The Frog Prince

Written by Pippa Goodhart and illustrated by Yannick Robert
Teaching notes written by Pam Dowson

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.

• The story of a prince who is turned into a frog by a spell is very old; it was first written down by the Brothers Grimm about two hundred years ago. Based on a traditional British version of this very old tale, this story, which contrasts meanness and generosity, teaches the lesson that promises must be kept. It can also be seen as a personal journey for the Princess, who learns not to be selfish.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

• Ask the children if they know the story of ‘The Frog Prince’. Do they know what usually happens?

• Tell the children that there is a princess in the story. Ask: What stories do you know with princesses in them? How do princesses usually behave in stories?

• Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: What clues do the illustrations give you about the characters of the frog and the Princess? Where would you expect this story to be set?

• Read pages 2 to 5 and ask: What do you think will happen next?

• All the words in this story are decodable. However, we’ve listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

Reading the story

• Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.

• On page 10, talk about the sentence, The Princess grabbed the ball. Ask the children to think about the verb grabbed and what this tells us about how the Princess behaved and how she took the ball from the frog. Can they think of any other words that could be used here, such as snatched, seized, clutched or picked up?

• Look at page 11 and discuss what might happen next. Ask: What would you do if you were in the frog’s situation?

• Pause at page 15 and ask: Why do you think the Princess says she can’t be friends with the frog?

Returning to the story

• Look at page 6 again and ask: What was the Princess thinking here?

• Look at the words crown (page 7), Now (page 9) and pillow (page 18) and draw attention to the alternative pronunciations of the ow grapheme.

• Read page 10 and ask: How do you think the frog felt when the Princess just ran away? How would you feel if someone broke a promise to you?

• Talk about what lessons the Princess learned from what happened to her in the story.
**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 in the story.
- Ask the children to think about how the storyteller uses her voice to add expression by varying her 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**
- Show pages 14 and 15 to the children. Tell them to work in pairs, in role as the Princess and the frog. The children in role as the frog should think of all the reasons why the Princess should be his friend. Encourage them to think of the benefits of friendship and to be as persuasive and convincing as possible. The children in the role of the Princess should think of all the reasons why she might not want to be friends with a cold, wet frog.
- Once the children have conducted the argument in role, ask them to swap roles. Bring the class together and ask the children to share any particularly good arguments in favour of or against the friendship.

**Writing**
- Ask the children to imagine the story from the frog’s point of view. Look at the book to find where he first appears, noting that he knows nothing about the Princess’s birthday wish.
- Talk about how the frog’s version of the story starts, how his emotions change as the story progresses, and his thinking behind what he decides to do.
- Model writing an opening in the first person, e.g. ‘I was just sitting at the edge of the pond when suddenly there was a great splash.’
- The children should then write in role, giving the frog’s version of events.

**Links to the wider curriculum**

**Science**
- Look at the life cycle of a frog.

**Art and design**
- Make simple finger puppets, from cylinders of card, to represent the main characters in the story. Use the puppets to act out the story.

**Music**
- Use xylophones or glockenspiels to make jumpy music for the frog, and royal music for the Princess.

**PSHE and Citizenship**
- Talk about making and keeping promises. Have the children ever broken a promise, or has someone broken a promise made to them? How did they feel?
- The Princess realised she had been a bad friend, but the frog explained how she had been a good friend. Talk about what makes a good friend.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the Traditional Tales Handbook.
How the Bear Lost His Tail

Written by Susan Price and illustrated by Sara Ogilvie
Teaching notes written by Pam Dowson

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 known in many cultures, including Norse and North American. It belongs to the tradition that explains why some things in the world are as they are. This story pits Bear against Fox, who is the trickster figure.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

• Ask the children what they know about bears in the wild. Perhaps they have seen them on television wildlife programmes. How would they describe a bear?

• Tell the children that the two main characters in the story are a bear and a fox. Ask: What would you expect them to be like? What might be different about them as characters? What other stories do you know with foxes in them?

• Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: Do you know any other stories that tell us how things came to be the way they are? Perhaps they know some of Rudyard Kipling’s ‘Just So’ stories, such as ‘How the Camel got his Hump’.

• Ask: How do you think the bear might lose his tail?

• Look at the word grumpy (page 2). Ask the children what this means. Can they make a grumpy face? Ask: What other words describe a grumpy character? For example, bad-tempered, irritable or grouchy.

• All the words in this story are decodable. However, we’ve listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

Reading the story

• Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.

• Ask the children to find all the words on page 4 that describe something about bears, e.g. big, hairy, sweet, kind, proud. Are these words they would expect to describe bears?

• Look at the phrase the fish will come and nibble your tail on page 12. Talk about how the word nibble suggests small fish. Ask: What word might we use if they were big fish?

• Pause at page 15. Ask: What do you think is going to happen next? What could happen to Bear’s tail?
Returning to the story

- Look again at page 10 and ask: Why did Fox decide to trick Bear?
- Tell the children that there are several alternative spellings of /air/ in the story. Encourage them to identify bears (page 2), hairy (page 2), their (page 4), Where (page 9) and share (page 10).
- Re-read page 20. Ask: How do you think Bear is feeling here? What might he be thinking about Fox and about himself?
- Bear learned that he shouldn’t believe everything he is told. Ask the children what they think Bear could have done differently. Ask: What might Bear have done to be sure that Fox’s advice was good?

Storytelling and Drama

- Using the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales as a prompt, talk together about the questions you might ask Bear at the end of the story to find out what happened to him and how he felt as the story progressed.
- Ask the children to work in pairs taking turns to be Bear in the hot seat, answering the sort of questions you have talked about.
- Encourage the children to elaborate on their answers, using ‘because’ to extend their answers.

Writing

- Having thought about Bear’s feelings in the drama activity, now focus on Fox’s character.
- Work together to list Fox’s characteristics, e.g. he is quick and sly and clever (page 22).
- Talk about Fox’s reasons for fooling Bear, how he did this and how he felt at the end of the story. Ask the children if they think Fox was happy with his trick? Did he find it funny? Do they think he knew what might happen to Bear’s tail?
- Model writing Fox’s version in the first person, e.g. ‘I was hungry that icy day and there was no way I was going to share my fish with that long-tailed Bear.’
- The children should now work independently to write their own versions of the story told from Fox’s point of view.

Links to the wider curriculum

Science/Mathematics
- Do experiments to find out how long it takes for water to freeze and melt. Make a graph of the results.

Geography
- Use books or the internet to find out where bears live and the foods they eat.

Art and design
- Using photographs from books or the internet for reference, create paintings, drawings or collages of different animals’ tails. Display them with the caption ‘Whose tails are these?’ with flaps to lift for the answers.

Music
- Compose music to suggest both Bear and Fox, using heavier, deliberate sounds for Bear and lighter, more playful sounds for Fox.

PSHE and Citizenship
- Fox thought it was clever to fool Bear. Talk about how playing tricks on others makes them feel, and how being found out leads to a lack of trust in the trickster.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the Traditional Tales Handbook.
**Stage 6**

**Monkey’s Magic Pipe**

Written by Pat Thomson and illustrated by Alessandra Cimatoribus
Teaching notes written by Pam Dowson

**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 South American tale where the smallest, weakest creature triumphs. Here Monkey is the clever problem-solver. Traditionally, when told aloud, pipe music is often used. The repetition, useful to young readers, encourages joining in.

**Group/Guided reading**

**Introducing the story**
- Talk about the title of the story with the children. Ask: *Does this sound like the monkeys you see in wildlife programmes on television? What is different?*
- Tell the children that the story is set in a faraway forest or a jungle. Ask: *What other animals might we find in this 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?*
- Read pages 2 to 5 and ask: *How might Monkey come into the story?* Ask the children if they were surprised to find a monster in the story. Ask: *What are monsters in stories usually like?*
- All the words in this story are decodable. However, we’ve listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

**Reading the story**
- Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.
- Look at page 7 and ask the children to find and read the words that describe how Snake and the Monster moved. Ask: *What do you notice about these words?* Talk about how the words *slid* and *pounced* suggest different types of movement. *Slid* suggests slow movement whereas *pounced* suggests sudden and fast movement.
- Read together the first sentence on page 10, “*I shall eat them all,*” *roared the Monster. Ask the children to say the Monster’s words in a roaring voice. Ask: *Can you think of any other words that might be used to describe how the Monster speaks?*
- Now look at the words used on page 17 to describe Parrot dancing, *flapped and screeched. Ask: *Do the words help you to imagine how Parrot danced?* Encourage the children to look for other good descriptive words, e.g. *struggled and snapped* (page 19), *Panther sprang* (page 20) and *puffing and panting* (page 21).
Returning to the story

- Ask: **How do you think the animals felt when the Monster trapped them? What would they think was going to happen to them?**
- Tell the children that there are several alternative spellings of /ee/ in the story. Encourage them to identify **eat** (page 3), **teeth** (page 5), **me** (page 6), **Monkey** (page 11) and **pity** (page 14).
- Ask: **What did Monkey do that shows us how clever she was? Was Monkey’s pipe really magic?**
- Talk about the Monster. Do the children think he learned anything from what Monkey did?

Storytelling and Drama

- As a class talk about the Monster’s character and create a list of his attributes.
- Ask the children to work in groups and talk about the things that the Monster boasted he was best at, such as “I am the best at waiting,” (page 5) and “I am the best at hunting!” (page 10). Remind them that the Monster says, “I must be the best dancer… because I am the best at everything.” (page 13). In groups, ask them to think of other things that he might boast about being the best at in the jungle.
- Ask the children in their groups to decide on their best Monster boast and to act it out. The children could take on the roles of the characters and create a new story episode based on the Monster’s new boast. Encourage them to think about how the other characters might react to the Monster. Ask each group to share their new Monster boast and story episode with the rest of the class.

Writing

- Talk together about what might happen after the end of the story. How did the Monster find food? Did the other animals stay around or move away? Did Monkey play any more clever tricks?
- Choose one of the children’s suggestions and model writing the continuation of the story, e.g. ‘The Monster stayed in his cave of bones for three days and nights. He was hungrier than ever. “What shall I do?” he asked himself…’
- Encourage the children to write their own continuation episode in the style of the story, such as having the Monster say new things he is best at, or creating new repeating sentences to go with their ideas.

Links to the wider curriculum

**Science**
- Use books and the internet to find out about different types of monkeys.

**Geography**
- Find countries where monkeys live, such as India and Brazil, and learn about their habitat.

**Art and design/Design and technology**
- Use old shoe boxes to make a story box, creating a background jungle setting inside the box and simple card puppets for the children to re-enact the story.

**PE**
- Using your chosen music, groups of children create a dance sequence representing the animals and the Monster in the story, moving appropriately for each one.

**PSHE and Citizenship**
- Talk about how boasting affects how others see you. You could read *Look What I’ve Got!* by Anthony Browne as an extension to the original story.

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

Written by Becca Heddle and illustrated by Meg Hunt
Teaching notes written by Pam Dowson

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 Japanese story shows how wanting more than we already have is not always a good thing. The story is circular in structure, with Yoshi realising at the end of the story that he wishes to be back where he started.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- Ask the children if they know what a stonecutter does. Explain that he would use hand tools to cut and carve stone blocks into shapes for building.
- Ask: Does the name Yoshi give you a clue about where the story might be set? Tell the children the setting is in Japan. Ask if they know anything about the country.
- Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: What do you think is going to happen in the story?
- Tell the children that Yoshi is a poor man. Ask: Do you know any other stories where the main characters are poor at the start? What happens to them?
- After reading pages 2 to 3, ask the children if the mountain spirit reminds them of characters from other stories, e.g. the genie from ‘Aladdin’, or the Fairy Godmother from ‘Cinderella’.
- All the words in this story are decodable. However, we’ve listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.
- Read the final words on page 5: Yoshi – a rich man you now shall be. Talk about the structure of this sentence, which is repeated throughout the story. We might call this ‘story language’.
- Ask the children if they know the meaning of the word wither on page 13. Can they think of another verb that could be used here? For example: shrivel, dry up or die.

Returning to the story

- Ask how Yoshi might have felt when the spirit granted his first wish (page 5).
- Tell the children that some of the words in this story include the /igh/ phoneme. Encourage them to find the alternative spellings of /igh/, including ride (page 7), dried (page 10), sky (page 13) and might (page 14).
- As Yoshi’s wishes continued to be granted, ask: Was Yoshi getting happier all the time? What conclusion did Yoshi reach at the end of the story? Do you think Yoshi is right?
Storytelling and Drama
- Using copies of the story map available on www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales as a prompt to remind the children of the main events in the story, ask the children to freeze-frame as Yoshi for each part of the story.
- Ask them to use facial expressions and body shapes to show how Yoshi was feeling.
- For each freeze-frame, choose some children to speak in role as Yoshi, saying what he was thinking and how he was feeling. Afterwards, talk about when Yoshi was happiest and why.

Writing
- Ask the children to imagine that they are Yoshi. Remind them that Yoshi tries being a rich man, a prince, the sun, a cloud and a rock. Ask which one they would like to be. Tell the class that the mountain spirit decided to delay granting Yoshi his next wish and so he had to stay in one of these forms for a while longer.
- Working in pairs or independently, instruct the children to think of a new episode for the story. Tell them to consider what Yoshi could do if he was stuck as a cloud or the sun, for example. How do they think Yoshi would feel about this?
- Model writing in the first person, e.g. ‘I didn’t feel as powerful as I wanted to be when I was the sun – the clouds kept on getting in my way and however hard I shone I could not clear them. Now I am a cloud, I have decided to rain and rain and rain.’
- The children should write in role as Yoshi telling their new episode in the story. Encourage them to explain how Yoshi feels, as well as telling the events of their new episode.
- You may want to create a new class version of the story, with the new episodes included in which Yoshi has to spend more time considering the power of each of his new roles before the mountain spirit allows him to change his form again.

Links to the wider curriculum

Science
- Link the story to work on the strength of materials. You could also play the game ‘Stone, Paper, Scissors’ for fun!

Geography
- Find Japan on a globe of the world. Look at maps of Japan and find the mountains and rivers.

Art and design
- Create a collage of Japanese cherry trees, with a large sun in the sky representing Yoshi when he was turned into the sun.

Music
- Listen to traditional Japanese music and find images of the instruments.

PSHE and Citizenship
- Yoshi was always wishing for his life to be different, not realising that he could be happy as he was. Talk about how we can appreciate what we have. Ask the children to describe the good things about their lives.

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