

gifted and talented activities

These fun activities are suitable for Gifted and Talented children, and will encourage them to use their imaginations and find creative solutions to problems.

Write an 'unexpected' fairy-tale

This activity is a fun way to develop children's understanding of narrative structure and descriptive writing, as well as introducing ideas of genres and stereotypes.

Start by looking together at a selection of traditional fairy-tales. As a class, make lists of typical fairy-tale:

- **Characters** eg. princess, wizard, king, villain, monster, hero
- **Characteristics** eg. wicked (witch), beautiful (princess), brave (hero), handsome (prince)
- **Settings** eg. the castle, the forest, the cottage
- **Objects** eg. a magic sword, a poisoned apple, a spell book, an enchanted mirror

Now look together at some unconventional re-tellings of fairy-tales eg. *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* or *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* by Jon Scieszka, *Snow White in New York* by Fiona French, *Revolting Rhymes* by Roald Dahl or the film *Shrek*.

What makes these stories different from conventional fairy-tales? Which stories do the children like best?

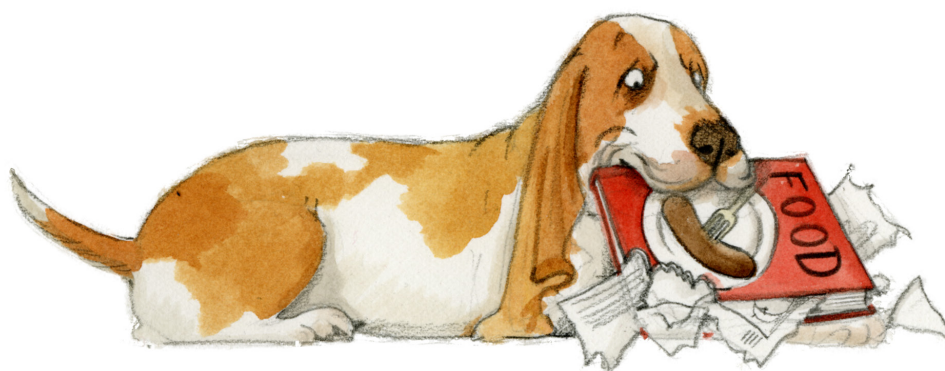
As a class, make a list of things you wouldn't expect to find in a traditional fairy-tale. Encourage children to use their imaginations and come up with unexpected ideas! You might talk about:

- **Characters** eg. a footballer, a dinner lady, a guinea pig...
- **Settings** eg. a supermarket, the park, your classroom...
- **Objects** eg. a cheese sandwich, a pair of socks, a television...

Write a selection of words from both your lists on strips of cardboard and mix them together.

Working in pairs, give children a random selection of strips and ask them to use these to write their own 'unexpected' fairy-tale.

Write up and illustrate stories to compile a book of unconventional fairy-tales to share with another class.



Making maps

This is a great activity which can be easily adapted to suit a wide range of abilities.

Look together at the maps included in books such as *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Seriously Silly Stories* by Laurence Anholt, *Last of the Polar Bears* by Harry Horse or *Little Wolf's Book of Badness* by Ian Whybrow.

Brainstorm a list of places included eg. cave, house, island, mountain, river, road, forest, junk yard, castle, meadow, lake. Then, working in groups, ask children to make maps of their own imaginary lands.

- Age the maps by carefully scrunching them up and dipping in a tea solution before leaving to dry overnight
- Each group decides where to hide a treasure on their map. Ask children to write a series of clues to help find the hiding place, then swap maps with another group to see if they can find the location of the treasure.
- To extend the activity, ask each group to write a story about their imaginary land and exhibit these alongside the maps and clues to make a class display.

This activity is also a perfect way to introduce the concept of map co-ordinates to children.



More activity ideas:

These book-related activities are based around children's reading, and are ideal for either individuals or groups.

- **Text message stories:** ask each child to tell the story of a book they know well, using no more than 60 characters, as in a text message. Make a display of these mini stories: can the children guess which books they relate to?
- **Illustrate a scene:** look together at a selection of illustrated books, and then ask children to create their own large A2/ A3 sized illustrations of a scene from a favourite story. Allow time for sketching and planning first, and provide a wide range of art and collage materials. Each child can use their finished illustration as a prop to tell their class the story of their scene. Use the illustrations to make a class display.
- **Vote for your favourite book:** make a list of children's favourite books. Children can make leaflets or posters in support of their favourite, before taking part in a vote. Display the winning books in the classroom or library.
- **Make a class magazine for Children's Book Week:** children can contribute book reviews, stories, book-themed puzzles or illustrations. You could even report on what other classes are doing to celebrate Children's Book Week, and include photos of your school's activities.

Children's Book Week 2009 takes place from 5-11 October but your school can celebrate reading for pleasure at any time of the year. For more information visit www.childrensbookweek.org.uk

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