

Learning through drama: Activities to develop immersion and engagement with a text.



Text: The Christmas Truce- **Hilary Robinson & Martin Impey**

Publisher: Strauss House Productions, 2014

ISBN-10:978-0-9571245-7-8

It is always best to become familiar with the text before planning from it.

Age range: Y1-Y6

This teaching sequence is designed to be used flexibly over a series of lessons or dipped into.

We encourage you to adapt the plans to suit your learners' needs and age- possibly within a wider English unit.

We advocate new writing genres to be modelled first via immersion and shared writing. Alternatively, the following sequence provides great opportunities for purposeful independent writing.

Main English Learning Intentions:

- participate in role-play, considering & evaluating different viewpoints...
 - draw inferences by what is said & done, inferring characters' feelings, thoughts & motives from their actions
 - predicting what might happen from what has been read so far & details stated and implied
 - write for a range of purposes & audiences
 - compose & rehearse sentences orally
- (See also history & PSHE ATs in the NC)**

Over Arching Success Criteria:

(These would need to be broken down into smaller steps & agreed by the children for each individual learning outcome within the sequence.)

During role-play, I can listen and respond appropriately, based on my growing understanding of the context.

I can infer characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions.

I can justify my inferences & predictions with clear and reasonable evidence from the context.

I can recognise the purpose and audience of different types of writing, adjusting the vocabulary, structure and register as appropriate.

I can speak for different purposes and audiences, and use this to support the planning & drafting of my writing.

I have increased my knowledge and understanding of a significant historical event from WW1.



Technique/Organisation	Context & Activities
<p>Pre activity to develop understanding of the concept of conflict</p> <p>Real objects are preferable but photographs/art work will do just as well.</p> <p>Activating prior knowledge</p> <p>Inference</p>	<p>Inquiry Question:</p> <p>How do we deal with conflict?</p> <p>Ask children to privately think about when they have had an argument with a sibling or friend. Think about why they disagreed with each other and how they made friends. Children could anonymously write the experience down and post it in a 'truce' box.</p> <p>Optional hook (s) to explore and discuss before the main drama:</p> <p>Wrapped parcel (brown paper and string), football, several battery candles, olive branch (if possible!), picture of a dove, dead/bare looking Christmas tree (if possible!), something to signify a soldier (whistle, hat or medals), hand bells, sheet music/ words for silent night or play a recording. (See Learnerama's Creative Sparks on our website for some images.)</p> <p>Activity 1</p> <p>Explore one of the final double page spreads -depicting war and the lone Christmas tree. Use senses etc- discuss and possibly label what can be seen & any initial basic interpretations.</p>



<p>Creating the space</p>	<p>Activity 2 The class could explore a typical parlour in 1914-18 by looking at images. (See Learnerama’s Creative Sparks page for one image.)</p>
	<p>Set up a space to represent it. You could use masking tape to represent position of furniture and label/draw items to be placed in the scene e.g. drawing a gas/paraffin lamp and placing it on the dining table/photographs etc- (No TV!)</p>
<p>Adult-in-Role</p>	<p>Adult-in-Role as a family member of a soldier e.g. a mother (head scarf to signify). If possible, set the scene by playing <i>Stille Nacht</i> in the background. Relative is sitting at the space the children have drawn/labelled as an armchair.</p>
<p>Reading and Role Mime</p>	<p>Adult-in-Role to mime opening a Christmas card (R1) out of which falls a letter (R2)- read the card out loud so the class knows who it is from & adult to then mime reading and reacting to the letter.</p>
<p>Reflection Inference/prediction</p>	<p>Out-of-Role- Discuss: What time of year is it? Who could the relative be? What are they reading? How is the relative feeling? What are they thinking? Where might Ben be writing from? What might the letter say?</p>
<p>Reading and Role</p>	<p>Adult-in-Role to read letter out loud.</p>
<p>Thought tapping/hot seating Inference</p>	<p>Thought tap or hot seat relative to find out how they are feeling.</p>
<p>Writing and Role</p>	<p>This could be recorded by the children as a short piece of writing (diary) or to be put into a narrative. Class could write own version of letter from the soldier.</p>
<p>Reflection</p>	<p>Out-of-Role discuss what should be done in response to the letter. Allow the class to come up with their own ideas but, via questioning, steer them to suggest that they should write and send a card, letter and Christmas parcel.</p>



Role-Play

Activity 3

Children to plan and prepare the parcel.

They could: use hook parcel as stimulus, provide written items or pictures of items to select from and 'pack' or simply draw and label.

Encourage children to justify why they have chosen particular items.

This could provide a descriptive writing opportunity e.g. developing noun phrases to describe what is in their parcel.

Writing and Role

Class could write own card & letter from the mother/family member to go with the parcel.

Mime

They could be asked to **mime**, as if they were the soldier, taking out an item and using it. Rest have to guess what it is.



**Role-Play
Writing and Role**

Reading and Role

Activity 4

Children to imagine it is Christmas Eve and they are a soldier writing back to their mother/family to thank them for the parcel and how they feel about Christmas Day approaching. Model first.

Children to **role-play** reading the draft letter to a fellow soldier as part of oral rehearsal.

Adult back in role as relative in the living room- read aloud some of the letters and react to them.

Children in smaller groups could then do the same so that their letters have a real purpose and audience within the drama.



<p>Reflection</p> <p>Tableau(x)/still image</p> <p>Narration</p> <p>Reflection</p>	<p>Activity 5</p> <p>Out-of-Role read and share first 2 double page spreads from text. Then divide the class in up-to 6 groups (groups can double up)- give each group one of the next 6 double page spreads (up to and including where the soldiers play football on Christmas Day)</p> <p>Give each group time to create and practise a tableau to represent/mimic their double page spread.</p> <p>Sit each group in order of the story in a (circle). Each group to take a turn showing their tableau while adult narrates the matching text. Could use open/close technique to do this: Group 1 shows their tableau, then audience (remainder groups) closes eyes. When they open them group one has sat down and group 2 is in their tableau and so on. Adult narrates each time. The class may want to rehearse this so that each 'page' of the book runs smoothly into the next.</p> <p>Out-of-Role adult reads and shares remainder of book. Adult may want to focus some discussion on the double page spread with the lone Christmas tree again. Have their initial interpretations changed?</p> <p>Adult may want to read the extracts from real letters from the time (at back of book), describing what happened on Christmas Eve. <i>Stille Nacht</i> could be played at the same time or just pause after reading to listen to it.</p> <p>Return to and discuss enquiry question.</p>
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Appendix 1

Additional Activities

Vocabulary:

There is a range of vocabulary (evergreen, chime, dove etc) and some English phrases (e.g .olive branch, dove of peace, No Man's Land) within this text to be explored.

Worderama-Vocabulary building- (see R5) is just one activity out of many to support breadth & depth of vocabulary understanding (get in touch if you would like training within this area).

Reading:

Discuss sections using the 'Tell Me' approach- (R4) (get in touch if you would like training on this).

Writing beyond role:

Most of the writing ideas have been included within the drama sequence but pupils could also produce a narrative of the events- to include diary extracts/thoughts

Across the Curriculum:

Link to learning in **History on WW1**

Link to learning in **PSHE- conflict**



Appendix 2

Resources:

R1- message for card

R2- Letter

R3- List of useful resources

R4- 'Tell Me' Grid

R5- Worderama-vocabulary building



Download our **Drama Toolkit** on the '**Free Resources**' page of the website for an explanation of some of the main drama techniques used.



R1

Christmas card:

To Mam and Dad

May you have a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

All my love

Ben

Ps. I cherish the hope that my battalion will soon be on leave and I will see you all soon.



R2 Letter

Dear parents,

I was very happy to receive my first parcel from you. I look forward to the one you have promised for Christmas.

Living in these trenches is very hard but we all try to keep each other's spirits up.

I do hate this terrible conflict and pray that there may be a truce – at least for Christmas. One can hope!

My best friend, Ray, was wounded by some shrapnel last week. He is recovered now, back from the hospital tent, and is in the trench with me once more.

I miss you all dearly and pray that we may all be kept safe.

Your loving son, Ben.



R3

List of Useful Resources

Wrapped parcel (brown paper and string) which could contain some or all of the following items:

Christmas card & letter

Blank writing paper and pen

battery operated candle

Framed family photo from the period (or drawn by the children in advance as an activity)

Socks

Gloves/scarf

Chocolate

Loose tea

Soap/flannel

Masking Tape



R4 Tell Me...

<p>likes</p>	<p>dislikes</p>
<p>puzzles</p>	<p>connections</p>



Word/phrase	
What does it mean?	
Other words I think of	Opposite words (Antonyms)
Sentences	
Picture or diagram	

R5 Worderama KS1



Word (s) & part of speech/word class if you know.	
What does it mean?	
Can you change the word(s)/phrases by adding prefixes & suffixes?	
Synonyms	Antonyms
Can you think of sentences to show the word (s) being used in different ways?	
Picture or diagram	

R5 Worderama KS2

