theirs are similar.
7. Tell them Part One of the story. Use the pictures, your voice and mime to bring the story to life.
8. Elicit their ideas about what is going to happen next. Write them on the board if you feel this will help them remember. You can even take a class vote on which idea is the best.
9. Tell them Part Two of the story. Again use mime and your voice to bring the story to life. Use the real snail shell at the end of the story and show it around the class.

10. Talk about the story with the class. Some talking points, depending on the age of the learners are:

Did they like the story?

Was the story better / not as good as theirs?

Which bit of the story did they like best?

Which bit of the story didn't they like?

The role of men and women in the house: who does what at home.

The ending of the story - what does it mean?

11. To finish, the pupils can work in groups, inventing their own ends to the story. Depending on the time you have left some groups can tell their endings to other groups.

\* If you have a small class, you can regroup the students to form new groups where the members are all from different original groups. They can then take it in turns in their new groups to re-tell their group's story. This works well with teenagers and makes sure that everyone has a chance to speak.

*Melanie Williams is a freelance teacher trainer, specialising in young learners. She is a tutor on the MA in TEYL by distance for the University of York and joint Series Editor of Penguin Young Readers. Her particular areas of interest are the use of stories in the language classroom and the assessment of young learners. email: mel.williams@paston.co.uk*

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# The Kangaroo

An urban legend set in Australia

Told and discussed by Andrew Wright

A family were in Australia; they were on holiday. The family drove across a big desert. Suddenly a kangaroo jumped across the road in front of their car. The car hit the kangaroo and the kangaroo went over the roof of the car. They stopped the car and got out to look at the kangaroo. It was lying on the road.

The man was a joker! He thought he was funny! He took off his jacket and he put it on the kangaroo! Then he picked up the kangaroo and shouted to his wife, "Quick! Take a photograph!" He thought it was funny!

But the kangaroo wasn't dead! It was just a bit dizzy. Suddenly it opened its eyes, looked and then jumped. And it jumped and jumped and jumped across the desert!

But the kangaroo was wearing the man's jacket! And in the pocket there was his passport and his money and his car keys!



---

ANDREW WRIGHT

## Suggested Teaching Ideas

- Age range:** Children of all ages love this story!  
**English level:** Elementary and upwards  
**Language focus:** This story is rich in verbs of action in the simple past tense. The story can be told in the present tense.

### Suggested teaching aids:

You don't need to prepare, but it might be useful to be able to show where Australia is on a map or a globe and to show pictures of the desert and of kangaroos. You might also bring in your own passport, car keys and purse or wallet of money.

### Content

Discuss the story in the children's mother tongue.

- The story is usually told as a true story. This raises the question of *What is a true story?* Stories of this kind are usually known as Urban Legends.
- The father is a cruel joker but then he suffers... but so does his family!
- What happens to them?

### Before

- Begin by asking what a kangaroo is (animal) and where it lives (Australia, desert) and what it does (eats leaves and grass and jumps).
- Talk about the desert (hot, dry, doesn't rain, Aborigine people, mainly flat country)
- With the class try to draw a kangaroo on the board and in this way use the language for naming parts of the body and the idea of jumping.

### During

- The first time you tell the story, the children can just listen. In order to help the children to understand the story, mime the actions as you refer to them.
- The second time you tell the story, you can ask the children to mime the story. Four chairs can represent a car.

### After

- Re-telling: the children practice re-telling the story so that they can go home and re-tell the story at home.
- Re-tell with changes. The children, in groups of five or six, turn the story into a play and add details, for example, conversation and singing in the car.
- Writing: the children can write a letter home about the accident and what happened.
- Topics: A study of animals in Australia  
A study of how animals escape

*Andrew Wright has supported the Young Learners SIG for many years. He is the author of books for OUP, CUP and Longman. He is working on another book for the OUP primary resource book series for teachers called Art and Language.*

# Conference Reports

## Annual IATEFL Conference: Dublin, March 2000

Andy Jackson

IATEFL holds its Annual Conference around the beginning of April every year. It is held at different venues, usually within the UK, but occasionally outside. This year's event was held in Dublin, with around 1,000 participants from about 75 different countries, the great majority from England.

The normal pattern for the conference is to have a plenary session every morning, followed by up to six sessions varying from 20 minutes to 90 minutes of parallel sessions each day, where participants may choose between as many as 16 different talks or workshops a time. There is also an exhibition area for publishers and various EFL organisations and a number of social events. The conference can last up to five days, and it can be very exhausting trying to attend a talk or workshop in every possible slot. You quickly begin to suffer from information overload. And of course the sessions vary from the esoteric to the entertaining, with as many as 200 people crowding in to listen to the more popular speakers and only a handful attending the more obscure topics.

The organisers provide a very comprehensive and well-laid-out programme, with plans, maps and summaries of events to help you decide who or what to see and hear. The summaries are accompanied by codes indicating the SIG area, the type of audience (experienced, secondary, adult etc), and each SIG has a focus day, so that those who cannot attend the whole conference but have a particular interest can opt for that day. There will, of course, be other sessions of interest to particular SIG members scattered across other days too, and it is a common grouse that the two sessions you most wanted to attend are on at the same time.

This year the Young Learner SIG day was Wednesday, with three talks - one by Nigel Harwood on *Favourite adolescent activities*, one by Herbert Pucha on *Multiple Intelligences with Young Learners through Stories*, and a report on a Lingua project on *Language teaching across the primary curriculum* by Anton Prochazka. There was also a short Open Forum, attended by around 45 participants, at which Chris Etoh introduced the work of the SIG and responded to questions. The participants filled in questionnaires, from which we gleaned that about half of those present were actual members of the SIG. Of the non-members present, there were two from UK and the rest from other countries - a total of fifteen countries were represented, including Morocco, Peru, Canada, six from Western Europe and five from Eastern Europe. Among SIG members, there were eleven countries represented, including five from Germany, one from Japan, one from Argentina and the rest from Europe. The majority were teachers or teacher-trainers, but one, from USA, noted her profession as a Vaudeville Performer Teaching Good Behavior in Elementary Schools! There were a number of questions raised by the participants which the

committee hope to address through this Newsletter or via the Website. Most of these concerned the flow of information on forth-coming events, how to organise events, and more information on the profile of the SIG membership – details of who people were, where they worked, who they taught etc. There was a clearly a desire for more contact between members – already reflected in the lively exchanges on the internet discussion list.

The Forum provided an excellent opportunity to put a face to some of those enigmatic email addresses, to renew old friendships and to make new acquaintance with people from a variety of backgrounds but a common interest in Young Learners. No doubt many will meet again at the next YLSIG event.

### **Joint IATEFL/TESOL Young Learners Conference: Viterbo, Italy, April 2000**

#### **Wendy Superfine**

This conference was set in Viterbo, the picturesque town north of Rome which housed the palace where the Pope was originally chosen, so this added historic interest to the venue!

The introductory plenary was given by the TESOL–Italy Honorary President Ispettore Raffaele Sanzo, who talked about *Primary Foreign Language Teaching in Italy: Present Conditions, Future Perspectives*. This was followed by Shelagh Rixon, University of Warwick, who asked, *What can we find out from the Young Learners themselves?* This talk looked at the important issue of involving the young learners themselves in the learning process. Areas discussed included what we can learn from self assessment, from testing and from asking them their views on learning English. The main part of the talk reported on a small-scale piece of research which she had undertaken in a Tuscan primary school in Autumn 1998. Children were interviewed in small friendship groups and revealed interesting and sometimes surprising views.

Other plenary talks were given by Herbert Puchta, University of Vienna, who talked about *Focusing on Young Learner's Speaking Skills* and Traute Taeschner, University of Rome, who discussed *Teaching a Foreign Language with the Narrative Format Approach*. The closing plenary was given by Susan Holden, Swan Publishing, who finalised the conference with her views on *Current Realities and Future Needs; Matching Perception and Reality*. She stated that “effective planning for the future needs to take account of the present reality in order for the aims to be realistic and achievable.” This paper presented and discussed some of the variables which can shape observation, thinking and planning and looked at them in relation to teacher supply and training, materials writing and classroom organisation.

Concurrent workshops were given throughout the conference. The first of these was given by Melanie Williams, University of York, who talked about *Turning Children Onto and Into Readers*. Readers for young learners need to be as varied as the learners themselves since learners within this age group have such different interests and language levels. In this workshop she explored ways of using readers that help

children to understand and use English appropriately at the same time as stimulating their creativity and curiosity

Amanda Cant, Longman, looked at *Wall space = Space for Creativity*. She asked, "How can we maximise the wall space in our classrooms and add to the variety of English activities?" This session concentrated on two activity types – wall space and blackboard stories. Participants had the opportunity to explore some new approaches which were broadly suitable for the 5-11 age range.

Wendy Superfine, IATEFL, looked at *Using Culture in the Primary Classroom*. This workshop was an introduction to practical ways of using British culture in the Primary EFL classroom. Teaching English to young learners involves activities which offer a rich array of interesting and highly motivating language material. One of the best methods of finding this material is looking at the culture of the target language. Examples were taken from course books which have been published for the Italian primary school curriculum.

Shelagh Rixon, University of Warwick, looked at *Teaching Vocabulary in the Primary Classroom*. In this workshop, she looked at the balance between teaching words and teaching structures and considered the questions: "Do we pay enough attention to vocabulary teaching or perhaps too much?" "How much vocabulary is it feasible to teach?" "What sort of words are most appropriate to choose?" and also offered some practical examples of activities which focus on words.

Susan Holden, Swan Publishing, analysed *What makes a good textbook?* Now that there are so many textbooks available, it is important that teachers are able to evaluate what is on offer and to choose the best one for their and their students' specific needs. In spite of the importance of materials evaluation for both teachers and learners, this topic is often neglected in teacher training courses. This workshop looked at some of the aspects and principles of materials evaluation in the Young Learner classroom. The aim of the session was to produce a materials evaluation checklist which was useful for teachers in Italy and elsewhere.

Herbert Puchta, University of Vienna, analysed *Teaching for Thinking in the Primary Classroom*. He dealt with the specific cognitive capabilities that children already have when they start learning a foreign language at primary school. Participants explored various ways of further enhancing these capabilities in order to help primary students maximise their language potential.

Traute Taeschner, University of Rome, was replaced by her colleague. In her workshop, *Teaching the Foreign Language through Narration: Let's enter 'Hocus and Locus' World*, she outlined a three year national research project concerning the teaching of English at kindergarten level. The aim of this project is on the one hand to verify through experimentation the possibility of successfully introducing a foreign language to kindergarten children through the narrative format approach. On the other hand it is to see if kindergarten teachers with little competence in English can improve both their methodology and their command of the foreign language through a model for teacher training, called the "brick model". *The adventures of Hocus and Locus* are stories to be acted out in class as shared actions between the teacher and

his/her pupils. Teachers were introduced into the magic world of Hocus and Locus through dramatisation and through a singing session.

Gabriella Spadaro's workshop *Drama in English Teaching* argued that teaching is not merely a passing on of information from those who "know" to those who don't, but it is, or should be, a very real developmental experience, taking into account learning styles as well as left and right brain development. Using drama techniques in the classroom can be effective and fun-filled way to help children learn. Drama helps students develop thinking skills and creative problem-solving techniques, skills that will serve them in the real world far more than parrot-learned information. Through drama, the child grows in understanding and control of his/her own body, voice and relationship. Games become a way of learning to follow directions, think creatively and grow in verbal skills. Drama combines the visual and the auditory with the very necessary kinesthetic in order to enhance learning.

The conference dinner was another memorable evening with a spectacular spread of Italian cuisine which was a tribute to Viterbo and its special atmosphere so typical of this part of Italy, thus helping the participants to feel replete in body and mind. We are very grateful to Paolo Coppari and Lucilla Lopriore and all the staff at TESOL Rome who worked so hard to enable us to come together and hold this conference in Italy for the first time.

## **14<sup>th</sup> Annual APPI Conference: Porto, Portugal, April 2000**

### **Debbie Smith**

The theme of the conference, *ELT Projects for a New Century*, attracted a large number of both speakers and participants. The conference was extremely well organised and the venue was excellent.

The key speaker, Penny Ur, presented us with a stimulating plenary covering her personal thoughts on the challenges facing ELT professionals in the new century. She covered areas which we are all constantly mulling over in our minds such as:

- Which English are we teaching?
- What culture?
- What is the best methodology?
- How do we train our teachers?

There was an excellent cross section of topics covered by the other 88 speakers at the conference, including some very helpful presentations from some of the major publishers.

One of the most exciting developments in the conference, and one that may be familiar to the YL SIG discussion group, was the initiation of the APPInep. This is the APPI YL SIG. Spurred on by her contact with the IATEFL YL SIG and the growth in the need for teachers of very young learners, Sandie Jones Mourao has sown the seeds for the development of this SIG.

## Reviews from REALBOOK NEWS

A wonderful source of story ideas comes from REALBOOK NEWS, Opal Dunn's valuable free publication. Twice a year, this newsletter reviews authentic English stories which are suitable for children learning English as a foreign language or additional language. It also reviews suitable non-fiction books. You can download it from the web on [www.realbooks.co.uk](http://www.realbooks.co.uk) or obtain it by post from REALBOOK NEWS, 23 St Peter's Street, London N1 8JP or by email from <OpalD@realbooks.co.uk>.

The books are classified into three levels – Beginners Level 1a, Post Beginners Level 1b, Early Readers Level 2, Reference Level 2. As a sampler, here are some story reviews from the recent May 2000 issue.

REALBOOK NEWS Issue 7

### Book Selection

**Hello, Goodbye** Author David Lloyd Illustrator Louise Voce Level 1a  
Walker Books Paperback ISBN 0-7745-1348-0 £4.99

Ideal for teachers who find teaching greetings and goodbyes difficult as there is no parallel within their children's own society. A big brown bear meets a tree and says *Hello* very loudly. Then two bees fly over and say *Hello Hello*. Then a bird does the same.

*Soon voices all over the tree were saying Hello. Suddenly a drop of rain fell on the bear's nose. Splash! Goodbye.*

Everyone disappears and finally the tree says very quietly *Hello rain!* This simple story easily adapts into an easy-to-perform play which, by increasing the number of animals, can give every child a role and a chance to use *Hello* and *Goodbye* in their right place.

**All Kinds of People** Author/Illus Emma Damon Level 1b  
Tango Books, London Hardback/Novelty ISBN 1-85707-067-4 £7.99

What makes you or anyone special? Do you look like your best friend? No you look like you!  
*People come in all different skin colours. Some people have short hair. Others have long hair. Some people like to dance. Others like to paint.*

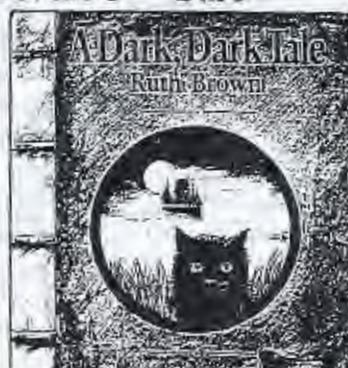
*There are as many different kinds of people in this world as there are clouds in the sky and fish in the sea. But EVERY ONE IS SPECIAL, including me!*

This story ends with a chart to be filled up, which includes Name, Height, Weight, Skin Colour, Hair and Hobbies with a built in mirror on the back cover to help. This humorous picture book helps children to think positively about themselves and warmly about others of different races and backgrounds. For many children this book sparks off projects. Some create their own simpler flap-up books about their family, their looks as well as likes and dislikes!

**A dark, dark tale** Author/Illus Ruth Brown Level 1a  
**A Red Fox Picture Book** Paperback ISBN 0-09-987400-8 £4.99

A spooky read-aloud book first published in 1981, but still a favourite. The atmospheric pictures are powerful and exciting. The language is easy to pick-up as it includes so much repetition. Children naturally absorb the difficult prepositions of place through the language and the pictures.

*Behind the door there was a dark, dark hall  
In the hall there were some dark, dark stairs.  
The end may be softer than you expected. The cupboard is in fact a toy cupboard!  
And in the box there was ...A MOUSE!*



**The Happy Hedgehog Band** Author Martin Waddell Illus Jill Barton Level 1b

Walker Books Paperback ISBN 0-7445-3049-0 £4.99p

This story about hedgehogs and woodland animals of the temperate western hemisphere comes highly recommended by a colleague working in Europe.

*Harry the hedgehog loved noise so he made a big drum. He was quickly copied.*

*Tum-tum-te-tum went one drum; that was Harry.*

*Diddle-diddle-dum went one drum; that was Helen.*

*Ratta-tat-tat went one drum; that was Norbet.*

*And BOOM went one drum; that was Billy. Until*

*the whole wood was humming and tumming with drumming.*

The other woodland animals liked the noise and asked how they could join in as they hadn't got drums. Harry suggested ways they could make music and created *The Happy Hedgehog Band* for all except a visitor to the wood, a dog, who danced to the music instead. The clear water colour illustrations make understanding easier and convey the feeling of joy that comes from making music together in a band. A sophisticated experience of using sounds and rhymes to make music-like noises and pretend to play instruments or just make *pop pop* with your mouth like the frog!

**My cat likes to hide** Author Eve Sutton Illus Lynley Dodd Level 1b

Picture Puffins Paperback ISBN 0-14-005550000242-4 £4.99

Another trip round the world but this time to meet different peoples or rather their stereotypes.

*My cat likes to hide in boxes. But The cat from France, Liked to sing and dance. And so the story continues introducing Cats from some European countries or cities dressed typically and often standing behind a recognisable national or local symbol.*

*Look at all these clever cats. Cats from Spain, Brazil and France, Cats from Greece, Japan and Norway. Cats who sing and fly and dance....*

But my cat is an ordinary cat and just *Likes to hide in boxes.*

The simple rhyming text is easily picked-up and, like most stereotypes provides a lead into a different culture from where children can begin exploring another culture and even looking more closely at their own.

**The Hairy Toe** Author-Illustrator Daniel Postgate Level 2

Walker Books Paperback ISBN 0-7445-6910-9

£4.99

A traditional American Tale about *a woman who went out to pick beans and she found a Hairy Toe.*

That night when she was in bed *she seemed to hear a voice crying. Where's my hair - r - ry To - o - oe?*

As the wind blew stronger, the voice got nearer and nearer until it seemed as if something was bending over the old woman.

Then *in an awful voice it said:*

*Where's my Hair - r - ry To - o - oe?*

And guess who it was who said *You've got it?*

The story is broken up which make for easier understanding of this scary tale, which is likely to grip older primary readers, but is too frightening for very young learners.

**Princess Aasta** Author - Illus Stina Langlo Ordal Level 2

Bloomsbury Children's Books Hardback ISBN 0-7475-4127-2

£9.99

The book written in English by a Norwegian gives a feel of the icy winter of a Nordic country in which the little Princess called Aasta lives. Aasta so wanted a bear to love that she decided to send a letter requesting one to a newspaper. She received replies from all over the world. She chose one who came from the North Pole and invited him to meet her. After some time the bear invited Aasta home to the North Pole. With her father, the King's permission she went. She had a wonderful time, but came back home in time for supper! The outline illustrations and the varied print sizes make it a special book.

