

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 think and talk confidently about their response to the book, using prediction, asking questions, making connections with their own experience
- To encourage collaborative narrative play
- To develop sustained story making and storytelling
- To enjoy listening to and using spoken and written language in play and learning
- To use language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences
- To think about the story meanings conveyed in the illustrations
- To explore the story through play, role-play and storytelling
- To write for meaning and purpose in a variety of narrative and non-narrative forms

This teaching sequence is designed for a Nursery or Reception 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.

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2012:

Prime Area: Communication and Language

Listening and attention:

- Listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.

Understanding:

- Answer 'how' and 'why' questions about

Specific Area: Literacy

Reading:

- Beginning to be aware of the way stories are structured.
- Suggests how the story might end.
- Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall.
- Describes main story settings, events and principal characters.

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their experiences and in response to stories or events.

Speaking:

- Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experience in play situations.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development:

- Be aware of own feelings, and knows that some actions and words can hurt others' feelings.
- Talk about how they and others show feelings, talk about their own and others' behaviour, and its consequences, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable.
- Children can communicate freely about own home and community.

- Shows interest in illustrations and print in books and print in the environment.
- Uses vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by their experiences of books.
- Enjoys an increasing range of books.

Writing:

- Gives meaning to marks they make as they draw, write and paint.
- Begins to break the flow of speech into words.
- Uses some clearly identifiable letters to communicate meaning, representing some sounds correctly and in sequence.
- Writes own name and other things such as labels, captions.
- Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful contexts.

Cross Curricular Links:

Understanding the World:

- Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members.
- Knows some of the things that make them unique, and can talk about some of the similarities and differences in relation to friends or family.

Expressive Arts and Design:

- Engages in imaginative role-play based on own first-hand experiences.
- Captures experiences and responses with a range of media, such as music, dance and paint and other materials or words.
- Understands that different media can be combined to create new effects.
- Explores what happens when they mix colours.
- Experiments to create different textures.

Teaching Approaches

Responding to illustration
Using drawing and modelling to create a character
Reading aloud and rereading

Writing Outcomes

Character labels and captions
Speech/thought Bubbles
Wish Star

<p>Storymapping Book talk Role Play and Drama Visualising</p>	<p>Storymaps Books to retell the story from Grendel's perspective Instructions for cooking Persuasive posters Poems about chocolate</p>
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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)

Links to other Traditional Stories:

Yummy! by Lucy Cousins
The Leopard's Drum by Jessica Souhami
The Gigantic Turnip by Aleksei Tolstoy and Niamh Sharkey
No Dinner! By Jessica Souhami

Other Monster texts:

Leonardo, the Terrible Monster by Mo Willems
Not Now Bernard by David McKee
Two Monsters by David McKee
A Monster Day at Work by Sarah Dyer
Creepy Monsters, Sleepy Monsters by Jane Yolen and Kelly Murphy

Other books referenced:

Here's a Little Poem ed. Jane Yolen

Teaching Sessions

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Before beginning this book:

- Set the scene by making a cave in the role play area. Decorate with a ‘Beware Monsters’ sign and other accessories that can be seen in the illustrations of the text. Make some ‘Monster Footprints’ to leave out in the classroom leading up to the cave.
- Prepare a class reading journal by sewing or stapling together sugar paper to collect children’s responses or examples of their work throughout the unit.

Introducing the book and the main character:

- 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.
- Children could go on to draw their own illustrations of Grendel or make him from clay, salt dough or junk modelling.

Exploring character:

- 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 as part of continuous provision.
- This could lead to a home learning activity around creating shrine boxes with the children; filling a shoe box or similar sized box with objects, photographs etc. of importance, and having these as a talking point in the setting.

Exploring story events, relating to personal experiences:

- 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. Talk about his behaviour in this part of the story. Is he behaving in a good way? Is he using good manners? Is his wish a good one?
- 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?

- As part of continuous provision, encourage the children to draw or mark make their wishes inside stars cut from paper or drawn on the ground with chalks in the outdoor area.

Exploring story settings:

- 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.
- As part of the continuous provision have chocolate playdough (see <http://theimaginationtree.com/2012/01/easy-chocolate-play-dough-recipe.html> for a recipe) and other small parts available for the children to make their own chocolate world. Take photographs and record examples of children's talk as they work that describe the setting that they are making.
- Leave the chocolate world out in preparation for tomorrow's activity.

Exploring and expanding vocabulary:

- Focus on the chocolate world created from playdough; can children think of words and phrases that describe what the chocolate world would be like? Focus back on the questions of how it looks and smells and what it would be like to be there.
- Scribe their words and record on caption strips, helping them to structure their thinking and expand on their ideas where necessary.
- Arrange the children's words to form and write a group poem about the chocolate world e.g.

Chocolate trees,

Sweet and sticky,

Everything is brown.

I want to nibble on a leaf!

- Perform the poem as a group, encouraging children to add actions or to use their voices in different ways as they perform.
- Children can then go on to record or scribe a similarly structured poem about the chocolate world they have created.

Reflecting on characters actions and consequences:

- 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?
- Model write a letter to Grendel, incorporating the children’s advice and ideas.
- Have a postbox, some writing paper and envelopes available in the continuous provision so that the children could write their own letters to Grendel. Have adults available to scribe their talk alongside their mark making if children are emerging as writers.
- Before the children leave, 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.

Responding to reading:

- Talk with children 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.
- 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 the continuous provision.
- You may also wish to provide materials for children to make lolly stick puppets, or additional resources in the role play cave area to re-enact the story.

Story Mapping:

- 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.
- Display the storymaps so that children can use these in their own retellings in the setting.

Shared Writing:

- Use the storymap created in yesterday’s session to reflect on the story from Grendel’s point of view. How does he feel at different points of the story? Support children in key words and phrases to convey Grendel’s emotions.
- In a large scale made book, shared write the children’s retelling of the story with you scribing the

words composed by the class, to retell the story.

- As you scribe, talk with the children about the language and the patterns, and shape of the story. Write each 'episode' on a separate sheet for children to illustrate with large pictures or paintings.
- Have some pre-made zig-zag or origami books available as part of the continuous provision so that children can draw and write their own versions.

Cooking: Making Krispie Cakes ***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.
- Talk about food hygiene and safety alongside vocabulary like pour, stir, mix etc.
- In groups, children go on to make their own batches of Rice Krispie cakes. Ensure adults are there to melt the chocolate and supervise.
- Take photographs of the different stages for the next session.

Shared writing: writing instructions

- As a class put the photographs of the cooking steps to make an illustrated recipe card of the ingredients and cooking process.
- Using shared writing, write captions under each photo.
- Children can go on to make their own cards and take these home to repeat the cooking experience with their families.

Poetry:

- Read the poem 'Sugarcake Bubble' by Grace Nichols. Look at the words and phrases used to describe the cooking process.
- Encourage the children to recall the experience of melting the chocolate using their senses; what did it look like, smell like?
- Scribe their words and record in a class journal
- Using the children's words write a group poem, for instance:

*Chocolate, chocolate
Brown and hot
Chocolate, chocolate
Melting in the pot*

*Goey and thick
Sticky and sweet*

*Chocolate, chocolate
delicious to eat!*

- This could link on work around rhythm and rhyme to support children’s early phonological development.
- Perform the poem as a group – you could record this for the children to watch themselves back.

Finishing the sequence:

- 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 cake sale. Children could make persuasive posters or write invitations to invite parents, carers and friends to a special morning or afternoon to share the learning they have been doing.