Year 4 Narrative Unit 1 – Stories with historical settings

Stories with historical settings (3 weeks)

This is the first of a block of four narrative units in Year 4. It builds on children's experience and knowledge from Year 3 and introduces new areas of learning that will be developed during the year. The unit has three parts with oral or written outcomes and assessment opportunities at regular intervals. It can be linked with other curriculum subjects or themes.

Phase 1

Read several short stories set in the past and a longer story with a historical setting as a serial to run throughout the unit. Identify the details in the text that describe characters and setting. Select a character. Children discuss their own response to the character and way that an author achieves this. Write a character sketch using evidence from the text. Watch a short extract of a TV drama set in the past. Discuss how differences in time and place are represented.

Phase 2

Map the stages in stories read and discuss the passing of time. Relate this to the organisation of paragraphs and key phrases. Identify events that are skimmed and those told in more depth. Explore the use of powerful verbs.

Phase 3

Present an historical setting familiar to the children, for example linked with a period studied in history. Support children as they plan and tell a story. Children write their own short stories set in the past, using their oral stories to structure the written versions. Demonstrate and support as they add descriptive detail to make the setting more vivid for the reader.

Overview

- Read several short stories set in the past. Begin reading a longer story with historical setting as a serial to run throughout unit. Identify the details in the text that describe characters and setting and discuss the similarities to and differences from children's own experience.
- Select a character. Discuss own response to the character and way that author achieves this. Write a character sketch using evidence from the text.
- Watch a short extract of a TV drama set in the past. Discuss how differences in time and place are represented.
- Map the stages in stories read and discuss the passing of time. Relate to organisation of paragraphs and key phrases, for example 'The next moment...', 'Minutes ticked by...', 'Some weeks later...'. Identify events that are skimmed and those told in more depth.
- Present a historical setting familiar to the children (e.g. linked with period studied in history). Support children as they plan and tell a story, for example first person account of a child caught up in a historical event.
- Children write own short stories set in the past, using their oral stories to structure the written versions. Demonstrate and support as they add descriptive detail to make the setting more vivid for the reader.
1998 Framework objectives covered:

Year 4, Term 1: T1 building character and setting from details; T2 identify main characteristics and predict actions; T3 mapping chronology; T10 plan a story; T11 write character sketches; T15 use paragraphs to organise and sequence narrative.

Objectives

To ensure effective planning of literacy teachers need to ensure they plan for all elements of literacy effectively across the year ensuring that assessment for learning is used to plan and amend teaching. It is essential that core skills such as phonic strategies, spelling, and handwriting are incorporated into these exemplar units to ensure effective learning.

Most children learn to:

(The following list comprises only the strands, numbered 1 through 12, that are relevant to this particular unit. Where there are relevant Steps in Learning for an objective, a link has been included.)

1. Speaking
   - Tell stories effectively and convey detailed information coherently for listeners

2. Listening and responding
   - Compare the different contributions of music, words and images in short extracts from TV programmes

7. Understanding and interpreting texts
   - Deduce characters’ reasons for behaviour from their actions and explain how ideas are developed in non-fiction texts

8. Engaging with and responding to texts
   - Interrogate texts to deepen and clarify understanding and response

9. Creating and shaping texts
   - Develop and refine ideas in writing using planning and problem-solving strategies
   - Use settings and characterisation to engage reader’s interest

10. Text structure and organisation
   - Organise texts into paragraphs to distinguish between different information, events or processes

Prior learning

Check that children can already:
• Recognise typical characters, settings and events in adventure stories.
• Write an adventure story that has: a problem and resolution; paragraphs and/or chapters with connectives to signal time, sequence or place; descriptions of typical setting and characters; written dialogue that moves the plot on.
• Tell a story for an audience with events in sequence, change voice for different characters and include story language.

Teaching sequence phase 1

Note: Children working significantly above or below age-related expectations will need differentiated support, which may include tracking forward or back in terms of learning objectives. EAL learners should be expected to work within the overall expectations for their year group. For further advice see the progression strands and hyperlinks to useful sources of practical support.

Reading and response (6 days)

Teaching content:

• Read several short stories set in the past. Select some examples of stories set in historical periods that children have learned about or are currently studying.
• Begin reading a longer story with a historical setting as a serial to run throughout the unit.
• Gather information about features of stories with historical settings, for example a distinctive setting, often an adventure but which can be another type of story; fictional characters, based on historical details, who sometimes encounter real people from history.
• Comment on what is familiar and unfamiliar to children and encourage them to raise questions about details they do not understand.
• Identify the vivid descriptive details that help to evoke another time and place and pick out expressive words or phrases.
• Encourage children to express their personal responses to stories to help them develop their personal reading preferences.
• Start reading a story without showing children the cover or illustrations. Ask questions to prompt discussion, for example, At what point did you know that this story takes place in the past? How do you know when it is set? What do you already know about this period?
• Select a character from one of the stories. Discuss children’s response to the character and what the author does to make the reader feel either sympathy or dislike for a particular character. Discuss what characters say and what they do and consider whether they are trying to hide anything. Check whether their actions demonstrate the same thing as their words. Children write a character sketch using evidence from the text and from their own deductions about a character’s feelings and motives.
• Watch a short extract from a TV drama set in the past. Look at all the different indications that the story takes place in a particular period of history. Discuss features that paper-based stories do not have, for example costumes, music and scenery.

Learning outcomes:

• Children can read stories with a historical setting and find evidence about the period when the story is set.
• Children write character sketches using evidence deduced from the text.

Teaching sequence phase 2
Analysis (3 days)

Teaching content:

• Explore narrative structure by reviewing the stories you have already read and mapping the stages in each one. Identify introduction, build-up, climax or conflict, resolution and map these on a hill shape or flow chart.
• Look at the way that the passing of time is represented and relate this to the organisation of paragraphs and key phrases, for example The next moment … Minutes ticked by … Some weeks later … Identify events that are skimmed and those told in more depth (see also Grammar for Writing: Year 4 teaching units, unit 25)
• Explore the use of powerful verbs in a text. Look at examples in extracts and think about what they tell you about, for example, how a character is feeling. Invent a character and ask children to act out a brief scenario where the character expresses particular feelings, for example anger, happiness, fear. Demonstrate how to write an account and ask children to select verbs that show how the character feels (see also Grammar for Writing: Year 4 teaching units, unit 22).

Learning outcomes:

• Children can recognise the stages in a story and the way that events are linked.
• Children can identify powerful verbs in a text and can talk about their function.

Teaching sequence phase 3

Speaking and listening; writing (6 days)

Teaching content:

• Use a historical setting as a starting point for creating a new story. Consider starting with a visit to a historical building or site and taking photographs, or looking closely at a painting or photograph from the period of history that you are studying with the class.
• Ask children to imagine the scene, using all their senses and noting descriptive words and phrases. Ask them to think about the people who live or work in the setting and imagine a main character: select a name; decide what kind of person the character is, what they look like, how they speak, what they do and how they get on with the other characters. Make notes of the ideas that children suggest.
• Plan ideas for events that could take place in the setting and draw on children's previous experience of adventure stories, for example finding something that was lost, rescuing someone or travelling to a new place. Build in further historical detail about names and important or exciting events that could be part of the story.
• Demonstrate how to bring these ideas together as a story plan, making notes in boxes under the headings Introduction, Build-up, Climax or conflict, Resolution.
• Children work in pairs to tell their own version of the story using the story plan. Remind them to make links between each event, to include historical detail and to tell their stories effectively, for example using gestures or repetition.
• Demonstrate how to open the story in an interesting way, for example starting with dialogue or a surprising event. Refer to examples of vivid description and connecting words and phrases collected from reading. Remind children about choosing powerful verbs.
• Children continue writing their own version of the story based on the plan, using their oral stories to structure the written versions. They divide the story into paragraphs and use connectives to show changes in time or place and the sequence of events. Demonstrate and support as they add descriptive detail to make the setting more vivid for the reader.
• Children read their finished stories to a partner and give one another feedback on the links between events and on details to create the historical setting and characters.
Learning outcomes:

- Children can plan a story with a clear structure including a build-up, climax or conflict, and resolution.
- Children can use connectives to show changes in time or place and the sequence of events.
- Children can write a complete narrative with their ideas organised into paragraphs.

Complete teaching sequence

Note: Children working significantly above or below age-related expectations will need differentiated support, which may include tracking forward or back in terms of learning objectives. EAL learners should be expected to work within the overall expectations for their year group. For further advice see the progression strands and hyperlinks to useful sources of practical support.

Phase 1: Reading and response (6 days)

Teaching content:

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- Begin reading a longer story with a historical setting as a serial to run throughout the unit.
- Gather information about features of stories with historical settings, for example a distinctive setting, often an adventure but which can be another type of story; fictional characters, based on historical details, who sometimes encounter real people from history.
- Comment on what is familiar and unfamiliar to children and encourage them to raise questions about details they do not understand.
- Identify the vivid descriptive details that help to evoke another time and place and pick out expressive words or phrases.
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Learning outcomes:

- Children can read stories with a historical setting and find evidence about the period when the story is set.
- Children write character sketches using evidence deduced from the text.

Phase 2: Analysis (3 days)

Teaching content:

- Explore narrative structure by reviewing the stories you have already read and mapping the stages in each one. Identify introduction, build-up, climax or conflict, resolution and map these on a hill shape or flow chart.
• Look at the way that the passing of time is represented and relate this to the organisation of paragraphs and key phrases, for example The next moment … Minutes ticked by … Some weeks later … Identify events that are skimmed and those told in more depth (see also Grammar for Writing: Year 4 teaching units, unit 25)
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Learning outcomes:

• Children can recognise the stages in a story and the way that events are linked.
• Children can identify powerful verbs in a text and can talk about their function.

Phase 3: Speaking and listening; writing (6 days)

Teaching content:

• Use a historical setting as a starting point for creating a new story. Consider starting with a visit to a historical building or site and taking photographs, or looking closely at a painting or photograph from the period of history that you are studying with the class.
• Ask children to imagine the scene, using all their senses and noting descriptive words and phrases. Ask them to think about the people who live or work in the setting and imagine a main character: select a name; decide what kind of person the character is, what they look like, how they speak, what they do and how they get on with the other characters. Make notes of the ideas that children suggest.
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Learning outcomes:

• Children can plan a story with a clear structure including a build-up, climax or conflict, and resolution.
• Children can use connectives to show changes in time or place and the sequence of events.
• Children can write a complete narrative with their ideas organised into paragraphs.
Assessing Pupils' Progress

In this exemplified unit we have identified the 'main' assessment focuses for reading and writing. However, it is important to remember that teachers should interpret and adapt the teaching sequence to meet the needs of particular classes and this may affect the types of evidence which it is desirable and possible to gather.

In order for a judgement to be made against writing assessment focuses 1 and 2 it is important that children are given space and time to develop their own ideas and define their own purposes for writing. Opportunities to plan for this will arise throughout the literacy curriculum as well as through the application of skills across the curriculum.

The suggested outcome for this unit is a short story which is set in the past. The teaching of this unit should support the collection of evidence against Reading assessment focus 3 (deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts), Reading assessment focus 7 (relate texts to their social, cultural and historical contexts and literary traditions) and Writing assessment focus 5 (vary sentences for clarity, purpose and effect).

Evidence against a variety of assessment focuses will be collected at many points during the teaching sequence. Independence and opportunities to make decisions are integral to children's development in reading and writing, and it will be important to collect evidence of achievement against the assessment focuses from occasions where children can demonstrate some independence and choice away from direct teaching.

Suggestions for the collection of assessment information against a range of assessment focuses are found below.

Opportunities for assessment

The following are examples selected from the teaching content for this unit of work that will support planning for effective assessment as an integrated part of the teaching and learning process. Evidence gathered during this ongoing work will contribute to the periodic assessment of pupils' progress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning outcomes</th>
<th>Example of teaching content and assessment opportunities</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Approach to assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children can read stories with a historical setting and find evidence about the period when the story is set.</td>
<td>During a guided reading session children investigate how historical settings are built up. The teacher directs the children to consider what facts they can find out about life in the period which the book is set (e.g. Victorians, Tudors) while reading independently. The group discuss what they have found and the teacher guides discussion by asking, 'How can we tell the story is set in the past? What particular words and phrases help you to imagine the place where his story is set?' The children work in pairs to note evidence from the text. The children are then asked to close their eyes while the teacher rereads a short extract from the narrative and the children consider the picture created in their minds. They consider what they would see, hear, smell and how they would feel if they were in this place. Their responses are shared and they are directed to the text to find the details, words and phrases which have evoked these senses.</td>
<td>Children's discussion. Children's notes and reading journal entries.</td>
<td>Teacher observation. Teacher questioning. Oral feedback and discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children write character sketches using evidence deduced</td>
<td>A main character from the class novel is chosen and the children are asked, 'What do you think about this character? Do you like/dislike them? Why? What makes this character tick?' Through think - pair - share initial responses are collected. The teacher takes an event in the narrative and then begins to explore with the children how the author evokes feelings in the reader. The character's behaviour during this event is explored. Images</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning outcomes | Example of teaching content and assessment opportunities | Evidence | Approach to assessment
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from the text. | from the event are recreated by the children using freeze-frames. Digital images are taken, projected and discussed; What did the character say? What was the character doing? Do their actions demonstrate the same thing as their words? Copies of the image are given to the children and annotated by each group with words and phrases taken from the text to indicate the character's actions and personality. The children's own thoughts about the character are also added. Following this, the children work in pairs to produce a character sketch. They consider what they know from the text and what they think they know from their understanding of the character in order to identify key characteristics: what they like, dislike, their appearance, personality, friends, hopes and fears. The children are encouraged to use phrases and words from the text to support their sketch and to be able to talk about those elements that are inferred or deduced from the text. | character sketches). Annotated digital images. | Oral feedback and discussion.

### Key aspects of learning

#### Creative thinking

Children will be encouraged to use their historical knowledge and their imaginations to create a setting and a new story set in the past.

#### Empathy

Exploring historical settings and events through narrative will help children to develop a sense of empathy with historical characters and an understanding of their way of life.

#### Self-awareness

Children will discuss and reflect on their personal responses to the texts.

#### Communication

Children will often work collaboratively in pairs and groups. They will communicate outcomes orally, in writing and using other modes and media where appropriate.

For further information, see the booklet Progression in key aspects of learning (Ref: 0524-2004) from Learning and teaching in the primary years: Professional development resources (Ref: 0518-2004G).
Resources

The following resources are to support the learning and teaching of Literacy

- Short extract from a TV drama set in the past
- Aspects of narrative: adventures, mysteries, historical tales, sci-fi, fantasy and stories with issues
- Writing flyer 1 - Improving writing and 2 - Writing narrative (Ref: 0532/2001)