The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rainforest by Lynne Cherry (Harcourt)

Subtitled ‘A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest’ this picture book expresses clearly by means of vibrant illustrations and a patterned and poetic story, the importance of humans preserving the rainforests and the ecosystems within it for the sake of all who live on this planet. A man is ordered to cut down a great Kapok tree. He begins the task and when he tires, falls asleep at its foot. Successive animals, birds, insects and finally a child of the Yanomamo tribe all whisper in his ear cogent reasons for why he should not continue. When he awakes, will they have influenced him and what choice will he make? The book begins and ends with a map showing whereabouts in the world there are tropical rainforests and a diagram demonstrating the layers of such a forest.

Overall learning aims of this teaching sequence:

- To explore global issues through a narrative text
- To investigate how illustrations influence a reader’s experience of a text
- To explore how an author uses language to create empathy for an issue
- To explore themes and debate issues and dilemmas in relation to a text, enabling children to make connections with their own lives
- To use sound, images and video to expand the use of ambitious vocabulary
- To develop creative responses to a text through drama and role-play
- To innovate from a familiar text to plan and write own narratives
- To respond to and evaluate own writing and that of others.

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 3 or Year 4 class.

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is approximately 3 weeks long if spread over 15 sessions. However, the book offers plenty of scope for a more extended cross-curricular unit of work when you consider the depth in which you could explore the key issues raised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Approaches:</th>
<th>Writing Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visualisation</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booktalk</td>
<td>Performance of a poem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Marking</td>
<td>Explanation text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Collections</td>
<td>Debate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responding to poetry</td>
<td>Report writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeze-Frame and Thought Tracking</td>
<td>Writing in role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate and argument</td>
<td>Argument writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared Writing</td>
<td>Making a visual text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscience Alley</td>
<td>Note of advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Play and Drama</td>
<td>Playscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookmaking</td>
<td>Extension of a narrative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Other useful resources:

Other linked texts which could be explored alongside:
- *The Vanishing Rainforest* by Richard Platt and Rupert van Wyk (Frances Lincoln)
- *In the Forest* by Anouck Boisrobert and Louis Rigaud (Tate Publishing)
- *Where’s the Elephant?* by Baroux (Egmont)
- *The Promise* by Nicola Davies and Laura Carlin (Walker)
- *Varmints* by Helen Ward and Mark Craste (Templar)
- *The Wonder Garden* by Kristjana S. Williams and Jenny Broom (Wide Eyed Editions)

See our downloadable booklist for more ideas: [https://www.clpe.org.uk/sites/default/files/Environment%20booklist.pdf](https://www.clpe.org.uk/sites/default/files/Environment%20booklist.pdf)

The following websites contain useful information throughout the sequence:

The BBC Nature website has an extensive range of resources that will help you to explore the Amazon Rainforest more thoroughly. These include, sound files, videos and web pages about the different species living in the rainforest: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/habitats/Tropical_and_subtropical_moist_broadleaf_forests#intro](http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/habitats/Tropical_and_subtropical_moist_broadleaf_forests#intro)

World Wildlife Fund pages on the Amazon:
[http://www.worldwildlife.org/places/amazon](http://www.worldwildlife.org/places/amazon)

Greenpeace page on the Amazon situation:

Teaching Sessions

**Session 1: Visualisation through Art**

*Opportunities to draw, both before and during writing, increase children’s motivation to write, and can help them to think. Drawing can help all writers to plan their writing, develop their ideas and use vivid description. Drawing story settings prompts children to imagine what a scene looks like, or visualise it from a particular viewpoint. Like drama, it enables children to enter the world of the story and provides support for writing.*

- In preparation for this session make available for the children a range of drawing materials and paper which will allow them to sketch a scene fluidly and with colour, such as pastels, and some dark coloured sugar paper.
- Invite the children to sketch the setting they can see while they listen to the sound file: [http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/earth/naturelibrary/assets/t/tr/tropical_and_subtropical_moist_broadleaf_forests/mne13-08.mp3](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/earth/naturelibrary/assets/t/tr/tropical_and_subtropical_moist_broadleaf_forests/mne13-08.mp3) (Accessed November 2015)
- As they finish, give time to explore some shared ideas about the sound file in relation to the setting. Some key questions may help to frame the discussion, e.g. *Where do you think this is? What did you hear that put that picture in your mind? What sorts of things did you sketch in the setting? Were they in relation to a specific sound you heard or from your own knowledge about the setting?*
- Working in pairs, give the children time to talk about their picture with a partner. You could invite the children to note down interesting words or phrases that they used in their discussions as annotations around their pictures or on notes attached to them.
Session 2: Exploring Non-Fiction – Broadening subject knowledge

When exploring a story that raises wider issues and explores concepts that may be new to some children, it is important to build on and develop children’s interests and understanding and plan investigative work around it.

- Read the introductory page to the text, starting: ‘In the Amazon rain forest it is always hot...’
- Discuss with the children what they already know about the Amazon Rainforest. Do the children know what ‘the rainforest’ is? Could they predict what it might be from the text read? Do they know whereabouts in the world we find the Amazon rainforest? Why do they think this? Have they learnt anything from reading this page?
- Show the following video: [link to video] to introduce the rainforest and some of the associated wildlife to the children. Could they now describe what the rainforest is? Orally model a description that helps to clarify their ideas in a manageable and understandable way.
- Show the children the endpapers from the text with the location of the Amazon rainforest and other prominent rainforests, the layers of the rainforest and some of the wildlife that lives in the rainforest eco-system. You could also show the children where the Amazon is on Google Earth, or show on a globe or an atlas.
- Ask the children to either discuss or record in a simple table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I already know or think I know about the rainforest:</th>
<th>What I want to find out:</th>
<th>How I think I can find this out:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- You may want to have a class version on the working wall to add to over the course of the sequence.
- Discuss the ways in which the children think they can find out information. Use the responses to talk about reliable sources and where they might find the most accurate information. Use texts from your school library, contact the school library service (if you have one available) or a local library to create an information text display in the classroom to support group, paired or individual research over the course of the sequence and beyond into cross-curricular learning.

Session 3: Looking at Language – Word Collections

Making word collections is a way of focussing on the language of a text. Children can make collections of words that describe a particular character, their feelings, a place, an event or a situation.

Collecting words in this way helps children to have a more focussed awareness of the ways language affects our perceptions and understandings and the ways in which the author creates the reader’s response.

- Explain to the children that they are going to watch a video about the setting they heard in the previous session. Whilst watching they should listen and note examples of interesting words or phrases used to describe the setting. Note: the total running time is 26:36 – You may just want to watch the first four minutes for this activity and explore the rest as the sequence progresses.
- Watch the video: [link to video]
- Watch the first four minutes again, and this time, really concentrate on hearing, remembering and noting the powerful words and phrases used to describe the setting. (Note some of these yourself to extend children’s explorations – they may focus on factual information.)
- Discuss some of the words and phrases in the video, e.g.
Huge trees stand like monuments, amidst the symphony of life
Outlasting the dinosaurs
Shrouded in a translucent veil
The rivers and streams are the veins and arteries of the rainforest

• What do these particular phrases tell us about the rainforest? E.g. If it outlasted the dinosaurs it must be strong, powerful, ancient. What does the use of simile and metaphor give us as a reader?

• Share a bank of images of the rainforest with the children, whilst listening to a rainforest ambience, e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8myYyMg1fFE and invite the children to compose their own words and phrases to describe the rainforest, life within it, what can be seen and heard and how it feels to be there.

• When they have had time to discuss different words and phrases, give each child a chance to use language to describe the rainforest from their own point of view on a strip of paper.

• In groups, put the children’s strips together to form a free verse. Talk about editing for cohesion and sense and prepare to perform for the rest of the class, thinking about how to use their voices and group dynamics to create effect for the listener. You may want to encourage the children to look at the poem again to see if they would like to use repetition of words or phrases for impact.

• Give time for each group to perform their poem to an audience. Allow time for the audience to respond to the performances, evaluating the impact of the language and performance on the listeners.

• Did the children have any of their ideas confirmed or find out anything new to add to the grids from the previous session? Did any other questions come to mind? Add to the grids as a working document.

Session 4: Read Aloud and Booktalk:
Reading aloud is one of the most important ways that children are motivated and supported to become readers, it is essential that children experience hearing texts read aloud in the classroom as a regular part of each school day. Before reading a book to a class, it is always important for teachers to read it themselves. Reading aloud is a kind of performance. It's helpful to think about the best way to read it and 'lift it off the page' in order to engage children and enable them to respond to the tunes and the meaning.

• Read the first page of the book aloud to the children. It would be useful for the children to see a large image of this, under a visualiser or as a scanned image on the IWB so that they can look at the interplay between the text and illustration.
  
  o What do you like and dislike about what you see?
  o Does it remind you of anything in real life or stories?
  o Do you have any questions about it? Does anything puzzle you?
  o How does this picture add to or change what you thought before?

• Talk with the children about who they think the smaller man and the larger man referred to in the text are. What do you think they are doing in the forest? What happens in the forest as they appear?

• Discuss the text: ‘Moments before, the forest had been alive with the sounds of squawking birds and howling monkeys. Now all was quiet as the creatures watched the two men and wondered why they had come.’ What impact does this part of the text have on you as a reader? What does it make you think about how the story will progress from this point forward?

• Children could annotate thoughts, ideas, predictions and questions about this first page around a copy of the page.

• Come back together and read the second page of the text. Were their predictions correct? Why do you think the smaller man is cutting down the tree? What impact might this have on the forest?

• Did the children have any of their ideas confirmed or find out anything new to add to the knowledge of the
### Session 5: Responding to Poetry – Developing inference and deduction

*Discussion about books forms the foundations for working with books. Children need frequent, regular and sustained opportunities to talk together about the books that they are reading as a whole class. The more experience they have of talking together like this the better they get at making explicit the meaning that a text holds for them: a child quoted in Aidan Chambers’ book Tell Me: Children, Reading & Talk with The Reading Environment (Thimble Press 2011) says ‘we don’t know what we think about a book until we’ve talked about it’. This booktalk is supportive to all readers and writers, but it is especially empowering for children who find literacy difficult. It helps the class as a whole to reach shared understandings and move towards a more dispassionate and informed debate of ideas and issues.*

- **Read the poem ‘For Forest’ by Grace Nichols.** This can be found on CLPE’s poetryline website: [https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poems/forest](https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetryline/poems/forest)
- **Use Soundbible download: Rainforest Ambience:** [http://soundbible.com/1818-Rainforest-Ambience.html](http://soundbible.com/1818-Rainforest-Ambience.html) alongside photographs of a tropical rainforest to give a sense of the sounds and sights of the rainforest. Does it match what is seen in the poem? What sounds do you think we would hear in this forest? Look at the key words and phrases that directly relate to sounds: watersound, birdsound, howl (of the howler monkeys) and those that suggest sounds like teeming, creeping of her forest-ground. What other noises do you think you would hear? Wind? Trees rustling? Ask children to come up with others for a list.
- **Spread the children out in the space you are working and allocate different sounds to groups / individuals.** Start with the constant sounds; water flowing, breeze blowing and then layer in incidental sounds; different birdcalls, howler monkeys, crickets chirping from the list to build up a soundscape for the children to experience the setting. Ask the children to close their eyes whilst listening to the soundscape and picture the forest in their minds. Take a mind photo of the scene they can see and hold it in their head.
- **Re-read the poem and clarify any unknown vocabulary with the children, for example, ‘roosting with mysterious eldorado’.** What might this phrase mean? What might the ‘mysterious eldorado’ be? What secrets do you think the forest might be keeping? Why do you think that the forest doesn’t want to ‘broadcast her business’?
- **What do you think the message of this poem is? Why do you think the poet tells us ‘And we must keep forest?’**
- **Prepare for a group performance of the poem with some children performing the soundscape behind the poem and others performing the lines.** Those performing the lines should think about the message of the poem and how to convey this through the use of their voices.
- **Record the performance as the children present their poems and allow them to watch the performance back to respond to and discuss the effects they have achieved.** What else do you understand from the poem now you have performed it?
- **Allow time for the children to talk through their responses to the poem.** A good model for this is the adaptation of Aidan Chambers ‘Tell Me’ grid for poetry below:
Session 6: Understanding Issues and Dilemmas - Reading Aloud, visual approaches:

Reading aloud slows written language down so that children can hear and absorb the words, tunes and patterns. It enables children to experience and enjoy stories they might otherwise not meet, enlarging their reading interests and providing access to texts beyond their level of independence as readers. Reading aloud helps children to broaden their repertoire as readers, becoming familiar with a wider range of genres and the work and voice of particular authors. By reading well chosen books aloud, teachers also help classes to become communities of readers, sharing in the rich experience of a growing range of books they enjoy, get to know well and talk about.

Conversations about books help children to explore and reflect on texts in ways that are made meaningful, personal and pleasurable.

- Re-read the first two pages of the book. Why do you now think the man is cutting down the tree?
- Watch the following video to explore deforestation and its impact: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4J9Fi2mjBgk
- Summarise in a concept map why people cut down trees in the rainforest and the impact it might have, e.g.
• Look beyond the knowledge in the film, e.g. If the trees are cut down, what impact will that have on the local environment and eco-system? On the wider planet? Add these to the concept map.

Session 7: Freeze-Frame, Thought Tracking and writing in role.

_freeze-frames are still images or tableaux. They can be used to enable groups of children to examine a key event or situation from a story and decide in detail how it could be represented. When presenting the freeze-frame, one of the group could act as a commentator to talk through what is happening in their version of the scene, or individual characters can be asked to speak their thoughts out loud.

When children have explored a fictional situation through talk or role-play, they may be ready to write in role as a character in the story. Taking the role of a particular character enables young writers to see events from a different viewpoint and involves them writing in a different voice.

• Re-read the text so far and on to the page where the bee buzzed ‘You see, all living things depend on one another.’

• Discuss the reading. Why would the man cutting down the tree impact on these particular animals? Show the children how to text mark specific words and phrases to describe this, clarifying any unknown vocabulary as it comes up, e.g. ancestors, pollinate. What makes their language persuasive?

• Look again at the endpapers of the text and the other animals that live in the rainforest. Discuss why another of the animals might depend on the rainforest, e.g. the poison arrow frog. The species pages on the World Wildlife Fund Amazon pages, such as this one on the sloth, could be used to broaden children’s subject knowledge and give ideas: [http://www.worldwildlife.org/species/sloth](http://www.worldwildlife.org/species/sloth)

• Model through talk why it might want to stop the man cutting down the tree and what language they could use to persuade him not to.

• Have each child pick their own animal and think of a reason why this animal would want to stop the man. Think about how this animal might look as they approach the man and freeze-frame in an appropriate position. As you freeze, think of what you will say to the man to persuade him not to cut down the tree and how you will phrase this
so that he will really listen.

- Go round to children as they freeze and tap them lightly on the shoulder. As they are tapped, they speak their thoughts to the man.
- When a few children have spoken their ideas, talk about which reasons were the most persuasive and why.
- Give the children time to re-think their reasons and to write these as a note to leave next to the sleeping man. Display these on the working wall surrounding a copy of one of the illustrations of the man sleeping.

**Session 8: Debate and Argument**

Talking together about books using the 'Tell me' questions is a very powerful way to explore and reflect on emotional response to a story and what it means for us as individuals. In contrast, debating ideas calls for a more formal and objective response to the story and helps children begin to analyse how the writer has made us feel this way. Teachers can structure debates inviting 'for' and 'against' arguments around particular statements arising from a book.

- Give time for the children to consider and discuss in groups, not only the harmful effects that the logging has on the environment and local area, but also in contrast some of the benefits it may bring to the local community.
- Note ideas on a split table, one side exploring the harmful impacts of logging, the other exploring potential benefits for the local community. The article below the video in the weblink may be useful for children to have alongside them to remind them of what they saw and to text mark ideas as they discuss.
- Discuss the ideas as a class in a debate across the room. Have children initiate an idea as to whether logging is always harmful or if sometimes there could be benefits for the local community and either support or counter ideas using ideas gained from the video and the associated article. You might also want to conduct research in other curriculum areas, such as Geography or Science to develop knowledge in this area even further.
- Make a note on the working wall of the most powerful arguments against logging and some of the benefits that could be considered. Discuss the struggle between the benefits for people and the impact on the environment – is there a way of making a balance? You could go on to discuss this in more detail in other curriculum areas, for example by looking at the impact on carbon emissions or responsible farming and reforestation.

**Session 9: Shared Writing – Argument**

Shared writing is one of the most important ways a teacher can show children how writing works and what it’s like to be a writer.

Acting as scribe, the teacher works with a small or large group of children to create a text together, enabling them to concentrate on their ideas and composition. Teacher and children work as active partners, talking together to share ideas and while the teacher guides the children through all the decisions that writers need to make and helps them shape their thoughts on paper.

Shared writing gives children a model for their own independent writing and can introduce them to unfamiliar genres or styles of writing.

- Revisit the issues raised in yesterday’s session. Do the children think the impact of logging outweighs the benefits or vice-versa, or do they think there is a careful balance to be maintained?
- Through shared writing, model how to write an argument, either against logging in the Amazon, or a more balanced argument detailing some of the benefits and considering how this could be kept under control.
- Focus on the use of persuasive language to engage the reader. You could also look at how to indicate degrees of possibility using **adverbs** [for example, perhaps, surely] or **modal verbs** [for example, might, should, will, must] from the vocabulary, grammar and punctuation programmes of study to incorporate the study of vocabulary and grammar for effect on the reader.
- Give time for the children to write their own argument, against logging or balanced with the considerations for the local population.
Session 10: Exploring Alternative means of publication – Making an informational video

Revisiting stories through a range of play-based experiences helps children to step into the world of the book and to explore it more completely. This is important throughout the primary school years.

- Following on from the arguments created, allow time for the children to explore how to use a computer programme such as Windows Movie-Maker, PhotoStory 3 or another appropriate program in pairs or groups to present an argument as an informational video to share with a wider audience.
- Give time for the children to explore safely images that will support the points they are making and record their voiceover either orally or as overlaid captions, so that arguments made are illustrated by persuasive photographs. You could also explore persuasive or emotional soundtracks to use with the photographs and narration.
- After the children have had time to complete their videos, watch each video and reflect on the message the audience has gained.

Session 11: Exploring issues and dilemmas: Conscience Alley

Conscience Alley is a useful technique for exploring any kind of dilemma faced by a character, providing an opportunity to analyse a decisive moment in greater detail. The class forms two lines facing each other. One person (the teacher or a participant) takes the role of the protagonist and walks between the lines as each member of the group speaks their advice. It can be organised so that those on one side give opposing advice to those on the other. When the protagonist reaches the end of the alley, they make their decision.

- Read the whole book, up until, ‘He turned and looked at the animals and the child.’ on the penultimate page.
- Taking into account everything they have learnt up until now, what do the children think the man should do next?
- What will the consequences be if he cuts the tree down? What will happen if he doesn’t?
- Who will be waiting for him when he leaves the forest? What do we now think we know about the ‘larger man’? Who might he be? What could the impact on him be?
- Ensure that, as in the previous activity, the children can reflect on both sides of the situation. Ensure they are aware of the possible consequences of going back to the larger man without the tree – what ramifications might this have for the smaller man?
- Have each child think of one reason for him cutting the tree down, and one reason against.
- Split the class in half and create two lines down the middle of the classroom to form a conscience alley. Have the first line present their ‘for’ arguments as one child, in role as the smaller man, walks down the alley and the other line, in turn, present their ‘against’ arguments. As the man reaches the end of the line, they turn and the lines present their alternate argument.
- When ‘the smaller man’ comes back to the start, he reflects on what he has heard and which views were most persuasive to him and why.
- Have each child think about which of their arguments they agree with most strongly and why. They then write a note of advice to the smaller man, to advise him on what they think he should do next and why.
- This could be followed by a ‘snowballing’ exercise, where children roll their note into a ball and throw to another random child in the room, who reads their note, reflects on the argument and answers in role as the smaller man, responding as to whether they agree or disagree and any worries they have about the consequences of their decision.

Session 12: Exploring issues and dilemmas: Role-Play and Drama

Role-play and drama provide immediate routes into the world of a story and allow children to explore texts actively. Through role-play and drama, children are encouraged to experiment with the ‘what if?’ of plot and make it their own. Role-play is a particularly effective way for children to inhabit a fictional world, imagining what the world of the story would be like, and illuminating it with their own experience. It enables children to put themselves into particular characters’ shoes and imagine how things would look from that point of view. Through drama and role-play children can
imagine characters’ body language, behaviour and tones of voice in ways that they can draw on later when they write.

- Read the whole book with the children.
- Reflect on the ending in relation to the previous activity. What did the man do? Why do you think he did this? What do you think will happen next?
- Present the scenario that the smaller man is now going to go back to the larger man. What do you think will happen when he returns? What will they say to each other? How will they react to each other in this situation? What will the larger man’s concerns be? How will the smaller man justify his actions? How will the larger man respond? Have the children try out the scene, looking for ways to create authentic dialogue, whilst holding the narrative flow of the story.
- When they have had time to rehearse and are happy with their scene, the children could go on to write this up as a playscript, thinking carefully about the stage directions and the impact these can have on the actor’s interpretation of the character and emotions behind the scene.

Session 13: Shared Writing and Drafting

Shared writing is one of the most important ways a teacher can show children how writing works and what it’s like to be a writer. Acting as scribe, the teacher works with a small or large group of children to create a text together, enabling them to concentrate on their ideas and composition. Teacher and children work as active partners, talking together to share ideas and while the teacher guides the children through all the decisions that writers need to make and helps them shape their thoughts on paper. Shared writing gives children a model for their own independent writing and can introduce them to unfamiliar genres or styles of writing. Children can then present their written work in a range of literary outcomes such as a poster, big book or poem for everyone to enjoy.

- Introduce the writing task for the end of the sequence; that the children will write the next part of the story, to describe what happens after the man leaves the forest. Explain that their role-play can help guide their thinking but the next part will be written as a third person narrative in the style of the rest of the book.
- Through shared writing, model how to balance narrative and dialogue to continue the story, using ideas from the previous role-play activity, their wider knowledge of the existing text and their own creative ideas for how the story could develop. You could consider what other characters could be introduced, possible routes the narrative could lead to and how to draw the story together.
- Allow time and space for children to plan and draft their own ideas for writing.

Session 14: Responding to Writing and Redrafting

It is important that you build up a community of writers who see writing as an ongoing process and to strengthen children’s awareness of the importance of response to writing as a reader and to developing a reflective metalanguage with children to talk about themselves as writers, enable them to voice their views, listen to others and develop new knowledge and understanding. The following ideas reference the work of Goouch et al in Richard Ings (2009) Writing is Primary. Action Research on the Teaching of Writing in Primary Schools (Esmée Fairbairn Foundation)

www.nawe.co.uk/Private/17646/Live/Writing-is-Primary.pdf

- Use your own writing or negotiate with a child to share their writing, under a visualiser if you have one, to model a process for responding to writing.
  - Revisit the author’s intention – asking what they were trying to achieve
  - Listen to the author read their writing aloud or read it to them
  - Respond, orally or in writing
- When responding to writing, ask the children to consider:
  - What thoughts, feelings, visual impressions come to mind as you read?
  - How did the writer make you engage in this way?
- Consider revisions that could be made and why. You may ask the questions:
• What can you suggest to develop the writing as it stands?
• What can you suggest to extend the writing, what more is needed or would enrich the writing for the reader?
• Give children time to look at and review their draft ideas. Share these with a response partner to evaluate the effectiveness of their writing for another reader. Allow time to make changes or enhancements.

Session 15: Editing and Publishing Writing

Publishing their work for an audience helps children to write more purposefully. Bookmaking provides a motivating context within which children can bring together their developing understanding of what written language is like; making written language meaningful as they construct their own texts.

• Show the children how to make a layered book to illustrate the layers of the rainforest, emergent, canopy, understory, forest floor, as illustrated below, to publish their writing into. This is a simple process:
  o Fold an A3 piece of bookmaking card into 4 zig-zag panels.
  o Lay the card flat and draw the layers onto the card in pencil, lightly, so that it can be rubbed out when cut.
  o Cut the outline of the layers drawn in pencil.
  o Write in and illustrate the text, carefully considering the interplay between words and pictures and how they are arranged on the page, as in the original text.
• Display the books in the class reading area or another prominent community space so that they can be read by others.

After Reading: Response to reading

Once they have heard a book read aloud, the class can begin to explore their responses to it with the help of what Chambers calls 'the four basic questions'. These questions give children accessible starting points for discussion. The openness of these questions unlike the more interrogative 'Why?' question encourages every child to feel that they have something to say. It allows everyone to take part in arriving at a shared view without the fear of the 'wrong' answer.

• Start by discussing the four basic questions to give children an open forum to discuss the text as a whole.
  o Tell me...was there anything you liked about this book?
  o Was there anything that you particularly disliked...?
  o Was there anything that puzzled you?
  o Were there any patterns...any connections that you noticed...?
• You may go on to focus on some of the general questions, to encourage children to think about the author’s intent, and the impact on them as readers e.g.
  o Does anyone know anything about the writer? Or about how the story came to be written? Or where? Or when? Would you like to find out?
If the writer asked you what could be improved in the book, how would you have made it better?

When you think about the book now, after all we've said, what is the most important thing about it for you?

You might also want to ask the children why the author, Lynne Cherry, left the ending so open. What does the space she gives allow the reader to do? Can the children think of any other texts that end in this way?

Other ideas to use across the curriculum:

Science:

Use the rainforest habitat and eco-system to explore the core elements of the Science programmes of study for Living Things and Plants in Year 3/4:

- recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways
- explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment – use the animals in the endpapers and those shown in the illustrations throughout the text.
- recognise that environments can change and that this can sometimes pose dangers to living things – explore the destruction of the rainforest in wider detail and the impact it has on the eco-system.
- identify and describe the functions of different parts of flowering plants: roots, stem/trunk, leaves and flowers
- explore the requirements of plants for life and growth (air, light, water, nutrients from soil, and room to grow) and how they vary from plant to plant
- investigate the way in which water is transported within plants
- explore the part that flowers play in the life cycle of flowering plants, including pollination (mentioned in the text), seed formation and seed dispersal – how does this happen in the rainforest?

Geography:

Lots of the elements covered in the Key Stage 2 programme of study for Geography can be covered through introducing the map in the end papers and broadening children’s knowledge beyond this in relation to a wider study of the Amazon. This includes:

- locate the world’s countries, using maps to focus on Europe (including the location of Russia) and North and South America, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities
- name and locate counties and cities of the United Kingdom, geographical regions and their identifying human and physical characteristics, key topographical features (including hills, mountains, coasts and rivers), and land-use patterns; and understand how some of these aspects have changed over time
- identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, Arctic and Antarctic Circle, the Prime/Greenwich Meridian and time zones (including day and night)
- understand geographical similarities and differences through the study of human and physical geography of a region of the United Kingdom, a region in a European country, and a region within North or South America
- physical geography, including: climate zones, biomes and vegetation belts, rivers, mountains, volcanoes and earthquakes, and the water cycle
- human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water
- use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied
You could also orchestrate a group project for the children to use wider research and design a presentation (written, film, multimedia) to:

- Warn people of the situation that is occurring in the Amazon.
- Teach others about the importance of the environment and how they can help save rainforests.
- Encourage people to live in a way that doesn’t hurt the environment.

This is a Core Book teaching sequence. The Core Book list is a carefully curated list of the best books to use with children in primary schools. It contains books which have been tried, tested and found to work successfully in classrooms, providing children with memorable and positive reading experiences. At CLPE we believe that the use of high quality books within the reading curriculum is at the heart of a school’s successful approach to engage and support children to become motivated and independent readers. The Core Book List is a free online resource that you can access at www.clpe.org.uk/corebooks. This book was part of our Raising Achievement in Writing course in 2015-16. Find out more about our professional development opportunities: www.clpe.org.uk/professionaldevelopment.