

Grendel: a Cautionary Tale about Chocolate by David Lucas (Walker Books)

Grendel is a little monster who adores chocolate. So when he is presented with the opportunity of making three wishes – guess what he does? In this new take on the King Midas story, a wish that everything he touches would turn to chocolate has the inevitable consequences.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence

- To explore, interpret and respond to a picture book
- To explore characters and draw inferences to aid our understanding of them
- To explore narrative plots and characters through role-play and play
- To broaden understanding and use of appropriate vocabulary
- To write character descriptions
- To write a short narrative episode

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 1 or a Year 2 class.

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is approximately 3 weeks long if spread out over 15 sessions.

The book supports teachers to teach about character development, emotional response to issues and dilemmas faced in a story and is a fantastic text to support personal, social and emotional development; being aware that actions have consequences. It follows a traditional tale format, deepening children's understanding of narrative structure.

National Curriculum 2014 Links:

Reading: (Word reading / Comprehension)

- Increase familiarity with a range of books;
- Explain and discuss understanding of books;
- Discuss the sequence of events in books;
- Answer and ask questions;
- Predict what might happen on the basis of what has been read;
- Draw inferences on the basis of what is being said and done;
- Express views and opinions about reading.

Writing: (Transcription / Composition)

- Draft and write by composing and rehearsing sentences orally;
- Sequence sentences to form short narratives;
- In narrative create settings, characters and plot;
- Write for different purposes including about fictional personal experiences and fictional narratives;
- Re-read writing to check it makes sense and make simple revisions.

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Speaking and Listening:

- Participate in discussion about what is read, taking turns and listening to what others say;
- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and peers;
- Articulate and justify answers and opinions;
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English;
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through imagining and exploring ideas in discussion, role-play and drama.

Cross Curricular Links:

Art and design

KS1 subject content: to use a range of materials creatively to design and make products; to use drawing, painting and sculpture to develop and share their ideas, experiences and imagination.

Geography

Use basic geographical vocabulary to refer to:

key physical features, including: beach, cliff, coast, forest, hill, mountain, sea, ocean, river, soil, valley, vegetation, season and weather

key human features, including: city, town, village, factory, farm, house, office, port, harbour and shop

Computing

KS1 subject content: Use technology purposefully to create, organise, store, manipulate and retrieve digital content.

Teaching Approaches

Responding to illustration
Using drawing and modelling to create a character
Reading aloud and rereading
Storymapping
Book talk
Role Play and Drama
Visualising

Writing Outcomes

Character labels and captions
Speech/thought Bubbles
Wish Star
Storymaps
Books to retell the story from Grendel's perspective
Instructions for cooking
Persuasive posters
Poems about chocolate

Links to other texts and resources.

Other books by David Lucas:

Halibut Jackson
Peanut
Lost in the Toy Museum
Christmas at the Toy Museum
The Skeleton Pirate
A Letter for Bear
Cake Girl
The Robot and the Bluebird (o/p)

Whale (o/p)

Nutmeg (o/p)

Other Takes on Traditional Tales:

Burger Boy by Alan Durant

Goldilocks and Just the One Bear by Leigh Hodgkinson

The Pea and the Princess by Mini Grey

Other books referenced:

Centrally Heated Knickers by Michael Rosen

Teaching Sessions:

Session 1: Reading aloud, shared writing, book talk

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- Look at the illustration of the setting on the endpapers of the book.
- Ask the children to talk to a partner about things they can see in the illustration. Use this activity to gauge an understanding of children's base vocabulary and identify opportunities to extend this throughout the sequence.
- Focus in on the cave – who do they think lives there? What do they look like?
- Look at the illustration of Grendel sitting on the log on the title page. Draw a large scale version of Grendel for the children to see. What words or phrases can the children think of to describe him? Write these around the image of Grendel. Take initial thoughts about the character, who he is, what he is like.
- Have children draw their own illustrations of Grendel. Write around the image to annotate with thoughts about the character; you could use key questions to prompt thinking, e.g. Who is he? What is his name? Where does he live? Who with? Who are his friends? What does he like doing?
- This could lead into a more extended piece of character description.

Session 2: Exploring character

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- Read the first page of the book. What else do we find out about Grendel? Encourage the children to focus on the illustrations as well as what they learn from the text being read to them. Add these thoughts to the large scale illustration.
- Ask the children about the things they love. Encourage the children to talk about the things they love. Scribe some of these thoughts to add to a working display, encouraging the children to talk about things of importance to them.
- Hearts could be cut out of coloured paper for the children to draw or scribe things that they love. Encourage the children to extend sentences by using conjunctions such as 'and' and 'because' to extend answers and justify responses.

- This could lead to a home learning activity around creating ‘me boxes’, finding photographs of objects of importance and talking and writing about these.

Session 3: Exploring story events, relating to personal experiences

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- Read aloud up to “I wish... everything I touch turns to chocolate!”.
- What do we think about the character of Grendel now? What is he like on the inside? Write these new thoughts on the inside of the illustration. Hone in on language that gives clues to his wider character like ‘Give it to me!’ and ‘snatched’. What do you think is meant by his mum saying ‘I was only going to give it to you if you were good.’?
- Think about Grendel’s wish more widely. Do they think it could have any good or bad consequences? What? Introduce the concept of selfishness; is his wish a good one? Will it benefit others?
- Scan or copy the illustration of Grendel holding the note towards the end of the book. Imagine you have got this note inside your chocolate egg. What would you wish for? Would it be a wish for yourself or someone else?
- Give the children star templates and get them to think of three things they would wish for if they had three wishes extend the children’s thinking and sentences by prompting them to justify their wishes.
- Get children to read their wishes through, checking first for sense, meaning and accuracy, then with a responsive eye; do they think any of their wishes may have good or bad consequences...?

Sessions 4 and 5: Exploring story settings

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- Re-read the start of the story, and read on until ‘*It was so much fun...*’
- Talk about the world of chocolate Grendel has created; what would it be like to be there? What would you see? How would it smell? What would you do if you were there? Collect the children’s thoughts around an illustration of Grendel in the chocolate setting.
- Have the children draw and describe their own chocolate land. What would it look like? Smell like, taste like? What could you do there? Encourage them to write on, around or on post-its attached to their illustrations, words and phrases that come to mind to describe the setting whilst drawing.
- You could watch and talk about the ‘Chocolate Room’ scene from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory to inspire children’s imagination. This can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZ-uV72pQKI>
- Have the children write a descriptive piece of writing to describe their chocolate land, what it is like to be there and what they could do in the setting.
- Encourage the children to respond to each other’s writing by sharing examples and looking for effective words and phrases that the children have used to bring the chocolate land to life. This could be done as a shared activity or in response partners, if these have been established.

Session 6: Exploring issues and dilemmas

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- Re-read the book so far, and read on until “*What have I done?*” said Grendel’
- What do the children think about what Grendel has done? Do they think his wish was a good wish now? Do they have any advice on how to make things better?
- Shared write a letter to Grendel, incorporating the children’s advice and ideas.
- Children go on to write their own letters to Grendel. Have a postbox, writing paper and envelopes available to make the writing purposeful.
- You could then follow up with emptying the postbox and writing a letter back from Grendel, thanking the children for their advice.
- Come back to the note that Grendel had found in his chocolate egg. Do the children have any more ideas about what he could do? Read the rest of the story so that the children feel secure in the ending. What do you think would be good wishes that Grendel could make now? Scribe ideas in the shared journal.

Session 7: Responding to reading:

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- Read the whole story through with the children.
- Talk with them about what they like or don’t like about the story, about any questions that they have or anything that the story makes them think about. You could record this in a ‘Tell Me’ grid.
- Ask them to say which part of the book stays in their minds most vividly.
- What will they tell their friends about this book? Record responses.
- Have a copy or multiple copies of the book for children to re-read, retell and share in the reading area as part of wider provision for reading.

Session 8: Storymapping

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- Re-read the whole story through with the children.
- Create a shared story map to recall the story of Grendel. Focus on children recalling the key events in the story. Look at how to create different kinds of storyboards and storymaps to aid children’s recall and retelling
- Look at how to use text and pictures to record key events, speech and other words and phrases of particular importance to the story; e.g. Grendel exclaiming “I hate chocolate!”
- Have large scale paper and mark making equipment available for children to record their own storymaps, individually, in pairs or in groups.
- Display the storymaps so that children can use these in their own retellings in the setting.

Session 8: Responding to Reading – Poetry ***Note: Ensure appropriate allergy checks take place prior to this session**

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- Important! Make sure all the children wash their hands prior to the start of the session.
- Reflect on the part of the text when Grendel’s mum starts to melt. Ask the children if they have ever

melted chocolate before. What happens? What is it like? What does it look, feel and smell like?

- Read the poem *Chocolate* by Michael Rosen, from the collection *Centrally Heated Knickers*. You can view the poem online via Google Books
- Give each child a chocolate button to hold in their hand, in a fist, while you read and discuss the poem. Tell the children that they must keep
- Discuss what words and phrases the children like in the poem that describe the chocolate and what happens to it.
- Have the children open up their hands and see what has happened to their chocolate buttons. Record words and phrases to describe how it looks, feels, smells and tastes. Ensure appropriate allergy checks have taken place in preparation for this.
- Have each child describe the chocolate using a single line. Put these lines together to make group 'Chocolate' poems.
- Have each group learn and perform their poems to the class.

Session 9: Developing an alternative character

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- Discuss the phrase 'Little Monster'. What do the children think it means? Have you ever been called a little monster? When? Why?
- Using a variety of drawing and creative materials such as playdough, clay and embellishments such as pipe cleaners and googly eyes, have the children draw or make their own 'little monster' character. Model your own alongside the children.
- How would they describe this character?
- Annotate the drawing or model with words and phrases to describe the new character.
- Using the story pattern of Grendel, model orally planning a story with the group, using your own character. If this character could make a wish, what would it be? What might go wrong? How could it be put right?

Session 10: Planning own Dilemma Story

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- Use the storymaps created in Session 7 to reflect on the pattern of the story.
- Use another sheet of paper to model an alternative to the Grendel story, following the pattern that a character makes a foolish wish which has a disastrous consequence and how the story gets resolved.
- Have children plan their own alternative stories on a storymap or storyboard.

Sessions 11-13: Drafting, re-drafting and editing

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- Supported by shared writing, have the children write their own dilemma story, following the pattern of the Grendel story. Use the storymap plans to build up sentences and on to paragraphs that lead the reader through the story. Focus on descriptive language, drawing from the original text, such as powerful verbs, exclamations and commands and adjectives and adverbs to add description.
- At points throughout the writing process, model how to use appropriate sentence openers to lead

the story on, re-read for sense and meaning, expand upon and edit writing.

- Give plenty of time for the children to get to the finished writing outcome.

Sessions 14 & 15: Celebrating achievement, publishing work

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- Re-read the final draft of your writing focus on checking with an editing partner for correct spelling and punctuation.
- Model how to make simple books, either an origami book or a simple sewn book and have each child make their own.
- Spend time writing up the story in the published book, focussing on best handwriting for presentation and plenty of time for illustrating their stories.
- Have these on prominent display for the class and school community to read.

Session 16: Non Fiction reading and writing - Recipes: Making Chocolate Truffles *Note: Ensure appropriate allergy checks take place prior to this session

- Revisit the part of the story where Grendel's mum begins to melt. Ask the children why they think this happened?
- Look at a bar of chocolate; what do the children think they will need to do to make this chocolate melt? What do they think they will need?
- Ask the children what they could use the melted chocolate for.
- Read a recipe for making chocolate truffles such as:
http://www.childrensrecipes.com/chocolate_truffles.htm
- Talk about food hygiene and safety alongside instructional vocabulary for recipes like pour, stir, mix, melt etc.
- In groups, children go on to make their own batches of chocolate truffles. Ensure adults are there to melt the chocolate and supervise.
- Take photographs of the different stages for the next session.

Session 17 and 18 Shared writing: Writing instructions

- As a class put the photographs of the cooking steps to make an illustrated recipe for chocolate truffles for others to follow.
- Using yesterday's photographs to support thinking, shared write a recipe for chocolate truffles.
- Children can go on to publish these using ICT to make their own recipe cards and take these home to repeat the cooking experience with their families.

Session 19: Persuasive writing

- Have the children make posters to sell their truffles to someone else. How will they describe them so someone else will want to buy them?

- Build up a bank of descriptive vocabulary through discussion to support children as they design their own posters or adverts to sell their truffles.
- You could watch some chocolate TV adverts to stimulate the children's thinking, e.g.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZof5SJ4XBY> or
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjQ5Yw72xtA>

Session 20: Writing invitations

- To draw the learning together, the children could hold an event where they share their loves, wishes, storymaps, books and poems as well as a truffle sale.
- Shared write an invitation to invite parents, carers and friends to a special morning or afternoon to share the learning they have been doing.
- Have children write their own invitations to send home to parents.