The Big Carrot

Written by Alison Hawes and illustrated by Stuart Trotter
Teaching notes written by Teresa Heapy

Sounds practised in this book: a (as in can), t (as in tug), i (as in big), o (as in Tom)

Background to the story

- Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.

- This is a simple retelling of a Russian or Slavic traditional tale, called 'The Enormous Turnip'. It is a cumulative type of story in which a growing number of people help an old man to pull up an enormous turnip. In this story, because of phonic restrictions, the turnip has been replaced by a big carrot. The moral of the story is that if you help others, you will be rewarded.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: Why might someone want to pull up such a big carrot? What do you think will happen in this story? Ask if any of the children have heard the story of 'The Enormous Turnip'.

- All the words in this story are decodable for this stage. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list of the high frequency tricky words for this stage used in the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story independently.

Reading the extended story

- Read the extended story (on page 39 of the Traditional Tales Handbook) to the children. Use the eBook or the pupil book to show the images to the children as you read, and pause during the story to ask questions.

- Stop reading at the end of page 3. Ask: Do you think that Tom and Ifra will be able to pull up the big carrot? Who else might be able to help them?

- Pause at page 7 where Kit has joined the group pulling up the big carrot. Ask: Who do you think might be next to join the group trying to pull up the carrot?

- At the end of the extended story, ask: Who finally helped them to pull up the big carrot? Is it who you expected to be able to help?

Reading the story

- Tell the children it's now their turn to read the story themselves. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.

- As they read, encourage the children to sound out the phonemes, for example u-p, t-u-g. Draw attention to the i grapheme in big, Ifra, Lin and Kit.

- Support the children with the word the, explaining that it is a tricky word, but also very common and useful. If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.

- Point out the exclamation marks and ask the children to read these sentences with expression.
Returning to the story

- Ask: How was Tom trying to get the big carrot out of the ground? What else could he have tried?
- Look again at page 6 and ask: What do you think Lin is thinking and saying here?
- Ask: What happened to the group trying to pull up the big carrot when it finally came out of the ground?
- Talk about the end of the story after they have pulled up the big carrot and ask: Do you think that Tom was grateful for everyone’s help? Would he have managed to pull up the big carrot on his own?

Storytelling

- Show the class the video of the storyteller performing the story on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales.
- Talk about how the storyteller uses rich and imaginative language to describe characters and events.
- Ask the children to think about how the storyteller uses his voice to add expression by varying his tone and the rhythm of the story. Discuss how the storyteller uses facial expressions to show emotions.
- Ask the class to discuss what they particularly enjoyed about the storyteller version of the story.
- Have a look at the storytellers’ notes for more information about the storytelling techniques used in the video.

Drama

- Using the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales for reference, talk about what happened in the story and ask the children for ideas for another vegetable to be pulled up out of the ground. It could be a radish, a potato or a beetroot!
- Ask a selection of children to come up, one at a time, to act out helping to try and tug the chosen vegetable out of the ground as you tell the story. Ask those children not acting in role to decide what each child should be as they join the back of the group to pull up the vegetable – they can be people or animals, small or big, strong or less powerful.
- How many children will it take to pull your vegetable out of the earth? Maybe it won’t come up! Ask the children for their ideas for how the story should progress. In your version of the story, who will finally help to pull up the vegetable?

Writing

- Ask the children to draw a picture of the big carrot or another enormous vegetable. Encourage them to draw a little person looking up at the vegetable, to show how big it is.
- Help the children to write a simple sentence for their picture, describing what it shows. The sentence could act as a starting point for a story; encourage the children to think about how the story about pulling up the big carrot started. Ask them to write their name on their work.

Links to the wider curriculum

Science
- Sow some carrot seeds to grow your own carrots. Observe how they grow and make a record of how they develop.

Mathematics
- Investigate size. Compare the size of big blocks with tiny blocks. Think about how big an elephant is, compared with a cat, or a mouse.

Design and technology
- Make your own vegetable soup, asking the children to choose which vegetables to use.

PSHE and Citizenship
- Discuss the importance of helping others.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the Traditional Tales Handbook.
Traditional Tales

Stage 1+

Lots of Nuts

Written by Gill Munton and illustrated by Emma Dodson
Teaching notes written by Teresa Heapy

Sounds practised in this book: a (as in bag), t (as in Tom), m (as in am), o (as in lots)

Background to the story

• Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.

• This story is based on Aesop’s fable ‘The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse’. The moral of the tale is that it is better to have a little in safety than abundance in danger, or to be happy with what you have. The story is circular as the country mouse returns back, happily, to where he started.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

• Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: Do you think both the mice like nuts?

• All the words in this story are decodable for this stage. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list of the high frequency tricky words for this stage used in the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story independently.

Reading the extended story

• Read the extended story (on page 37 of the Traditional Tales Handbook) to the children. Use the pupil book to show the images to the children as you read, and pause during the story to ask questions.

• Stop reading at the end of page 5. Ask: Do you think that Tim likes living in town?

• Pause at page 7 where Tim is scared by the dog. Ask: How do you think Tim is feeling now? What does he think about the dog?

• At the end of the extended story, ask: What do you think Tim learned from his visit to town? Where do you think it would be best for Tim to live?

Reading the story

• Tell the children it’s now their turn to read the story themselves. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.

• As they read, encourage the children to sound out the phonemes, for example b-a-g, b-a-ck. Draw attention to the ff grapheme in huff, off and ruff.

• Support the children with the word the, explaining that it is a tricky word, but also very common and useful. If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.

• As they read, point out the exclamation marks and encourage the children to read these sentences with expression.

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Returning to the story

- Talk about what happened in the story. Ask: Why did Tom and Tim go to Tom’s home in town?
- Ask: What happened when the dog came into the kitchen? How did Tim and Tom feel at this point in the story?
- Look at pages 10 and 11 again and ask: How do you think Tim feels at the end of the story? What do you think happened to Tom?
- Talk about the characters of Tim and Tom. Ask the children to think of words to describe each mouse.

Storytelling and Drama

- Tell the children that you are one of the other animals that live in the wood with Tim, e.g. the deer, the hedgehog or a rabbit. Tell them that you are very pleased that Tim has come back to live in the wood again and that you want to hear all about his adventures in town.
- Provide the children with copies of the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales as a reference. Ask them to work in pairs to talk about what happened in the story and how Tim felt at each point.
- Gather the class back together and ask them to tell you what happened from Tim’s point of view, taking it in turns around the class. If necessary, prompt the children with questions about the events and how Tim might have been feeling.

Writing

- Look again at page 8 of the pupil book. As a class discuss why Tim wants to leave Tom’s home in town and go back to his home in the country. Ask the children to imagine that Tom wants Tim to stay. What do they think he might have said to persuade Tom to stay in town?
- Take suggestions from the class for both reasons why Tom thinks Tim should stay in town, and reasons why Tim wants to go back to his home in the country. Act as scribe to make lists of their suggestions on the board. Where appropriate, encourage the children to use their phonics skills to help you to spell words.
- Ask the children to draw a picture of either Tim or Tom. Help each child to write a simple sentence in a speech bubble to show one of the arguments that the class suggested in the group discussion. Alternatively, the children could write key words in the speech bubble if this is more appropriate.

Links to the wider curriculum

Science
- Find out about mice. Ask children to investigate their habitats and what they like to eat.
- Talk about the differences between nuts and buns. Talk about how they are grown or made, ask: Would you find a bun growing on a tree?

Geography
- Talk about the two settings of the story – the town and the country. Talk about the similarities and differences between the two.

Art and design/Design and technology
- Ask the children to design a house for Tim, or a house for Tom.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the Traditional Tales Handbook.
Run, Run!

Written by Alex Lane and illustrated by Paula Metcalf
Teaching notes written by Teresa Heapy

Sounds practised in this book: a (as in cat), n (as in run), r (as in ran)

Background to the story

Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.

This story is based on ‘The Gingerbread Man’, which was originally published in 1895 in America in the St Nicholas Magazine, a magazine for children. It is a cumulative story as more and more people chase the gingerbread man.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: What do you think is going to happen in the story? Do you think someone will catch the gingerbread man? If the children recognise the story, let them tell you what they remember about it.

All the words in this story are decodable for this stage. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list of the high frequency tricky words for this stage used in the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story independently.

Reading the extended story

Read the extended story (on page 33 of the Traditional Tales Handbook) to the children. Use the pupil book to show the images to the children as you read, and pause during the story to ask questions.

Stop reading at the end of page 6. Ask: Why do you think the cat, Mum and Dad are chasing the gingerbread man?

Pause after page 8 where the gingerbread man has got onto the fox’s back. Ask: Why do you think the fox is helping the gingerbread man to get away?

At the end of the extended story, ask: What do you think about what happened to the gingerbread man?

Reading the story

Tell the children it’s now their turn to read the story themselves. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.

As they read, encourage the children to sound out the phonemes, for example D-a-d, r-a-n. Draw attention to the ck grapheme in back.

Support the children with the words the, I, go, explaining that they are tricky words, but also very common and useful. If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.

As they read, draw attention to the speech bubbles and thought bubbles and explain that they show who is speaking or what a character is thinking.
Returning to the story

- Talk about what happened in the story. Look at pages 4 and 5 again and ask: How do you think Mum, Dad and the cat are feeling here?
- Ask: Why did the gingerbread man get onto the fox’s back? What do you think the fox is thinking?
- Ask: What happened to the gingerbread man? Do you think he deserved to be eaten or would you have preferred him to escape? What do you think the gingerbread man should have done differently?

Storytelling and Drama

- Using the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales for reference, talk as a class about what happened in the story. Then ask the children to think about other characters that they can think of who might have chased the gingerbread man if they had seen him. Ask: What other animals or people might want to chase him?
- For each new character suggestion that the children invent, ask them to think about whether the gingerbread man would be able to outrun them and why they might be chasing the gingerbread man. Would they want to help him, eat him or be his friend?
- Work in small groups to create a new episode in the story where the gingerbread man encounters one of the new characters you have thought of. Encourage the children to act out their new episode and to think about what each character might say.
- If appropriate, you could create a class version of the story with the children acting out each new episode one after another with the gingerbread man meeting lots of new characters before he finally meets the fox.

Writing

- Ask the children to draw a picture of a new character that could chase the gingerbread man.
- Encourage the children to write labels for their new character to go with their picture, and help them to do this. Encourage them to give their new character a name and to write keywords to describe them. Ask them to write their name on their work.
- If appropriate, ask the children to show their picture to the rest of the class and describe their new character and why they would be chasing the gingerbread man.

Links to the wider curriculum

Science
- Make your own gingerbread men, weighing out the ingredients together.

Art and design/Design and technology
- Ask the children to design their own gingerbread man. They could add clothes, special buttons or coloured eyes. How would they make the decorations if they were making a real gingerbread man?

Music
- Tell the children that in some versions of the story the gingerbread man calls ‘Run, run as fast as you can! You can’t catch me, I’m the gingerbread man!’ Ask them to make up a song or rhyme that the gingerbread man can sing as he runs away.

PSHE and Citizenship
- Talk about the importance of knowing who you trust and being aware.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the Traditional Tales Handbook.
Get the Rat!

Written by Alex Lane and illustrated by Sholto Walker
Teaching notes written by Teresa Heapy

Sounds practised in this book: a (as in rat), t (as in get), i (as in it)

Background to the story

- Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.

- This story is based on a circular theme, which is a structure used in many traditional tales. The humour in the story comes from the repetition of events, the increasing levels of chaos as the story progresses and the conclusion … where it seems as if the whole cycle is about to start all over again!

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: What do you think the rat is thinking? What do you think might happen to the rat in the story?

- All the words in this story are decodable for this stage. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list of the high frequency tricky words for this stage used in the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story independently.

Reading the extended story

- Read the extended story (on page 35 of the Traditional Tales Handbook) to the children. Use the pupil book to show the images to the children as you read, and pause during the story to ask questions.

- Stop reading at the end of page 3. Ask: How are the different characters reacting to the sighting of the rat? Do you think they like rats?

- Pause at page 9 where the King’s wig is mistaken for the rat. Ask: What do you think the Princess is thinking?

- At the end of the extended story, ask: What do you think happened next? What has the Princess spotted this time?

Reading the story

- Tell the children it’s now their turn to read the story themselves. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.

- As they read, encourage the children to sound out the phonemes, for example g-e-t, r-a-t. Draw attention to the u grapheme in rug, cup and bug.

- Support the children with the word the, explaining that it is a tricky word, but also very common and useful. If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.

- As they read, ask them to spot the rat on each page of the book. Ask: Do you think he is a clever rat? Check that the children understand that various items are being mistaken for the rat – the sock on page 3, the teabag on page 5 and the King’s wig on page 7.
Returning to the story

- Talk about what happened in the story. Ask: *Who first spotted the rat? What do you think the Princess thought when she saw it?*
- Ask: *What happened when the Princess thought the rat was on the King’s hat? What do you think the King, the Queen and the footmen might be saying at this moment in the story?*
- Look at pages 10 and 11 again and ask: *What has happened to the room since the beginning of the story?*
- Ask: *What do you think the rat thinks about what happened in the story? Was he surprised that they didn’t catch him? Did you think he would get caught?*

Storytelling and Drama

- Using the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales for reference, talk as a class about what happened in the story.
- Ask three children to take the roles of the Princess, the King and the Queen. Ask them to act out the story, but this time with the King and Queen refusing to chase the rat!
- Ask another three children to come up and act out the story. This time, you could change the animal – it could be a spider, a dog or even a tiger! What will happen in the story now?
- Keep asking other groups of children to come and act out the story, changing events or characters. Ask the children in the class who are not acting in role to think of suggestions for alternatives that the groups can act out.

Writing

- Ask the children to draw their favourite character in the story. It could be the King, the Princess or even the rat! Ask them to think about the events in the story and to draw their character at a key moment. Make picture frames for the children’s illustrations like the pictures on the wall in the story.
- Encourage the children to write labels for the character they have drawn. These could be for their clothes or key words about what they are doing or thinking. Ask them to write their name on their work.
- If appropriate, ask the children to show their picture to the rest of the class and describe the moment in the story and the character that it shows.

Links to the wider curriculum

**Science**
- Find out about rats. Ask children to investigate their habitats and what they like to eat.

**Geography**
- The King, Queen and Princess live in a palace. Find out about real palaces, or castles, in books or on the internet.

**Art and design/Design and technology**
- Ask the children to design a royal crown. They can choose to make a crown for the King, the Queen or the Princess.

**PE**
- Ask the children to tell the story in a dance. They should think about the chaotic moments of running around and chasing the rat, and contrast them with quiet moments when the rat is happily hidden away nibbling cheese.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the *Traditional Tales Handbook*. 