

# teach PRIMARY

Outstanding advice from the UK's top education experts

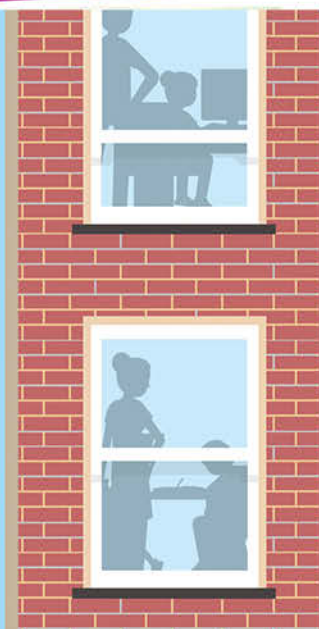


Supporting schools, parents  
and pupils with Rising Stars

ACHIEVE



CRACKING  
COMPREHENSION



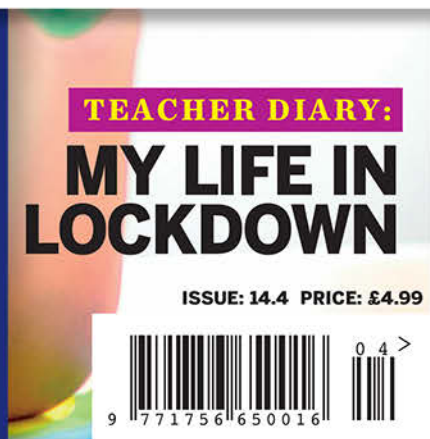
RISING STARS  
Teach ★ Learn ★ Shine

[risingstars-uk.com/3-months](https://risingstars-uk.com/3-months)



Find out more at [risingstars-uk.com/3-months](https://risingstars-uk.com/3-months)

RISING STARS  
Teach ★ Learn ★ Shine



WELLBEING  
...cake Fridays just aren't enough

# teach PRIMARY

Outstanding advice from the UK's top education experts

Supporting schools, parents  
and pupils with Rising Stars

Share resources with pupils at  
home, with 3 months free access

Allocate ebooks, quizzes and activities  
to pupils and parents.



Find out more at [risingstars-uk.com/3-months](https://risingstars-uk.com/3-months)

**RISING STARS**  
Teach ★ Learn ★ Shine



It **STAND-UP COMICS** can  
teach us

**GET YOUR LIFE BACK**  
with simple  
lessons

**TEACHER DIARY:**  
**MY LIFE IN LOCKDOWN**

ISSUE: 14.4 PRICE: £4.99



**WELLBEING**

...cake Fridays just aren't enough



VISIT [TEACHWIRE.NET/PRIMARY](http://TEACHWIRE.NET/PRIMARY)

# teach PRIMARY

Outstanding advice from the UK's top education experts

75

**GENIUS HOME  
LEARNING  
IDEAS**

## KS1 remote learning hacks

**TAKE  
CHARGE  
OF YOUR  
CAREER**

# Smooth transition

**Help Y6 from home**

What *STAND-UP  
COMICS* can  
teach us

**GET YOUR  
LIFE BACK**  
with simple  
lessons

**TEACHER DIARY:  
MY LIFE IN  
LOCKDOWN**

ISSUE: 14.4 PRICE: £4.99



**PLUS**



**OPINION**

My headteacher is a micromanager



**LESSON PLANS**

Explore gender equality with pupils



**WELLBEING**

Free cake Fridays just aren't enough



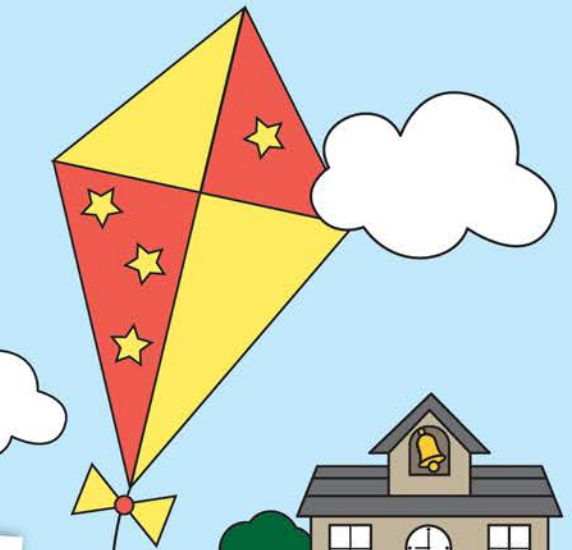
# Get Set Early Years

Ideal  
for home  
learning

Help children to become  
school-ready by the end  
of Reception



- ✦ Structured activity books to support classroom teaching
- ✦ Friendly illustrations to make learning fun
- ✦ Key vocabulary for each topic area
- ✦ Helpful notes and tips for parents and carers





# Hello!



I often leave the writing of this letter to the last minute, and while that's sometimes for disorganisation reasons, this issue I hesitated in case the government made an announcement about when children might return to school – nothing so far...

To help you and your pupils get through this rather strange period of limbo, we've put together a special home learning section this issue. If your charges are suffering from worksheet fatigue, Jonny Walker's dreamt up 25 exciting ideas children can try at home that are rich in learning opportunities. Find them on p18. Trying to video conference with an excitable bunch of KS1 kids is a challenge many of you will have faced over the last few weeks. Jack Dabell shares five great tips for making remote learning work with younger pupils on p25.

The wellbeing of both teachers and children is something that will be at the forefront of everyone's minds when schools reopen and we return to some sort of normality – whatever that might look like. Head over to p69 to hear from assistant principal Kat Howard about how tokenistic initiatives like free cake Fridays and yoga classes (as nice as they are) just won't cut the mustard.

If, like me, you count Gogglebox on Friday night as the official start of the weekend, you'll enjoy Baasit Siddiqui's piece on page 48. Did you know he used to be a teacher and now runs education workshops?

Until next time,

*Elaine*

Elaine Bennett, Editor

 @editorteach

*Don't miss our  
next issue, on sale  
3rd July*

## POWERED BY...



**LAURA CROSS**  
promotes engineering  
and the numerous  
benefits it can bring  
to primary pupils

*“It's not a fancy discipline  
requiring resources you don't  
have the budget for”*

p37



**ANDREW HAMMOND**  
explores how to make  
RSE lessons open and  
honest while protecting  
pupils' innocence

*“Creating a forum in which  
children's concerns can be aired  
in class is vitally important”*

p45



**AIDAN SEVERS**  
says forget flashy session  
plans – simple lessons can  
save you time and give you  
your life back

*“Make each task as simple as  
possible so that the focus is on  
what children need to learn”*

p50



YOUNGMINDS  
**360°**  
schools

Want **FREE**  
mental health resources  
relevant to the needs of  
**YOUR** school?



We know how difficult it can be to prioritise your pupils' mental health, and finding useful resources can be overwhelming. Our **360° Schools' Community** e-newsletter is packed with expert advice, high-quality resources and practical classroom activities to help you support your pupils' wellbeing.



Scan the **QR code**  
to sign up today!



# Contents

ISSUE 14.4



## REGULARS

- 8 **BREAKTIME**
- 46 **SUBSCRIBE TODAY**

## VOICES

- 15 **A LETTER TO...**  
You may find my adopted son hard work, but with support he can thrive
- 33 **UNDERCOVER TEACHER**  
Headteachers are still finding ways to micromanage during the shutdown

## SUBJECT SPECIAL

## WELLBEING

- 64 **WORKS LIKE MAGIC**  
The positive education movement is helping children become more resilient
- 66 **LOOK AFTER YOU**  
Five ways to take charge of your

professional life and improve your wellbeing

- 69 **STOP TALKING ABOUT WELLBEING**  
Want to improve teachers' lives? We need to tackle the root causes of stress
- 70 **A NEW NORMAL**  
We're having to consider wellbeing in a way we could never have predicted

## HOME LEARNING

- 18 **25 HOME LEARNING PROJECTS**  
Forget dull worksheets – immerse children in these learning opportunities
- 25 **LEARNING CURVE**  
Tech tips to help with remote learning for KS1 children
- 26 **50 FREE APPS & WEBSITES**  
Supercharge pupils' home learning by showing them these ace resources
- 34 **TOPICAL TUESDAYS**  
Keep children abreast of current affairs by using our free weekly resources

**We're all ears!**

We want to make sure our magazine is a brilliant resource for teachers and are always striving to improve. That's why we host a reader feedback panel every issue to hear from real teachers about what they liked and what they would change. Got feedback? Contact us via the details in the yellow box below.

**teach  
PRIMARY**

**We want to hear from you!**

Get in touch with your rants, comments, photos and ideas.



[teachwire.net](http://teachwire.net)

[facebook.com/teachwire](https://facebook.com/teachwire)

[twitter.com/teachprimary](https://twitter.com/teachprimary)

[elaine.bennett@theteachco.com](mailto:elaine.bennett@theteachco.com)

**EDITOR:**

Elaine Bennett,  
elaine.bennett@theteachco.com,  
01206 505994

**GROUP EDITOR:**

Joe Carter,  
joe.carter@theteachco.com,  
01206 505925

**HEAD OF COMMERCIAL SOLUTIONS:**

Richard Stebbing,  
richard.stebbing@theteachco.com

**ADVERTISING****MANAGER:**

Hayley Rackham,  
hayley.rackham@theteachco.com,  
01206 505988

**DEPUTY ADVERTISING****MANAGER:**

Samantha Law,  
samantha.law@theteachco.com,  
01206 505499

**SENIOR ACCOUNT****MANAGERS:**

Hannah Jones,  
hannah.jones@theteachco.com,  
01206 505924

Katie Harvey-Jones,  
katie.jones@theteachco.com,  
01206 505477

**ART EDITOR:**

Richard Allen

**DESIGNERS:**

Chris England, Adam Barford

**PHOTOGRAPHY:**

ClIQQ Photography,  
cliqq.co.uk

**ACCOUNTS:**

01206 505995

**DESIGN &****REPROGRAPHICS:**

Ace Pre-Press 01206 508608

**SUBSCRIPTIONS****DEPARTMENT:**

Andrea Turner

**CUSTOMER SERVICES:**

aceville@dctmedia.co.uk  
0800 904 7000

**PUBLISHER:**

Helen Tudor

**DISTRIBUTED BY:**

Distributed by Frontline Ltd.,  
Peterborough. Tel: 01733 555161

**PUBLISHED BY:**

Maze Media (2000) Ltd, 25 Phoenix  
Court, Hawkins Rd, Colchester,  
Essex, CO2 8JY. Tel: 01206 505900



The views in this magazine are not necessarily those of the publisher. Every effort is made to ensure the veracity and integrity of the companies, persons, products and services mentioned in this publication, and the details given are believed to be accurate at the time of going to press. However, no responsibility or liability whatsoever can be accepted for any consequence or repercussion of responding to information or advice given or inferred. Copyright Maze Media (2000) Ltd.



## FEATURES

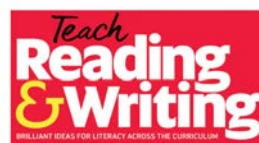
- 11 6 STAND-UP TIPS TO USE IN CLASS**  
A good comic can command even the rowdiest of audience
- 13 7 NEWS STORIES**  
Catch up with some of the education stories you might have missed
- 17 HOW I DO IT**  
Create maps featuring key events from your class novel
- 37 DESIGN & MAKE**  
Engineering is simply about spotting problems and creating solutions
- 38 EPILEPSY AWARENESS**  
Making the case for why schools need a progression framework for young people on the autism spectrum
- 42 MOVING ON UP**  
How do you prepare Y6 pupils for secondary during the lockdown?
- 45 I'VE GOT A QUESTION...**  
How to foster a culture of openness during RSE while protecting pupils' innocence
- 48 THAT GUY OFF THE TELLY**  
Baasit Siddiqui is using the hook of Gogglebox to raise pupils' aspirations
- 50 SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN**  
Forget flashy lessons – simple can be beautiful, and can give you your life back
- 82 DAY IN THE LIFE**  
We follow a teacher from first alarm to lights out during lockdown...

## LESSON PLANS

- 72** MATHS & PE
- 74** PSHE & ENGLISH
- 76** SCIENCE

## REVIEWS

- 79** THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES HISTORY TOOLKIT
- 81** PRIMARY SCIENCE TEACHING TRUST



- 52 OVER THE MOON**  
Nursery rhymes play a vital role in reading and spelling success
- 54 BRIGHT AS A BUTTON**  
Nine ways to teach similes and metaphors with confidence
- 56 BOOK CLUB**  
We review five new titles that will excite your class
- 58 HUMAN SENTENCES**  
This low-stakes analogue grammar game sharpens pupils' minds and leads to greater engagement
- 61 BOOK TOPIC**  
Go on an adventure with Jeffrey Alan Love's evocative picturebook

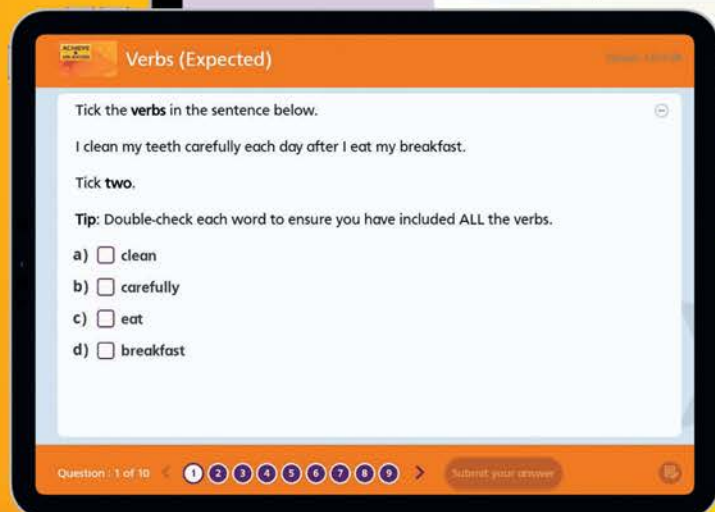
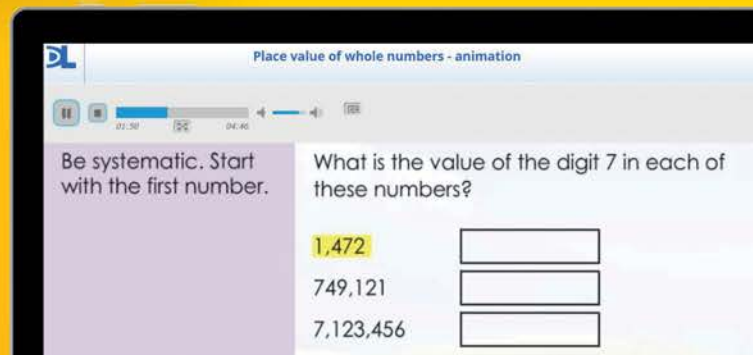


# Support pupils and parents with *Achieve SATs Success Online*

Try FREE for 90 Days

**ACHIEVE**  
★  
**SATs SUCCESS**

- Teach children new skills by sending them fun 4-step animations.
- Measure progress with ready-made interactive quizzes that can be done anywhere.
- Build confidence with instant rewards.
- Identify trickier areas with reporting dashboards, even when they're at home.



Sign-up for 3 months free at  
[risingstars-uk.com/achieve-3-months](https://risingstars-uk.com/achieve-3-months)

# Breaktime

News | Interviews | Ideas | Resources | Research



## Listen up

Charity Sound and Music has made its digital resource Minute of Listening free. The online music resource for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 children provides a minute of creative and curious listening every day and can be used by parents or teachers as a starting point for creative activities such as drawing and writing. Introduce children to a range of music and sounds from Björk to Beethoven and select via mood or curriculum area. Use the follow-up questions to encourage children to discuss what they heard, thought and felt. Sign up at [minuteoflistening.org/free-trial](https://www.minuteoflistening.org/free-trial)

## 3 INSTANT LESSONS... (You're welcome)

© Andy Tatt



### HISTORY AT HOME

CBBC presenter Ben Shires has teamed up with experts from English Heritage to explore some of history's most fascinating moments. View each 30-minute video for free online at [english-heritage.org.uk/history-at-home](https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/history-at-home)



### EVERYDAY SCIENCE

As part of the Royal Society's Science at Home offering, Professor Brian Cox has recorded a series of videos about simple science experiments pupils can carry out at home. Do plants need soil? Can you change the size of a shadow? [tinyurl.com/tpcox](https://www.tinyurl.com/tpcox)



### EASY GENETICS

Introduce pupils to the basics of genetics with a free online book. Little Letters by Dr Tiffany Taylor is an illustrated story about a scientist and her two children who discover a new type of animal. It uses rhyme to explain DNA, genetics and nature vs nurture. [littlelettersgenetics.co.uk](https://www.littlelettersgenetics.co.uk)

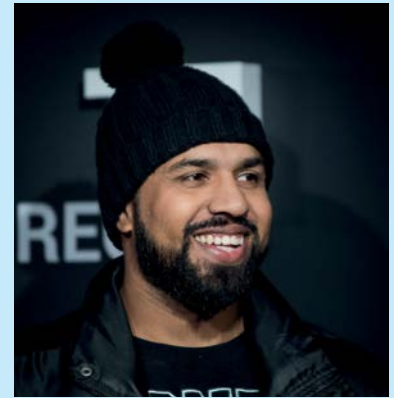
## →→→ YOUR **FREE** **RESOURCES**



This home learning pack is designed for children in Y3-6 to complete over a week, with some adult support where possible. It's based around the topic of animals and their habitats and offers a range of activities covering reading, writing, science and geography, with additional ideas including music and art. Find it at [tinyurl.com/plazoomanimals](https://www.tinyurl.com/plazoomanimals)



Q & A



**Humza Arshad**  
Comedian, YouTuber and star of the Puffin Podcast

*What was primary school like for you?*

Fun! I wasn't the naughtiest or the one that would get top marks in class – I was often the one that would say a joke, make the class laugh and get told to stand in the corner, then I'd cry! Looking back, I appreciate how enjoyable it all was – the lessons, playtime, kiss chase... I should probably stop now!

*What's lockdown been like?*

I actually had many of the coronavirus symptoms so it didn't start off very well, but thankfully I'm much better. This lockdown period has been extra unusual as it's also Ramadan so I'm fasting for most of the day. I've tried to spend my time as productively as I can – I've been writing the next Little Badman book, creating content for my YouTube channel and working on some new ideas.

*How did you get involved with the Puffin Podcast?*

The Puffin team showed me their plans to reach families and asked if I would like to get involved. I said I would only do it if I could get young people involved in the show, and they agreed! The podcast covers everything from biology and wildlife to space. We ask questions like, 'How do astronauts go to the loo?' and share ridiculous facts, unbelievable stories and lots of jokes. Listen in!

**FIND OUT MORE**

All episodes of The Puffin Podcast with Humza Arshad are available for free at [puffin.co.uk/podcast](http://puffin.co.uk/podcast) or wherever you get your podcasts. Find out more about Puffin's 80th birthday celebrations at [puffin.co.uk/dreambig](http://puffin.co.uk/dreambig)



**Head back in time**

The Prehistoric Society has recently launched a website designed to help teachers deliver prehistoric topics in the classroom. It features teaching resources and introductory material written collaboratively by members of the Prehistoric Society with consultation from teachers. There is a programme of 11 off-the-peg lessons covering the KS2 'Prehistoric Britain' history module. They have been designed to simulate archaeological discovery and to generate class discussion. Through progressive frames of a Powerpoint presentation, children can 'excavate' a site and are challenged to use the evidence and resources included to explain what they think their find is, how it was used and how old it is. Cross-curricular links have also been built in, providing opportunities for outdoor and forest school activities. Visit the website at [theprehistoricsociety.school.blog](http://theprehistoricsociety.school.blog)



**Free app for parents**

myHappyMind, provider of award-winning, NHS-backed, mental wellbeing programmes to schools, has released a free version of its online material that parents can use during the coronavirus lockdown. The programmes are normally delivered by staff in school, but have now been adapted so that schools can share them remotely with parents at home. The content is designed to help parents initiate fun, positive interactions and conversations with their children and to support positive mental health and self-esteem. Schools can register at [myhappymind.org/light-enquiry](http://myhappymind.org/light-enquiry)

600%

THE INCREASE IN NEW REGISTERED MEMBERS SOME COUNCIL-OWNED LIBRARIES HAVE EXPERIENCED SINCE CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN\*

**Look ahead | Book ahead**

**LUNCH CLUB**

The Big Lunch, an annual get-together for neighbours, has been running since 2009 and will also happen this year – albeit a little differently! [tinyurl.com/tplunch](http://tinyurl.com/tplunch)



**ART ATTACK**

Children's Art Week takes place in June. Encourage children and families to try some creative activities they've never done before. [tinyurl.com/tpartweek](http://tinyurl.com/tpartweek)



\* Local Government Association

# Great Ormond Street Hospital is a place where extraordinary things happen every day

Your school can help us save more lives, develop new treatments, build new wards and support our young patients and their families.

Start fundraising today!

Visit [gosh.org/schools](https://gosh.org/schools) for great ideas, fun activities and handy resources.



Get in touch:  
[schools@gosh.org](mailto:schools@gosh.org) or  
020 7239 3131

# Schools





# 6 STAND-UP tips to use in class

A good comic can command even the rowdiest of audiences, so utilise some of their tricks to keep your pupils on side, says **Dave Keeling**

## 1 | AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

A good teacher, like a good comic, should always be aware of what their audience is doing at all times. Are they engaged and, if not, can I be flexible enough in the moment to tailor my lesson to fit the needs of all those gathered before me? Can I get them back on track with a question they weren't expecting?

Can I bring them in with a well-crafted change in direction, tone, thought or activity? Your audience is the sole reason you are there so, whether they are captive or not, they need to feel wanted, valued and a necessary part of the ongoing action of a lesson.

## 2 | DON'T BE AFRAID TO FAIL

Every comic who has ever stood up has fallen flat on their arse at least once, if not multiple times, during their career. Look at each lesson as an opportunity to learn, develop and improve. You are, as they say, only as good as your last job. It doesn't matter how good the lesson was last week; it's your performance when you deliver the next lesson that counts. Just keep trying new stuff out. Nobody dies. You'll never know whether it works or not if you don't give it a whirl.

## 3 | GO OFF ON A TANGENT

Riffing is the ability to explore an idea, go where it goes, build off other people's input and see where that takes you. It's a way of working that gets all kinds of neurological connections firing and promotes the art of 'first thoughts'. The great thing about riffing is this: if it works, make a note and keep it in for next time, and if it doesn't work, get rid and pretend it never happened. Riffing helps to build up content, ideas and thoughts and helps to develop great working relationships.



**DAVE  
KEELING**

has been a professional actor and 'stand-up educationalist' for more than 20 years.

This is an extract from his new book, *Independent Thinking on Laughter* (Crown House Publishing).

## 4 | ACCEPT FEEDBACK

Many comics will record their sets so that when they get home they can replay it and see what worked. Teachers have a ready-made feedback system called 'students'. Never forget that pupils have had the pleasure/misfortune of sitting through hundreds of lessons and are adept at knowing what worked, what didn't and, crucially, why. While some feedback may be hard to take, it is imperative for our own personal growth that we learn to use it and move forward.

## 5 | TRY CALLBACKS

In comedy, a 'callback' is a joke or comment that refers back to a previous joke in the set that worked. For instance, when I'm performing I may ascertain early on who the naughtiest person in the room is. Whenever something vaguely naughty occurs, I can give a nod towards that person – something that will almost certainly get a laugh of recognition. The skill is to set up something in advance such as a phrase, activity or relationship that you can keep coming back to throughout the session. This will not only elicit a laugh but will also ensure pupils remember it.

## 6 | STRONG FINISH

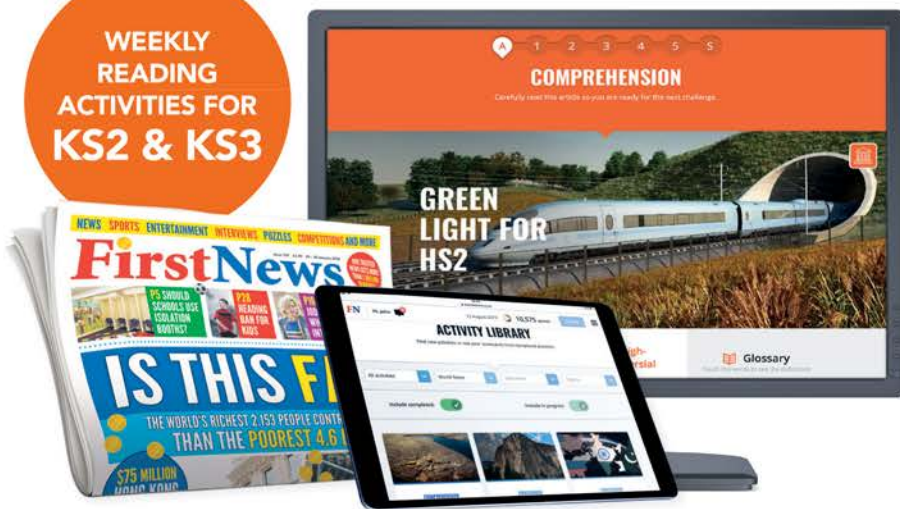
All good stand-ups constantly hone their sets until they have what we call a 'bulletproof act'. Comedian Frank Skinner once said that if you have a strong opening and a strong finish, the middle will take care of itself. What this means is that you can try out new material in the middle because you already know you've got them eating out of the palm of your hand, and even if this new bit doesn't work too well, at least you know you've got that big finish that'll knock 'em off their feet and leave 'em wanting more.

15% OFF  
YOUR FIRST YEAR  
UNTIL 17 JULY\*

# THE AWARD-WINNING NEWS AND LITERACY PLATFORM

FOR HOME AND SCHOOL LEARNING

WEEKLY  
READING  
ACTIVITIES FOR  
KS2 & KS3



**HOMEWORK OPTION**

to provide weekly, remote-learning plans



**DIFFERENTIATED ACTIVITIES**

automatically tailored to students' reading levels



**INTERACTIVE INTERFACE**

to engage students, driving interest and focus



**FLEXIBILITY**

to automatically assign or select activities



**TIME-SAVING**

automatic marking of multiple-choice questions




**MOTIVATES & REWARDS**

through earning points and badges for progress



**REPORTING DASHBOARD**

to monitor the progress of individuals and classes

 We immediately had an abundance of additional reading materials at our fingertips that would be updated on a weekly basis, offering our students engaging articles on local and global issues, comprehensions, vocabulary puzzles, polls and debates. Reading the news online, and in print, therefore became a weekly expectation for our students, both out of class and through the curriculum in school.

**Richard Long**, English Lead Practitioner, St Michael's Catholic School

Sign up for your **FREE iHUB TRIAL** at [schools.firstnews.co.uk/teachprimary](https://schools.firstnews.co.uk/teachprimary)

## ABOUT FIRST NEWS EDUCATION

The UK's only **newspaper** published for young people

**News-based reading activities** for KS2 and KS3



SUBSCRIBE FROM £54/YEAR

**PRINT**

Your chosen number of copies delivered every Friday



**DIGITAL**

School-wide access on tablets and phones



**iHUB**

Interactive, automatically tailored weekly articles and activities



**ACTIVITY SHEETS**

Printable activities, provided weekly in three reading levels

Offer Terms: 15% off is valid to the entire package when ordered by 5.00pm on 17 July 2020, using code TP15OFF. Orders can be placed online, via phone or email. The 15% discount applies to the first year of the subscription only. Subscriptions will auto-renew as per our standard terms, at full rate. Discount is available to new customers only.





# 7 NEWS STORIES

*you might have missed*

## REMOTE LEARNING EVIDENCE

The Education Endowment Foundation has undertaken a new review of the evidence on remote learning and has found that the quality of remote teaching is more important than how lessons are delivered. Whether delivered live or by pre-recorded video, what matters most is whether the explanation builds clearly on pupils' prior learning. The review also highlights the importance of access to technology and finds that getting pupils to interact with each other in online learning environments – for example, through peer marking – can boost the impact of remote learning. Read the full report and find evidence-based resources at [educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources)

## OFSTED PAUSE

Ofsted is unlikely to resume routine inspections this academic year, Amanda Spielman has told MPs. Inspections have been paused since mid-March. When asked about future inspections, Spielman said, "We're going to have a year where there are going to be no tests and exam results, so there is going to be more weight, not less weight, put on the outcomes of Ofsted visits. I think it's very important that parents aren't left completely in the dark." She clarified that schools will not be judged on their response to COVID-19, saying "We wouldn't be asking for evidence of what [work] you set children."

## DOMESTIC ABUSE

The government has announced it will spend £3.1 million on services supporting children who may have witnessed "appalling abuse" at home during the coronavirus lockdown. The funding will be given to councils, charities and police and crime commissioners in England and Wales, and will go towards services such as counselling sessions and early intervention schemes. The National Domestic Abuse helpline, run by Refuge, reported that calls were up 49% after three weeks of lockdown. The home affairs select committee said that without a comprehensive government strategy to cope with the consequences of violence, "we will be dealing with serious consequences for a generation."

## SUSPEND ACADEMISATION

The Local Government Association has called for the 500 academy conversions currently in the pipeline to be temporarily suspended during the coronavirus crisis. It says this will help overstretched councils to focus on supporting schools and nurseries to stay open and coordinating sufficient school places for vulnerable children and children of key workers. Judith Blake from LGA says, "Council staff are working flat out at reduced capacity, and taking council teams away from their primary duty of care to see through applications for academy conversions is clearly not in the interest of either councils or schools during this unprecedented time."



## SKILLS TOP-UP

Education secretary Gavin Williamson has launched a new online learning platform for workplace skills. The Skills Toolkit will give users access to free digital and numeracy courses to build skills and boost job prospects while in lockdown.

The 13 courses on offer have been developed by the University of Leeds, the Institute of Coding and the Open University and topics include everyday maths, how to create a professional online presence and an introduction to coding. Point parents and staff in the direction of the free resources at [theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk](https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk)

## A QUIET PLACE

A new poll by the Department for Opportunities, the campaign arm of the Social Mobility Foundation, has shown that 40% of children from low-income households don't have a quiet room in which they can study. This compares to just 19% of children in households with income of more than £70,000 a year. The same survey showed that 20% of better-off households are either already using private tutors or are likely to do so during the school shutdown, compared to just 7% of low-income households. View the full results of the survey at [tinyurl.com/tpquietplace](https://tinyurl.com/tpquietplace)





Timotay  
PLAYSCAPES

Consult Design Construct

# Delivering Your Inspirational Outdoor Space



FREE  
Consultation  
Book now!



## Transform Your Outdoor Play Space

Timotay Playscapes, your access to award winning inspirational outdoor play spaces. Using imaginative thinking and natural materials to create an inclusive and nurturing environment specific to your school.

01933 665151 for your free consultation

For outdoor play products

[www.timotayplayscapes.co.uk](http://www.timotayplayscapes.co.uk)

@TimotayPlayscapes @TIMOTAY\_PLAY enquiries@timotayplayscapes.co.uk



*Each issue we ask a contributor to pen a note they would love to send*

## A letter to...

### *My adopted son's new class teacher*

You may find him hard work, but with support, empathy and guidance he'll be able to thrive



We are so excited for our son to be in your class in September. He has come from a very tricky background with many different carers, teachers, homes and siblings – already in his short little life. He had no choice in any of these changes and they made him very scared and unsure.

We wanted to let you know a few things about him to help. He is very excitable and can't control his emotions. His brain is so dysregulated that he even spells his own name wrong. He also has other gaps in his Early Years learning due to having minimal support and stability at that time.

He is so charming and complimentary to adults that they sometimes find it extremely hard to believe that there are any difficulties. They may think they have a special relationship with him and might tell you that they can handle him for you. This is because he has encouraged them to join his 'team' to protect himself. These people will not hurt him now as they believe him to be a nice, kind boy with great charm and personality. He uses these skills as a shield to prevent people getting to know who he thinks is the 'real him'.

You, as his teacher, will quickly find him hard work. The moment you ask him to do something he doesn't like he will drop the charm and go into fight or flight mode. This is another skill he has developed to protect himself from danger. Work that is too tough will make him feel rubbish and sad, so he finds it easier to refuse to do it or just run

away from it. He has done this successfully over many school years with staff who just cannot understand him.

He blames himself for his past. This means he is so overwhelmed by shame that he believes everything he does is bad and there is no way he could possibly do something well. Because of this, we do not praise him directly. We gossip about him, talking loudly and showing each other the amazing things which he has done that day. He overhears this and feels pride in himself, without having to confront his negative feelings and beliefs.

***“The moment you ask him to do something he doesn't like he will drop the charm”***

My son needs tight boundaries. Don't be scared of him – underneath is a lovely character just wanting to be loved. On the surface, however, he is an angry, hurt, rejected child who learnt to survive in a big bad world that he was too young to have to deal with. He cannot unlive his past experiences, so we need to help him move past them and create better ones.

He needs to hear the word 'no'. When he was younger he never heard this, simply because adults were never there to stop him. He was always able to do whatever he chose, without guidance or prevention.

For this reason, his brain created the neurological pathway to allow this to continue, which you are now stopping. This causes an 'itch' in his brain – the pathway has to reroute and that is why it makes him angry or upset. But over time the pathway will reset, allowing him to relax and follow instructions without the irritation and annoyance.

This negative pathway, and all of the other free-range pathways which developed during his period of neglect, rears its ugly head regularly, generally when he is overwhelmed with emotion.

However, with love, support, empathy, guidance and strength he can overcome these tricky moments and make good choices for himself, trusting that he is safe to do so in our care.

Your classroom will be better off for having him as a member. He is incredibly creative and has such an engineering imagination. He can realistically and logically solve all kinds of problems. He can be relied upon for simple tasks and shows real kindness to others in need. He is enthusiastic and, if managed, can bring a fun, loving and humorous presence to the room. We know that if you can get the best from him, you will love him as much as we do.

*From Elena*

*Elena Holmes is the adoptive mum of two children and author of [AdoptyMum: A Survival Guide to Life with Adopted Kids](#)*



30 COUNTRIES 2,000 SCHOOLS 70,000 CHILDREN  
THE AWARD-WINNING PETER PAN MUSICAL FOR KS2

# Pantastic

A Soaring Musical Adventure by Matthew Crosse and Tom Kirkham

20-70 roles  
Fully adaptable,  
editable and  
abridged scripts

Book & CD  
£33.95



THE  
SCHOOL  
MUSICALS  
CO

[www.theschoolmusicalscompany.com](http://www.theschoolmusicalscompany.com)



Hand  
on Heart

Saving children's lives with defibrillators

Providing defibrillators and life saving training packages to schools and communities across the UK

Did you know **12 young people die each week** from sudden cardiac arrest?  
Make your school heart safe and increase survival rates from **6% to 74%**



If you're a school or community group interested in expanding your first aid kit with a life saving Defib, contact the Hand on Heart team for some great advice or free fundraising ideas on how to **ensure your site becomes heart safe** in the future.

0845 071 0822  
[enquiries@handonheart.org](mailto:enquiries@handonheart.org)  
[www.handonheart.org](http://www.handonheart.org)

 @handonheart  
 Handonheartcharity



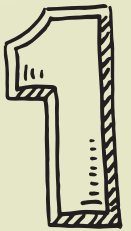
# How I do it

Create maps featuring key events from your class novel to ensure all pupils are on board

**BEN KING**

For many children it can be hard to visualise and really understand action that takes place over a short amount of time when reading. Add in numerous variables – character, setting, equipment or weather, for example – and it can become difficult to truly keep up with what is happening at various stages of a key event. To ensure that all children in class are able to follow and comprehend these key events, it is important to break each stage down and fully discuss what is happening. I did this with my class to great effect when studying a particular passage of *Brightstorm* by Vashti Hardy. The activity, explained below, was spread over several days.

## DAY 1



Read the chapter containing the passage you are going to study. Ask pupils to read, read some parts yourself, read some all together and ask children to read to each other in pairs. In the section we studied, the main characters and their friends were tricked into going to the aid of an apparently stranded man. It was a trap, however, and they were quickly attacked. As all hope appeared lost, they were rescued by yet more strangers. What would be easy to show in a film is tricky for some pupils to comprehend in print. Discuss what has happened and ensure children understand the key points.



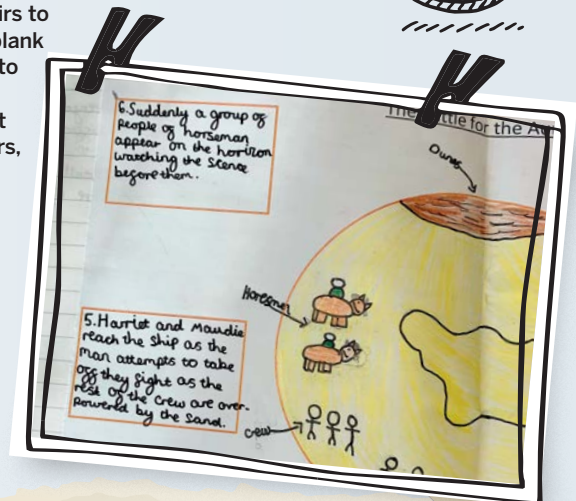
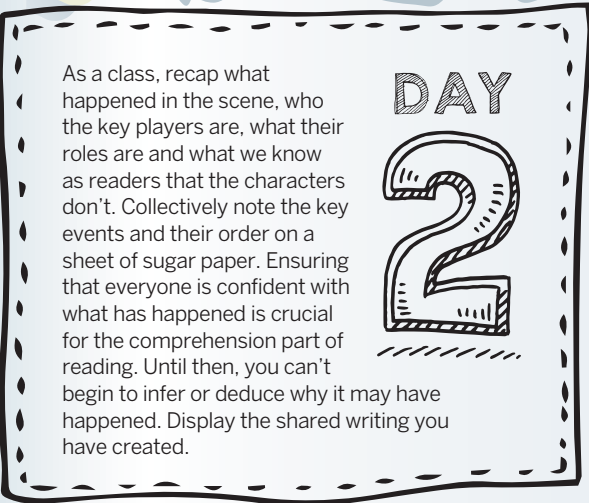
## DAY 2



As a class, recap what happened in the scene, who the key players are, what their roles are and what we know as readers that the characters don't. Collectively note the key events and their order on a sheet of sugar paper. Ensuring that everyone is confident with what has happened is crucial for the comprehension part of reading. Until then, you can't begin to infer or deduce why it may have happened. Display the shared writing you have created.



Recap events using yesterday's notes. Discuss where each event took place in relation to different characters, important landmarks and the story's wider geographical setting. Display yesterday's sugar paper notes and ask children to work in pairs to plot each event on a blank map, using a number to define each plotpoint. Use examples of event maps from newspapers, such as a map that shows the route of a royal procession or a rescue mission. This enables children to see how one event leads to the next and how characters in turn respond to the actions of others.



## DAY 3



Ask children to create a clear map that shows the characters involved, the terrain around them and their locations in relation to other events. Draw and label key areas and include 'zoomed in' boxes (larger-scale depictions of particular parts) to help others clearly see what is occurring. The children can add one or two sentences to explain characters' direction of travel or what is happening at a particular time. Number these to show the order of events.

## Conclusion

Children will need to demonstrate high levels of comprehension and decoding during this task. It takes mature thinking to be able to accurately recall and plot multiple characters, comprehend motivation and causality and then be able to show this using just the text as a guide. The children's maps will show you who really 'gets' what has happened in the text and who might need some extra input. As well as looking brilliant, event maps are a great way to ensure that children have understood crucial parts of your class novel.



Ben King is a Y5 teacher and reading lead.

@mrbking1988

kingintheclassroom.blogspot.com

## INSIDE THIS SECTION...



Five top tech tips to help with remote learning for KS1 children



Supercharge pupils' home learning by showing them these fantastic resources



Some headteachers are still finding ways to micromanage during the shutdown



Keep children abreast of current affairs by using our free weekly resources

# 25

## HOME LEARNING projects

Forget dull worksheets – immerse children in rich learning opportunities with these easy ideas

JONNY WALKER

In these unprecedented times, our students are spending more time than ever learning at home. Resist the temptation to bombard them with a dull parade of worksheets. Instead, try these meaningful home learning project ideas. Not all children have regular access to computers or smartphones which is why there's a range of suggestions here, some which involve internet technology, and some that don't.

## 1 Superheroes assemble

This project can be small or large. On a smaller scale, set up an art session and draw or paint a superhero alter-ego, or write and record part of a film script. On a larger scale, encourage children to live as their superhero alter-ego for a while. What does their costume look like? Do they have any gadgets? Can they create these using junk modelling and bits and bobs from home? Act out or film scenes of heroism. Marvellous! (See what we did there?)





## 2 Back & forth

The following game is a fun and quirky way to generate a story arc. You'll need at least two people, taking turns. The first person shares a sentence beginning with the word 'fortunately' – their role is to tell a happy, optimistic tale. The next person begins with 'unfortunately', and responds, trying to make the story sad. The playful back and forth is fun in itself, but can lead to inventive story ideas.



## Life stories

# 3

During this period of social distancing and self-isolation, many older people in our communities and families may be feeling particularly lonely. This project can help to keep children occupied in a meaningful way that benefits others. If you're a parent, think of relatives or neighbours who may like to take part. If you're a school, investigate linking up with a local nursing home. Children can prepare questions in advance and call their chosen older person to hear their stories. They can then write these up and send them to their interviewees, or phone them up and read it to them.

## 4 Family comic

Sometimes we overburden children by expecting them to invent a story, plot, characters and dialogue from scratch. By using their real life as fuel, children can focus on the humour and storytelling. Provide a comic book template for them, or they can make their own. They can then create a comic showing the peculiar life of their household. The Beano is a great source of inspiration. Its website contains lots of comic strip examples.



## Variety show

Link up pupils with each other on an online platform like Google Classroom. Give each child a different topic, ideally covering the breadth of the curriculum. For example, one pupil can research the excavation of the tomb of Tutankhamun, while another researches the significance of the Rosetta Stone for Egyptology. Ask pupils to create a three-minute 'show' about their topic, demonstrating and articulating their research in engaging ways. Focus on presentational skills as much as the content being researched.



## 5 Read, read, read

It would be remiss of us not to mention one of the simplest and most effective home learning activities: read books, and read them well. If children are lucky enough to have lots of books at home, they can start with any they've not read before. Many children's writers have authorised teachers to read their books in online videos. Pupils will love seeing a familiar face.

# 6

## Home theatre

Mousetrap Theatre Projects has launched a new 'stay-at-home' theatre initiative to bring the merriment and creativity of the stage into every living room in the country. Every week, it sets different creative challenges which explore different themes, genres and techniques. Week one involves working with your household to create a theatre-inspired video clip. Try a Shakespearean speech, a parody of your favourite show or the famous clicking battle from West Side Story. Visit [mousetrap.org.uk/every-home-a-theatre](http://mousetrap.org.uk/every-home-a-theatre)

# 7



# 8 *Kitchen maths*

Baking and cooking are good things to be doing in their own right, but if you want to introduce a mathematical element, formalise it a bit so that

the maths doesn't get lost in the process. If you have the recipe for how much of each ingredient is needed to make one cookie, how much of each ingredient will we need to make eight cookies? This can be an effective way to foreground children's understanding of ratio.



# Swap shop

An effective way for children to develop an understanding of money, and of equivalence, is to set up a household 'swap shop'. Children can find objects that they want to exchange and attribute a value to each item. If one child wants to swap a doll for a value of £3, what could he afford to swap it for from his sister's shop? If pupils have access to



9 technology, this is something that could be done with classmates. Ask each child to photograph their 'shop' with visible price labels. They can then 'trade' with classmates. This can all be make-believe – no contracts need exchanging! Platforms like Google Classroom are well equipped for this.

# 10 Puppet show

Shadow theatre originated

thousands of years ago in China and Indonesia. As a form of ancient storytelling, it is worthy of study in its own right, as well as being a rich way to develop children's skills in design and performance. Children can create their own stories, props and characters from scratch, or produce their own reimaginings of classic fairy and folk tales. This focus means less time is spent imagining characters, and more on pupils' own interpretation of their words and actions.



# 11



# Ball control

Many of my students can often be heard shouting 'Tekkers!' as they dribble past an embarrassed opponent, or nutmeg them. Encourage children to use their time to practise close control techniques. If they have a garden, great. If not, there are still lots of skills that can be developed indoors without smashing the TV. Toe taps are a good one to practise for football. Can children do 60 in a minute?

If children have access to a basketball hoop, or can make one, how many shots can they make out of 50 each day? Encourage them to record the results in a table. This allows them to see their progress and practise calculating averages.

# 12

## *Geography bee*

Try an online geography bee. I've created one on YouTube at [tinyurl.com/tpbee](https://www.youtube.com/tpbee). There are five rounds, each around 20 minutes long, and a free study pack. It will introduce children to locational knowledge, flags and mapping skills, then guide them to do independent research on elements of human and physical geography.

# 13

## Try tessellation

This mosaic tile project is a fusion of geometry and art. As well as making something aesthetically pleasing, children will be learning the relationship between area and regular/irregular shapes. Begin with a small (A6/A7) piece of rectangular card. Cut a wavy-lined strip off one vertical side and stick it the opposite side. Repeat with the horizontal sides. This shape is a perfect tessellator. Experiment with this idea. Can children make a tessellation tile in the shape of an animal, for example?



14

## Camera obscura

A prolonged time at home allows for children to get stuck into some more ambitious science projects. By making a camera obscura lens from an empty cereal box, children can learn about light, technology and the function of the human eye. It creates a stunning visual effect and the science behind it is equally fascinating. Find a simple guide at [tinyurl.com/tpobscura](http://tinyurl.com/tpobscura)

15

## Virtual visit

If you ask most children what they like about school, you can bet that school trips are high on their list. While we are all social distancing this is a bit of a pipedream, but hope is not lost, since many great museums have some very well-designed virtual tours that children can enjoy. The British Museum and the Natural History Museum both have great interactivity through the Google Arts and Culture app ([artsandculture.google.com](http://artsandculture.google.com)). Ask children to report back on the most interesting thing that they find.

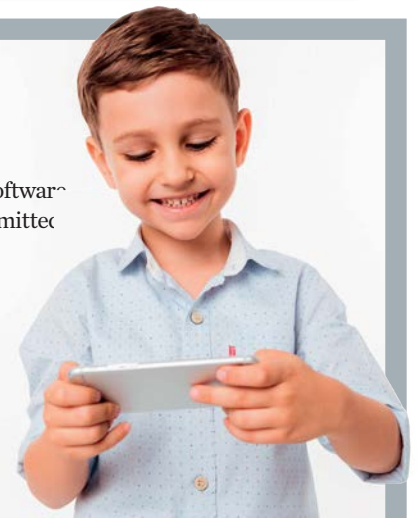
16

## Paper planes

There are an abundance of practical ways to let children explore and experiment with the notion of air resistance. Try making 'good' and 'bad' paper aeroplanes and consider why some work and others don't. Use this logic to create the most effective paper aeroplane you can. Measure the distance it flies.

## 17 Scratch an itch

Scratch is a programming software and community that is committed to supporting children to learn coding. It's pitched at eight to 16-year-olds, with Scratch Jr accommodating five to seven-year-olds. The whole project is developed by academics at MIT. The app and website are very user-friendly; children can create animations, stories and even games, and there is a lot of help for parents and pupils alike. Visit [scratch.mit.edu](http://scratch.mit.edu)



18

## Harness the outdoors

Make the most of the time you're allowed to spend outdoors. Encourage children to breathe deep and notice the small details of their daily walk. This can inspire poetry back at home. Watch a video of Adisa the poet exploring this idea at [tinyurl.com/tpadisa](http://tinyurl.com/tpadisa)



## 19 Write a letter

For all the majesty of technological advancement, there are few things that excite a kid as much as receiving mail that is addressed to them. Organise a letter swap among the children in your class to help them feel connected. Act as an intermediary by asking families to send their letters to school, to be passed on to different children in the class, or try linking up with another school.





20

## Get artistic

Many schools work in creative partnership with local artists who have great expertise and ideas. Ask them if they can support your children to develop their technical skills and creative expression during the lockdown. Look for practical tutorials on YouTube. ArtJohn is a great example ([youtube.com/artjohn](https://www.youtube.com/artjohn)), with sculpture, 3D drawing and colour mixing tutorials for teachers, parents and children.



23

## Make a family anthology

For children and their families, this shutdown will be a strange and memorable experience. Encourage them to collate their writing, art, poetry and other creations into a big book, which can serve as a memento of this peculiar time. Knowing that this anthology exists will be a motivator in itself, as children tend to think more carefully about what they are doing if they have a clearer purpose.

## 21 Crack a code

It can sometimes feel like our children are speaking in code, but this takes it to the next level. Codes can enable children to develop a foundational understanding of computational language, which depends on similar devices and techniques. The Postal Museum has a great resource pack for teachers which can be adapted for home learning. Get it at [tinyurl.com/tpcodes](https://tinyurl.com/tpcodes)



## Game over

There are some great board games out there for kids. Many classics, like Scrabble and Trivial Pursuit, have junior versions. There are also free Scrabble apps available. Alternatively, why not set children the challenge of creating their own? The theme can draw on their own interests, and children will need to make the board and playing equipment, as well as coming up with a clear set of rules and instructions.

22



24

## Try a reading app

The Reading Journey is a brilliant app developed by Just Imagine. It allows children to log the books they've read and also makes smart recommendations and sets challenges for pupils to record their own response. It is all about celebrating and promoting a love of reading. Given that children will have more time, it can be a great way for teachers to see what pupils are immersing themselves in. Schools, rather than parents, need to sign up, but it's free. Visit [thereadingjourney.co.uk](https://thereadingjourney.co.uk)



## 25 Make time to talk

More than any of the above, the most important thing for us to do in these times is to make time to talk. As adults, we are likely juggling several worries and anxieties, and our children are likely to feel very similar. The news is scary for us, and even more so for children. Make time to talk and to truly listen. Let children share what is on their mind, whether they are blissfully happy and distracted, or sad and missing school. For now, families are the most valuable learning resource schools have access to.



*Jonny Walker is the director of OtherWise Education and runs innovative projects across groups of schools, such as poetry retreats and creative writing networks. During the school closures, OtherWise is curating a collection of free resources for schools, families and children.*

@jonnywalker\_edu

[otherwiseeducation.com](https://otherwiseeducation.com)



# THE WOW FACTOR

Keep allocating new eBooks to pupils at home with three months' free access to the Reading Planet online library



Teachers and pupils can now access the Reading Planet online library completely free of charge for three months. Featuring hundreds of colourful fiction and non-fiction eBooks, audio synchronisation and interactive quizzes, the online library boosts the teaching of reading from age 4-11, wherever they're reading. Allocating eBooks to pupils at home will also allow you to see how they're doing, with comprehension-boosting quizzes at the end of each book.



#### Contact:

Sign up for three months' free access at [risingstars-uk.com/onlineibrary](https://risingstars-uk.com/onlineibrary)

#### BOOKS FOR ALL READERS

The online library provides access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, across different genres. Whether you need a modern adventure story or a historical biography, a classic retelling or a fact-filled information guide, there's an eBook for all interests and reading abilities.

#### BRING STORIES TO LIFE

Each eBook includes audio synchronisation (KS1 only), helping to bring stories to life for young readers. Literacy coordinator Hayley Footitt says, "The children feel more confident when they hear and see the audio-synced text being highlighted and read out loud."

#### GET CHILDREN INVOLVED

Interactive quizzes are available for each eBook, providing a fun way of assessing comprehension and vocabulary skills, even outside of the classroom. As one parent noted, "It makes it easy to encourage him to read with me."

#### EXPLORE IN DEPTH

The teacher toolkit provides easy-to-use tools such as pens and text boxes, to support study of each eBook. English lead Dani Rackley says, "Being able to circle, draw on and annotate the text is useful."

# 4 REASONS TO TRY... The Literacy Tree's Literary Curriculum

Our Learning Logs and Home Learning Branches resources will help with book-based English while pupils are at home

## 1 HIGH ENGAGEMENT

Our Learning Logs and Home Learning Branches connect to the curriculum and engage pupils using the context of a book. The narrative helps to make the learning interesting – providing an audience and purpose for writing and a reason to read.



## 2 NEW TEACHER

The Learning Logs are a series of book-based videos led by our consultants. They guide children through the book, directing them to tasks and asking questions. It's great for pupils to listen to a different voice – even if it's just for 20 minutes a day.

## 3 LOVE OF BOOKS

We often base our resources on lesser-known books by significant authors. These titles help children discover new writers and

genres which might inspire their future reading choices.

## 4 EASY ACCESS

We know that access to books can be an issue. Many of the titles we've chosen for our Home Learning Branches are available as films or free audio versions. This is a great way to introduce children to a classic and show them how to engage with a text in a different way.



### Contact:

Find the resources at [literarycurriculum.co.uk](http://literarycurriculum.co.uk)

## At a glance

- Access 28 Home Learning Branches with an individual or school subscription and download as many times as you want.
- Download a planning sequence to gain access to our Learning Logs.
- Individual sequences, £5; monthly subscription, £3.99 for a token each month plus receive an additional token in the first month to spend on any book-based resource.

# 4 REASONS TO TRY... Nexus P2P range

Early Years teachers will love using our P2P products to boost pupils' literacy and numeracy skills

## 1 GOOD FOUNDATIONS

The P2P range is a family of products comprising 'Pegs to Paper' for literacy and 'P2P Count Up' for numeracy. The focus of the activities are centred around copying patterns onto pegboards. From letter formation to early number sense, the products help to enhance all basic cognitive processes for mastering skills of literacy and numeracy, while forming strong connections in the brain which stimulate learning.

## 2 DEVELOPED WITH EXPERTS

Dr Angela Webb, child psychologist, board member of the National Handwriting Association and former

primary head, has been an instrumental player in developing the P2P range. Christina Wood, a lead school improvement advisor for mathematics, has also had a key role in developing the support material for the numeracy section 'P2P Count Up'.

## 3 GREAT FOR BOYS

Helen Sowden, headteacher at Ann Edwards Primary, says: "One of the biggest differences we noted was the increased engagement by all pupils, but particularly boys. Their physical development, as well as their desire to go to writing activities, has really increased."



## 4 BRITISH LIBRARY

Our giant pegboard was on display in an exhibition at the British Library last summer called 'Writing: Making Your Mark'. It was included as an example of one of the modern ways in which handwriting is taught today.

Learn. Play.  
**NeXus**

### Contact:

For free trials and free home packs for key workers visit: [learnplaynexus.com/pegs-to-paper-products](http://learnplaynexus.com/pegs-to-paper-products)

Get in touch by email: [connect@learnplaynexus.com](mailto:connect@learnplaynexus.com)

## At a glance

- Uses a combination of physical and cognitive approaches to learning.
- Improves all aspects of Early Years & SEN handwriting.
- The most open-ended maths manipulative available.



# Learning CURVE

Tech tips to help with remote learning for KS1 children

JACK DABELL

**I**n the current climate, many teachers are having to grapple with new technology. Even for the most tech-savvy it can feel like a steep learning curve when so much else is changing. If you feel like you're climbing alone (with your hands tied behind your back and your leg in a bear trap) these five tech hacks might help to flatten the curve.

## 1 Keep the noise down

If you are using video conferencing software to recreate an online classroom, you may have noticed how loud it can get. In a normal classroom the noise of 30 seven-year-olds can naturally dissipate, but it's a different story when all 30 voices are excitedly talking right in your ear. Luckily, Zoom has you covered. By clicking on the 'Manage participants' button on the bottom task bar you can bring up a list of everyone in the meeting and mute specific users, or mute all at the same time. If you schedule a meeting through the website, you can also choose to mute participants on entry.

## 2 Share your screen

Another very handy feature on Zoom is the ability to screen-share. This transforms your computer into a whiteboard. Enable this by clicking the green 'Share screen' button at the bottom. You will then be prompted to choose what you want to share. It will show you a preview of everything you have open on your computer. The screen you select is now visible to your online class. As with a

whiteboard, you can annotate it, meaning you can draw, highlight, write text and place stamps anywhere on the screen. The children will be able to see these.

## 3 Create a schedule

Children respond well to structure and for many teachers, creating a timetabled day is very important. This is particularly important for Y1 and 2 pupils who are still developing their understanding of a more formalised daily schedule. Knowing something will come out at a set time on set days can be really beneficial for them. If you are using Google Classroom you can schedule posts. This is a great help if you want to establish set activities at different times of the day. It's also a lifesaver for anyone who wants to get ahead with planning. To schedule something, click the drop-down arrow next to the 'Post' button, then click 'Schedule' to select dates and times. You can post documents, assignments, announcements, videos, questions, quizzes... the list goes on!

## 4 Flag it

Encouraging interaction and socialising with younger children and their parents is a valuable part of the virtual school day. However, things can easily get lost in group chats. This is why I like the 'flagging' function in Microsoft Teams. If there's an important message or document you don't want to lose track of, hover over it and click the flag icon. You can then find all your flagged messages by clicking your profile in the top right and selecting 'Saved'.

## 5 Record your lessons

Another challenge for KS1 teachers is how best to revisit and go back to key concepts. Always having things ticking over so they aren't forgotten is really important, especially for KS1 children. In a classroom, this can be done quickly with a five-minute starter or a question while children line up for lunch. With remote learning this is trickier. Skype's ability to record video meetings is one option worth trying. You can either record whole sessions or use the pause and record buttons to capture

important snippets you want to revisit. To do this, click the three dots on your taskbar, then 'Start recording'. Once you click 'Stop recording' the video will be available for 30 days in the chat box and can be downloaded, saved and shared by clicking the "three dots" above the video. **TP**



*Jack Dabell is education advisor at Tapestry, the online learning journal, and a former primary*

*teacher. He also writes for the Foundation Stage Forum.*

 [tapestry.info](https://www.tapestry.info)



# 50 **FREE** apps & websites

Supercharge pupils' home learning by pointing them in the direction of these fantastic resources

JO CASTRO

## 1 Chess master

[chesskids.org.uk](http://chesskids.org.uk)

This is a great website that children can use independently to learn the game of chess. There are interactive lessons, videos, games and quizzes. Start by learning the names of the pieces and how to move them, then move on to tactics, strategy and playing actual games.



## SPACE RACE 2

[nasa.gov](http://nasa.gov)

Housebound kids can launch into space with NASA's website. It's loaded with science games, activities and stunning images of the solar system and is suitable for all ages. Have fun programming the Mars Rover or learn how to change currents using heat and salt to propel a submarine explorer.



## 3

### Solve a puzzle

[sciencemuseum.org.uk](http://sciencemuseum.org.uk)

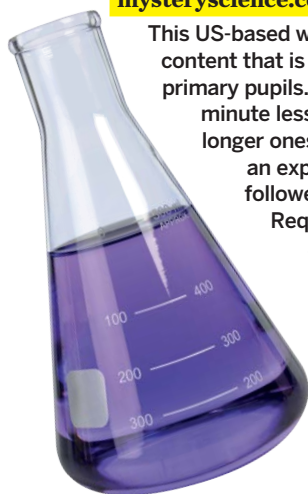
Access the Science Museum's free apps. They are family-friendly and can be shared with six family members. Try Transmission – a puzzle game with 70 levels and seven unlockable worlds. It features a very simple interface but a demanding level of challenge.

## 4 Keen scientists

[mysteryscience.com](http://mysteryscience.com)

This US-based website features content that is suitable for UK primary pupils. It contains five-minute lessons as well as longer ones, each featuring an exploration video followed by an activity.

Required resources are listed and for extra keen scientists there are extension activities too.



## 5

### Meet Moby

[brainpop.com](http://brainpop.com)

This cross-curricular website is free for the duration of school closures. It features material for Reception upwards and has particularly strong science and maths resources. Moby the robot and his friends explain a subject, then there is a quiz to complete. Adventurous pupils can make movies about their learning too.

## 7

### RICH DISCUSSIONS

[explorify.wellcome.ac.uk](http://explorify.wellcome.ac.uk)

Explore a range of different science topics including light, electricity, animals, plants, space and rocks. Most topics come with a video or picture exercise. For really keen home educators, the teacher videos will support you to initiate rich discussions with children about their learning.

## 6 Beautiful tutorials

[thekidsshouldseethis.com](http://thekidsshouldseethis.com)

Watch beautifully curated videos and tutorials for learners of all ages. Listen to an astronaut reading a children's book or learn how to create an egg-decorating machine using lego and cardboard. Videos are categorised into subjects to help you find what you are looking for.





8

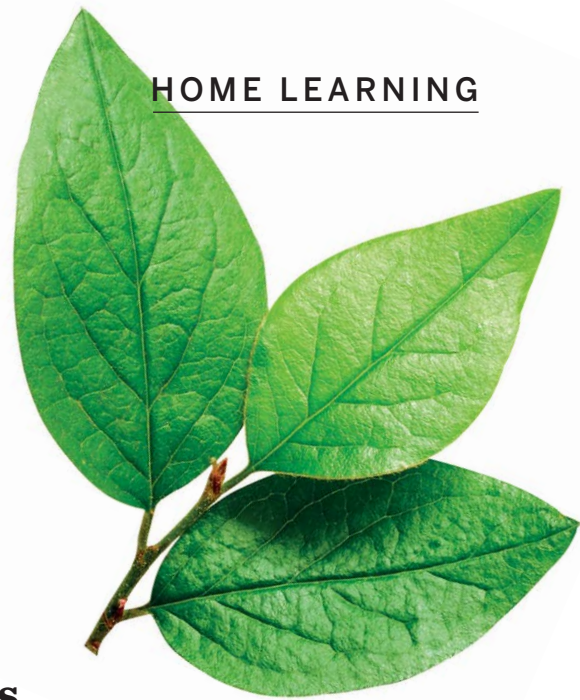
**Learn a language**[duolingo.com](https://www.duolingo.com)

This app makes learning a language fun. It breaks down the process into skills and motivates learners by making each lesson feel like a game. Earn points when you complete a lesson and lose a life if you make a mistake. It develops listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

**TREE TOOLS**[treetoolsforschools.org.uk](https://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk)

The Woodland Trust has put together all of its schools resources to create this online learning hub. There are family activities that you can do in your back garden or on your balcony, plus printable worksheets and quizzes. Parents may need to revise their wildlife knowledge to support some of the activities.

9

**10 Bitesize bits**[bbc.co.uk/bitesize](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

This well-resourced website has lessons from across the curriculum for Early Years upwards. It is clearly organised into subject areas so is easy to navigate. The BBC is now offering daily maths and English lessons for all ages.

11

**INDEPENDENT MATHS**[nrich.maths.org](https://www.nrich.maths.org)

Develop children's mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills. The 'Maths at home' section of this website features activities and games that don't require teacher input. Some of the problems require resources but many are accessible with just pen and paper.



12

**3D modelling**[tinkercad.com](https://www.tinkercad.com)

This online 3D modelling program runs in a web browser and is easy to use. Pupils' 3D model designs can be saved to the cloud, ready for 3D printing. Children will need a laptop or desktop computer to use this app.

**HAPPY MATHS**[mathsframe.co.uk](https://www.mathsframe.co.uk)

Play 22 free maths games here, with each one featuring different levels of difficulty. Click on a child's year group to highlight the level they should be at. The games are simple and are mainly focused on practising the four operations.

15

13

**Times tables**[mathschase.com](https://www.mathschase.com)

Help children from Reception to Y4 to learn their times tables. This repetitive game is designed to help pupils increase the speed of their recall of times tables facts. Its simplicity means they can play independently.



14

**World explorer**[world-geography-games.com](https://www.world-geography-games.com)

Looking for a fun and interactive way for children to test their geographical knowledge? Choose to focus on a particular continent or the world as a whole and test your knowledge of flags, capital cities, countries, mountains, rivers and more.

**ENGAGING GEOGRAPHY**[natgeokids.com](https://www.natgeokids.com)

This website is filled with wonderful resources and lesson ideas and also features fun facts, quizzes and interviews. Children can learn about cultures, places, historical events and people.

The layout and pictures make it accessible and engaging.

16



# 17 Code monkey

[scratch.mit.edu](http://scratch.mit.edu)

*Scratch is a fun website to learn computer programming. It is suitable for children aged eight and up but there is a junior version for younger pupils. Both the website and app are very intuitive and kids will quickly see results and understand how to layer commands.*



# 20

## TALK TALK

[ed.ted.com](http://ed.ted.com)

Watch a huge range of talks and animations from a diverse group of speakers, covering a variety of subjects. There are thousands of video-based lessons organised by age and subject. You can even create your own lessons by adding questions to your favourite talk.

# 23 Creative writing

[clpe.org.uk](http://clpe.org.uk)

CLPE has launched a set of home learning resources called 'Take 5' which 'Power of Reading' schools can send home to parents. Each set of notes contains five simple activities which will develop children's comprehension skills and strategies and develop their imagination and creativity for writing.

# 25 Early readers

[teachyourmonstertoread.com](http://teachyourmonstertoread.com)

*This award-winning app is for early readers. Children can practise matching letters and sounds, blending, segmenting, tricky words and reading full sentences. It complements synthetic phonics systems taught in schools and the computer version is completely free.*

# 18

## Have a party

[houseparty.com](http://houseparty.com)

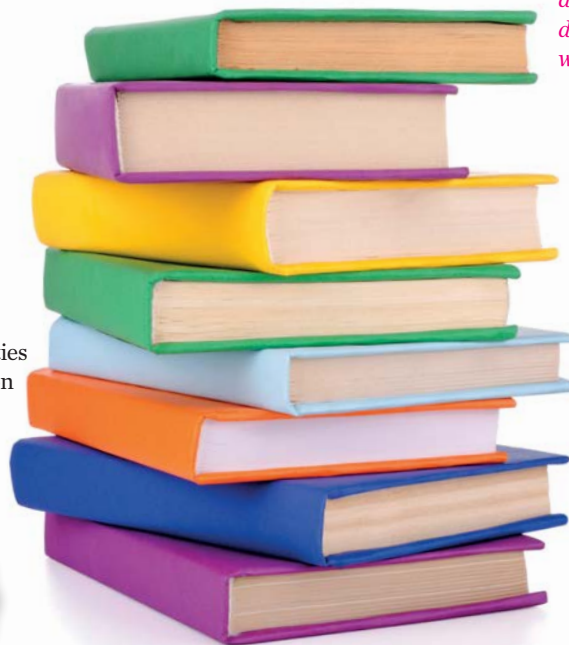
OK – so it's not exactly 'educational', but it's super important to enable children to communicate and socialise and this app is just the ticket. The kids can have a game of hangman while sharing their thoughts and feelings. Don't forget to 'lock' the party once all friends are gathered.

# 21

## Super STEM

[stem.org.uk](http://stem.org.uk)

This site contains beautiful high-quality visual resources and is packed with interesting activities and games designed to support the new curriculum. They are conveniently organised by topic and year groups. There are comprehensive explanations of the aims of the learning and lovely printable workbooks.



## Book lovers

[puffinschools.co.uk](http://puffinschools.co.uk)

These lovely lesson sequences, based on a variety of books, could easily be adapted for home learning. There are also creative writing resources, topical book lists and activity sheets. Check out the exciting Big Dreams on Screen competition too.

# 26

# 19

## BROWSE RESOURCES

[primaryresources.co.uk](http://primaryresources.co.uk)

Browse a range of printable resources for all primary year groups. The site is organised into different curriculum subjects and the Powerpoints and worksheets indicate which year group the learning is suitable for. In the topic and themes section you can find more in-depth projects.



# 22 Poetry please

[poetrysociety.org.uk](http://poetrysociety.org.uk)

*Inspire future poets with comprehensive lesson plans featuring a diverse range of poets. The Poetry Society has responded to school closures by creating a huge bundle of learning resources. There are also video collections of poets delivering top tips and suggesting writing exercises.*

# 24

## READING RESOURCES

[literacytrust.org.uk](http://literacytrust.org.uk)

The 'Family zone' on this fantastic site gives parents access to a range of reading resources. You'll find free reading and writing resources, audiobooks, videos, competitions and reading challenges.

# 27 Get creative

[artjohn.co.uk](http://artjohn.co.uk)

*Art John creates inspiring, creative and achievable YouTube art tutorials. He explains what resources you will need and the skills that are being developed. The results are beautiful and will instantly brighten any bedroom or kitchen.*





## 28 Free ebooks

[home.oxfordowl.co.uk](http://home.oxfordowl.co.uk)

Browse a good selection of free tablet-friendly ebooks for children. Oxford Owl is currently collaborating with authors to create story-telling videos, challenges and draw-alongs. The site also features a selection of ideas for practical home learning, as well as maths and English activities sorted by year group.



## 29

### GO EXPLORING

[dkfindout.com](http://dkfindout.com)

This is a safe, secure site for children to search, learn and explore. Its content is visual and informed and covers all of the curriculum subjects and more. The site houses videos, animations, quizzes and articles for parents that explain the curriculum and how they can support their child's learning.

## 30 London's burning

[fireoflondon.org.uk](http://fireoflondon.org.uk)

If you usually cover the Great Fire of London, this niche site is fun and interactive. There is an absorbing game to play and children can also set about rebuilding London after the fire by downloading 1666 maps via Minecraft.

## Island hopping

[discoveringgalapagos.org.uk](http://discoveringgalapagos.org.uk)

Y6 children will enjoy learning about how the Galapagos islands were formed and how species arrive and thrive there. They can find out about Darwin and evolution through the well-constructed diagrams, animations and videos. The online magazine in the teacher zone is also fantastic.



## 31

### Chill out

[chillpanda.co.uk](http://chillpanda.co.uk)

Chillpanda is a free mental health and wellbeing app being trialled by the NHS. It has been developed by clinical psychologists to help under-eights learn to recognise and manage feelings of anxiety. Children can track their heart rate, learn breathing techniques and play calming games.

## 32



## 33 VIRTUAL VISIT

[nhm.ac.uk](http://nhm.ac.uk)

Enjoy different virtual tours of London's Natural History Museum and listen to the soothing voice of David Attenborough as he describes the Hintze Hall. Watch the fascinating 'Discover' videos, delve into the collections and get busy in the 'Try at home' area.

## Open-ended activities

[otherwiseeducation.com](http://otherwiseeducation.com)

Teacher Jonny Walker and poet Adisa have created some inspiring writing activities for schools to send out for home learning. They are open-ended, perfect for families to work through together and will inspire creativity while supporting learners to develop their creative writing skills.

## 34

## 37 WORK OUT

[app.sworkit.com](http://app.sworkit.com)

Developed to fight childhood obesity, this free app features a selection of workouts for different ages. The sequences are varied and can be customised to suit individual children. Refreshingly, while the activities are explained by an adult, the videos feature children doing the exercises.



## 35 Online classes

[teach.outschool.com](http://teach.outschool.com)

This US website provides online classes for children who are being home-schooled. If you've been tasked with creating online sessions, visit for tips about how to make your lessons engaging and accessible.

## 38

### Family PSHE

[families.jigsawpshe.com/stuck-at-home](http://families.jigsawpshe.com/stuck-at-home)

Jigsaw Families is currently offering free access to two of the stories from its family PSHE programme. There are activities and discussion prompts to go with each and you can also listen to two of its 'Calm me' recordings.

## Premium coding 36

[tynker.com](http://tynker.com)

This website provides self-paced sequencing and coding tutorials for children aged five and up. The premium coding courses are free during the school closures.

## 39

### Calm nature

[wildlifetrusts.org](http://wildlifetrusts.org)

In order to boost the nation's mental health and wellbeing during this strange time, the Wildlife Trust is streaming live footage of a range of wildlife. These live webcasts are a perfect way of feeling closer to nature and may inspire pupils to increase their knowledge of birds, badgers and bats.



# 40

## Direct a film

[toontastic.withgoogle.com](http://toontastic.withgoogle.com)

This app will excite budding directors, authors, artists and musicians. Turn your drawings into 3D cartoon animations, record your voice to narrate or add dialogue, learn how to mix a soundtrack to create a mood and experiment creating different genres.



# 42

## MY LIBRARY

[rivet.area120.com](http://rivet.area120.com)

Developed to support early readers, this app has 3,500 free digital books for kids. Work out your child's level then choose from a selection of titles. You can create a personal library and there are games interspersed to keep young readers motivated.



# 45

## Writing stimulus

[pobble365.com](http://pobble365.com)

Get a new creative writing stimulus every day. Children will receive a story starter, sentence challenge and questions to prompt discussion. There is also a daily webinar to support home learning.



# 48

## Classical music

[bbc.co.uk/teach/ten-pieces](http://bbc.co.uk/teach/ten-pieces)

Ten Pieces is a wonderful way to get children excited about and creative with classical music. For home learning, visit the 'Get creative with classical music at home' section. There are also resources for hearing impaired children.



## Easy learning

# 41

[keeplearning.khanacademy.org](http://keeplearning.khanacademy.org)

Created by an American non-profit organisation, this site features daily schedules for all age groups to help parents plan a day of learning. The timetables contain suggested lessons covering a range of subjects that can be accessed easily by clicking on the link.

# 43

## Do the mash

[2simple.com](http://2simple.com)

Parents can access Purple Mash for free during the school closures. It gives you access to thousands of cross-curricular resources and schemes of work. It is cloud-based and can be accessed on any device.

# 46

## FUTURE ENGINEERS

[jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk](http://jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk)

This charitable foundation was set up to inspire future engineers. The 'Challenge cards' are great for home learning. Children will be able to get their hands on most of the things they'll need at home, the instructions are clearly written and the results are exciting.



# 47

## ROLEPLAY IDEAS

[bigeyedowl.co.uk](http://bigeyedowl.co.uk)

Aimed at KS1 pupils, this site features a comprehensive range of activities. The roleplay ideas are brilliant and if pupils don't have the exact resources listed, they can adapt the set-up according to what they have in the house.

# 49

## EAL resources

[learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org](http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org)

This is a great resource for children who are learning English. There are games, songs, stories and activities. The site also offers lots of advice for parents supporting their children to learn English. These include videos, articles and simple activities.



# 50

## Teacher made

[plazoom.com](http://plazoom.com)

Browse Plazoom's teacher-made printable resource packs for home learning. There are times tables challenge packs, Mad Hatter's Tea Party themed activities and learning games to play at home, all differentiated for different age groups.



Jo Castro has worked in education as a teacher and assistant head for 20 years. She currently coaches teachers and senior leaders and leads creative writing and self development workshops for pupils.

[@jocastro\\_coach](https://twitter.com/jocastro_coach)



## Q&amp;A

# “We aim to provide practical advice”

Nick Acton from JTRS discusses how to create the best distance learning experience for pupils



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

JTRS is an Apple Authorised Education Specialist and LEGO® Education partner and can help you plan technology projects, install devices, provide technical support, collect and recycle devices and deploy professional learning for your staff.

### What is the distance learning resource centre?

An online resource centre which aims to provide practical advice and highlight the best distance learning solutions available. You'll find information on live lesson solutions, online quizzing and assessment apps, subject-specific applications and online learning platforms. It can be found on the JTRS website.

### What is an online learning platform?

An online learning platform enables teachers and pupils to experience a digital workflow. In other words, in one cyclical process, tasks can be set, children can respond and the teacher can mark the work and provide feedback before moving on to the next task. The best online learning apps have built-in functions that enable pupils to tackle the learning task all within the platform itself.

### Are live online lessons effective?

Providing pupils with the opportunity to see their peers as well as their teacher is going to help them when they integrate back into school. Most importantly, however, some of the nuances of modelling learning objectives and demonstrating tasks can only really be achieved visually. Through clever features and restrictions, some video call solutions make it easier for teachers to host live lessons.



### How can our school keep track of the learning?

Assessing learning progress is one of the biggest challenges of distance learning. We explore a number of solutions that can help in this regard. Online quizzing tools and assessment apps can test children and provide meaningful data for teachers. The best quizzing apps allow teachers to create and share engaging activities easily.



**ABOUT NICK:**  
Apple curriculum specialist, part-time computing and music teacher

jtrs | econocom

**Book your free consultation:**  
0330 223 0500  
education@jtrs.co.uk

### How can technology help in more practical subjects?

We highlight some of the best subject-specific applications available and show how they can be used to provide active learning experiences. Mobile technology can enable pupils to take their learning outside. Multimedia capabilities can help learners to capture the practical elements of their learning.



Authorised  
Education Specialist

## Need to know

- + All the best solutions found in one place
- + Free advice and tips for getting the most out of distance learning technology
- + Easy-to-navigate resource centre so you can find a solution that works for you



# Kites for Schools

**PACK OF 4  
KITE KITS**

**£9.95 INC VAT & P&P**



[kitesforschools.co.uk](http://kitesforschools.co.uk)





## Some headteachers are still finding ways to micromanage staff – and parents – during the school shutdown

🐦 @fakeheadteacher 📧 headteacher-newsletter.com

**W**ith very short notice and very little guidance, schools were told in March that they were closing but staying open for key worker children. Countless phone calls were made and hundreds of messages were sent out to parents to find out how many children would be attending school. It was a tremendous effort.

On top of this, schools were dealing with staff self-isolation, anxious parents, free school meal provision and ensuring safeguarding concerns for particular children were being addressed. Book scrutinies and learning walks were immediately cancelled. Good leaders sensibly balanced the need for education provision alongside pupil, family and staff wellbeing.

However, I was also inundated with teachers concerned with what was being asked of them. My inbox had never been so busy. It was very clear that some heads didn't want teachers to be at home doing nothing, so they set out some very clear guidance as to how they should spend their time.

Firstly, some schools told all staff to come in even though they knew only a small number of children would be present. Surplus staff were asked to tidy cupboards, update display boards or complete curriculum mapping. Soon, some schools devised a timetable for when staff should come in (to cover Easter holidays too). Part-time staff were told that they had to come in on days they wouldn't normally teach.

In addition, teachers were given CPD tasks to do at home and had to complete evaluation sheets when they'd finished them. Chapters from educational books were sent out to read. Some heads were asking for September planning to be completed by Easter. In one school, teachers had to email a daily summary of the work they'd done at home by 3pm and state how long it took.

On top of this, teachers were being asked to plan for both children who were not coming to school and those who were. Online platforms were quickly set up so children could upload

work for teachers to look at. A friend of mine was told she had to make comments on anything a child had uploaded within 24 hours. A very upset teacher told me that the head had informed staff he wanted to moderate some of the online work being uploaded by Y3 pupils.

Some teachers were suddenly expected to provide online lessons using platforms they were unfamiliar with. One teacher told me she was put under enormous pressure to provide video calls with pupils to ensure 'progress doesn't slip'. Another complained that his head unexpectedly appeared in a live online video lesson he was teaching

with students. He didn't say anything – just listened for a few minutes and then left. Later, it transpired that the head was carrying out quality control observations to ensure children were still receiving a good education. Madness.

As a parent myself, I appreciate my children's school. They uploaded some ideas for pupils but said it was voluntary. If we wanted to, we could share work on the school's online platform.

Parents are working at home too and trying to homeschool is not easy. One teacher anonymously sent me a copy of a letter sent to parents, encouraging them to follow a 9am-3pm routine at home. The letter encouraged parents to teach all

the subjects as normal to ensure 'consistency'. The teacher was furious. The letter went on to say that work would be sent back to pupils if it wasn't good enough.

As a teacher, I have thoroughly enjoyed teaching my own children over the last few weeks. We do a bit of maths and English and a foundation subject. Some days we don't do anything. I haven't had to follow a long list of non-negotiables and nobody is dropping into my lessons with a clipboard to scrutinise every second of my teaching.

It would be great if some leaders could use this time to reflect on their micromanagement ways and think more about reducing workload, excessive scrutiny and accountability measures, ready for when schools open again. It's going to take a long time for schools to recover from this, but some good might come out of it.

Fingers crossed. **TP**

*“Some heads  
were asking  
for September  
planning to be  
completed by  
Easter”*



# TOPICAL TUESDAYS

Keep children abreast of current affairs by using our free weekly resources

**W**e've teamed up with excellent current affairs magazine for children, The Week Junior, and a team of experienced teachers to produce creative, topical resources that you can use in your classroom or send to pupils working at home.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED?



Each free download contains a timely news article from this week's copy of The Week Junior, followed by classroom activity ideas. Kick off proceedings by reading the article and hosting a guided debate, then move on to the tasks. Each takes around ten minutes, making them perfect for writing warm-ups or homework. There's also ideas for extending each story into a bigger project if it captures the imagination of your class.



### Should politicians have to try different jobs?

- Write a thank you letter to NHS staff dealing with coronavirus.
- Pen a recount of the last time you were seen by a doctor.



### Should we have nature lessons at school?

- Create an account of a time you've spent out in the wild.
- Write a funny or emotional pretend letter from mother nature.



### Has the world got better since 1908?

- Write a pretend letter to the world's oldest man as a schoolboy.
- Dream up a recipe for dealing with life's problems in a positive way.



### Is Tom & Jerry too violent for kids?

- Pen a set of instructions for a trick that Tom could play on Jerry.
- Imagine you're Tom or Jerry and write a reconciliation letter.



**FIND ALL THESE RESOURCES AND MORE AT [plazoom.com/collections/topical-tuesdays](https://plazoom.com/collections/topical-tuesdays)**



# 5 REASONS TO TRY... MyMaths

Claire Mullen from the MyMaths team discusses how it can support teaching and learning at school and home



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

MyMaths is an online subscription for teaching and learning maths. It's an invaluable tool for working both remotely and in the classroom. Subscribe to gain access to hundreds of mathematically rich activities with automated marking and results tracking.

### 1 SELF-MARKING HOMEWORK

MyMaths contains hundreds of online homework activities, which are aligned to UK curriculum objectives. These are ideal for consolidating learning. All homework activities are self-marking and results are automatically recorded; saving you time as a teacher. You can assign activities to pupils as a class, or you can assign different tasks to individuals. This is done in the Assessment Manager area of the platform. Pupils can attempt activities as many times as they like – questions are regenerated each time to avoid duplication.

### 2 TRACK PUPIL PROGRESS

Whether you're in school or at home, you can track your pupils' progress in real time using the Assessment Manager. The traffic light colour-coding of your class's results table helps you see at a glance how each pupil is performing in individual tasks, so you can quickly identify areas for targeted intervention. You can also use the Assessment Manager to download results as reports, leave feedback for your pupils, and generate letters to parents and carers.

### 3 READY-MADE LESSONS

Each homework activity has a matching interactive lesson. These are clearly arranged by curriculum area. You can use these rich resources as front-of-class tools on an interactive whiteboard. Your



pupils (and caregivers) can also access lessons at home to refresh their knowledge or explore new topics, where appropriate. They use simple language and clear animations to explain mathematical concepts in an accessible way. These ready-made lessons are also great for TAs to use with smaller groups of pupils at their own pace.

### 4 SUPPORTIVE 'BOOSTERS'

MyMaths contains 'Booster Packs' to support targeted learning of key areas. These resources offer almost limitless practice to build pupils' confidence and fluency. You may find the year group boosters particularly helpful for supporting your pupils when they return to school following the current closures. You can assign booster packs to individuals or groups to work through at their own pace. In the words of Old Town Primary teacher Sally Smith, "It's almost like having another teacher in the classroom."

### 5 HOME-SCHOOL LINK

Particularly relevant to current times, MyMaths strengthens the home-school link. Our support site includes pages aimed at caregivers, and the pupil view of the platform contains a video walkthrough of using MyMaths at home. The Pupil Portal also links to Oxford OWL, where caregivers can access free printable MyMaths worksheets for the summer term, and additional help for supporting maths learning at home. Parents and carers can also refer to MyMaths lessons to bring them up-to-date with current maths teaching methods.

#### Contact:

01536 452970  
mail@mymaths.co.uk

To support schools in these unprecedented times, we have extended our usual 30-day free trial period. Gain free access for every child and teacher in your school until September 2020 by signing up at [mymaths.co.uk/subscribe.html](https://mymaths.co.uk/subscribe.html)

## KEY POINTS

You can use MyMaths flexibly alongside your existing resources and programmes. To support this, we have matched our content to popular schemes and curricula.

MyMaths has recently undergone a huge update to refresh our content, improve the platform and make all our homework activities and lessons tablet-compatible.

We're here to help you set up MyMaths with a dedicated support site, how-to webinars, and personal help from Oxford University Press's educational consultants.

Your whole school can access MyMaths for free until September 2020, when it returns to its usual fantastic value of £339+VAT per annum.



british-sign.co.uk

Let your hands do the talking

LEARN BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE ONLINE

Our online course is a comprehensive introduction to learning BSL. You can now learn wherever and whenever you like.

SIGN UP ONLINE or email hello@british-sign.co.uk

Fun, Easy & Flexible

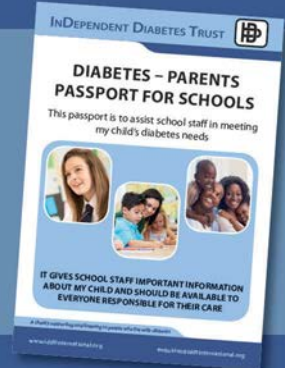
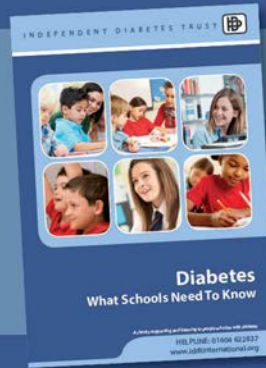
£14 PER PERSON GROUP RATE

£25 PER PERSON

CPD CERTIFIED The CPD Certification Service



INDEPENDENT DIABETES TRUST



## DO YOU HAVE A CHILD IN YOUR CLASS WITH DIABETES?

DIABETES - WHAT SCHOOLS NEED TO KNOW  
DIABETES - PARENTS PASSPORT FOR SCHOOLS

ASK FOR YOUR FREE COPIES TODAY

EMAIL: martin@iddtinternational.org  
or TELEPHONE: 01604 622837

InDependent Diabetes Trust  
P O Box 294, Northampton NN1 4XS

www.iddtinternational.org  
Charity Number: 1058284  
Registered Number: 3148360

## PRIMARY SCIENCE TEACHING TRUST

Free resources and ideas to support teachers and families with the planning and delivery of primary science.



### SCIENCE FUN AT HOME

Developed to share with parents, these activities are clear, manageable and fun for children and their families to complete.



### SCIENCE & STEM CLUBS

Off the shelf resources for running extra-curricular clubs for children, accredited by the Children's University.



### CHAIN REACTION

An engaging primary school STEM project developed for upper primary, but easily adapted to suit any age group.



### BIG JURASSIC CLASSROOM

Activities to enrich the teaching of rocks and bring the wonder of the Jurassic Coast into any primary classroom.



### CITY SCIENCE STARS

Ideas to engage primary school children in practical science, with links to football and space.

Follow us on:

Facebook: primaryscienceteachingtrust

Twitter: PSTT\_whyhow

[www.pstt.org.uk/resources](http://www.pstt.org.uk/resources)





# Design & make

Engineering can seem like a daunting topic, but it's simply about spotting problems and creating solutions

LAURA CROSS

Teaching design and technology – the place where engineering sits in the primary curriculum – always filled me with terror. On my teacher training, I remember being told to complete a slipper-making project with my Y6 class. I had no idea how to make a pair of slippers, let alone how to teach a class about them.

Yet now, even with my lack of slipper-making knowledge, I visit schools to teach workshops around STEM and, specifically, engineering. I haven't suddenly retrained as an engineer, or a cobbler, so how did I get comfortable with teaching children about these concepts?

In 2015, I moved to California to work at an edtech company. While I was there I got to work closely with engineers and my own interest in the field grew. I started to understand what engineering is really about, and it ain't just slippers.

So, what is engineering and why does it matter? It's the application of science and technology to solve real-world problems. With the growth of new technology, the job market is changing. Engineering

represents 19% of total UK employment, and it's growing fast. The problem-solving skills that are so vital in engineering will be crucial to today's children in a world where low-skilled jobs are either automated or outsourced overseas.

It's a sad fact that despite all of its benefits, engineering is commonly overlooked in primary school, or just covered for a couple of days during science week. My own opinion is that it's not prioritised because engineering seems like a scary thing to teach. What do us teachers know about engineering? The thing is, it's not a fancy discipline requiring resources you don't have the budget for. It doesn't have to involve sitting in the ICT suite writing lines of code either. It's just designing and making stuff. At a primary level, it's as simple as encouraging children to recognise problems and formulate solutions, and then getting them to have a go at building stuff.

An important part of starting to bring engineering to your classroom is to lower your own expectations. What your pupils design and make isn't going to necessarily fill your display area, impress SLT or be 'oohed'

at by parents. When children learn about engineering it's the process rather than the outcome that's important. They don't need aesthetically-pleasing final outcomes, but instead a process full of problem-solving, creativity and collaboration.

And it's exactly this pupil-led process that makes engineering so easy to bring into the classroom. Yes, you need to help pupils reflect on their successes and failures, but there's no direct teaching needed: children need to create, problem-solve and learn for themselves. Kids teaching themselves? Sounds a bit more interesting now, right? **TP**



*Laura Cross is a former primary teacher and worked as head of curriculum*

*at a Californian edtech company. She set up Inventors & Makers in 2019 and runs workshops and classes focusing on STEM, design and 21st century skills.*

 @inventorsm

 inventorsandmakers.com

## 5 EASY ENGINEERING CHALLENGES

Organise a simple engineering challenge every week. It only needs to take 20 minutes, but that weekly slot will really help to develop pupils' creativity, problem-solving and collaboration skills.



### Straw towers

In teams of two or three, build the tallest tower you can from 40-50 straws and some tearable tape.



### Cup towers

In teams of two or three build the tallest tower you can from 60 paper cups and craft sticks.



### Improve an invention

Choose an existing invention (pencil, car, postal system, etc) and improve on it, drawing and labelling your design.



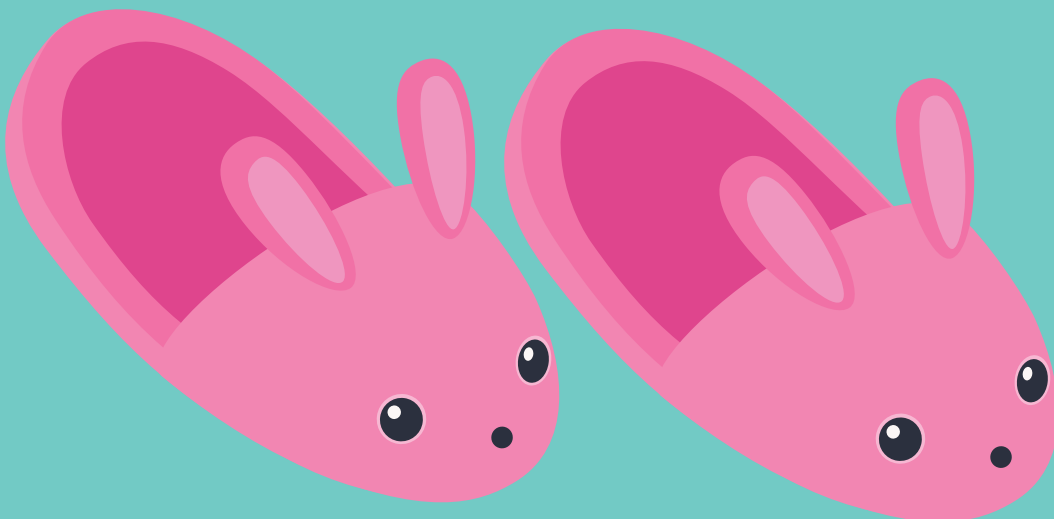
### Design an invention

Think of a problem (generated individually, in groups or as a class) and design a brand new invention to solve it.



### Build a boat

Use cling film, duct tape, paper cups and straws to design, build and test a floating boat that can support 25 pennies.



# Epilepsy awareness

Find more at  
TEACHWIRE.NET



## Differentiation For Home Schooling

It's not something that has to stop once your students' learning is taken outside the classroom...

Read it at [tinyurl.com/tpdifferentiation](http://tinyurl.com/tpdifferentiation)



## Language Disorders

How to speedily uncover and address developmental language disorders in primary school.

Read it at [tinyurl.com/tpdisorder](http://tinyurl.com/tpdisorder)



## Reasonable Adjustment

What schools sometimes overlook when it comes to drawing up accessibility plans.

Read it at [tinyurl.com/tptalents](http://tinyurl.com/tptalents)

## REQUEST YOUR FREE COPY



**Our sister title SENCo provides useful ideas, practical guidance and thoughtful insights into SEND provision.**

**Request your free copy at [teachwire.net/free-senco](http://teachwire.net/free-senco)**

If a pupil were to have a seizure in your classroom, would you know what to do?

LOUISE COUSINS

**E**pilepsy affects almost 1 in every 100 people in the UK. On average, that means there'll be one child with epilepsy in every primary school and five in every secondary school.

People with epilepsy have a tendency to have seizures caused by sudden bursts of intense electrical activity in the brain. There are around 60 different types of epileptic seizure, and it's possible for people to experience more than one type. What actually happens to someone during a seizure depends on which part of their brain is affected and how far the aforementioned electrical activity spreads.

Epilepsy can start at any age and any time of life. It can be a complex and difficult condition to plan for, given the sheer number of different seizure types, yet it's important for teachers to at least have an awareness of what epilepsy is and the different ways in which it might present.

## Seizure types

During certain types of seizure a person can remain completely alert and aware of what's going on around them, while other types may cause someone to lose consciousness. Tonic clonic seizures are the type that people most often call to mind when they think of epilepsy, which is where a child might go stiff, fall to the floor and jerk.

Another type quite common among children – and frequently missed – is absence seizures. These cause a person to lose consciousness, but only for a couple of seconds; from the outside, they may seem to suddenly appear a blank

expression, or appear to not be paying attention. Some children affected by absence seizures have been known to have them over a hundred times a day.

## Practical steps

Draw up individual healthcare plans (IHPs) for any pupils with epilepsy, and ensure that these contain details about the nature of the pupil's epilepsy and their needs. Make it clear exactly what specific support a child might need, when they're likely to need it and who will be responsible for making sure that support is provided.

For example, a child might have a seizure that results in them needing time to recover afterwards. They might be tired and in need of rest, so the plan in this case could be to provide them with a safe space in which they can rest and recover. Other children might need to go home, which should be similarly planned for. Class teachers will obviously need to be informed ahead of time about any children whose epilepsy might require them to take emergency medication.

It's possible for some children to receive a diagnosis of epilepsy seemingly out of the blue, and subsequently feel self-conscious. A child affected by tonic clonic seizures could conceivably lose control of their bodily functions at a moment's notice, thereby prompting concerns and feelings of embarrassment that they may need help in managing.

Do what you can to inform other students of what they can do to help any peers with epilepsy, and the importance of informing staff, should the need arise. Consider the social and emotional



aspects that may be involved. Is the child at a higher risk of being bullied by peers? Are they likely to be absent from school more often?

## Full inclusion

Schools should also be sensitive to the impact epilepsy can have on a child's learning. Seizure symptoms and the side effects of medication needed to control them can leave children feeling fatigued. They might develop memory problems or additional behaviour challenges. It may be that reasonable adjustments need to be put in place, such as alternative arrangements for homework deadlines or adjustments to the pupil's timetable. Older pupils might require extra time during formal tests.

Above all, ensure that pupils with epilepsy are properly integrated into

every aspect of school life. We've often heard of pupils being told they can't partake in PE or join school trips – in fact, those activities are perfectly appropriate for children with epilepsy, so long as due care is taken in terms of the response plan in the event of a seizure.

## Plan ahead

It's our belief that all schools should have a medical conditions policy – ideally one containing a section on epilepsy – that's made available to parents and staff. We appreciate that teaching staff are increasingly overworked, but it's far better to develop your epilepsy response plans ahead of time, than to do so reactively if a child happens to develop epilepsy while attending your setting. There should already be a policy in place if that happens.

We'd also recommend that schools regularly review any policies of this type, and that they maintain frequent communications with parents/carers of children with epilepsy. It's a fluctuating condition that can and will change over time.

Our preference would be to see formal policies like this implemented and reviewed annually, accompanied by staff refresher training. This is a best practice scenario – one that we know isn't realistic for some settings now, but certainly what we should be aiming towards. **TP**

## What to do if a child has a seizure

### 1 CREATE SPACE

Move the child out of danger if it looks like they're about to fall off their chair or hit their head. Create space around them and cushion their head so that they don't injure themselves.

### 2 TIME IT

If possible, time the seizure. The longer it lasts, the harder it will be for the child to recover, and the more likely it is that they'll require emergency medical assistance. Consider keeping a stopwatch in the classroom for timing seizure durations.

### 3 BE PRESENT

It's then largely a case of waiting. Once the seizure is over, place the pupil in the recovery position and avoid restraining them. Don't put anything in their mouth or give them any food or drink. Stay with them. If a seizure lasts for more than five minutes, call an ambulance. Seizures with a lengthy duration are dangerous – if there's a possibility that these may occur, it should be clearly recorded in the pupil's IHP.



*Louise Cousins is campaigns manager at the national charity Epilepsy Action.*

 @epilepsyaction

 epilepsy.org.uk

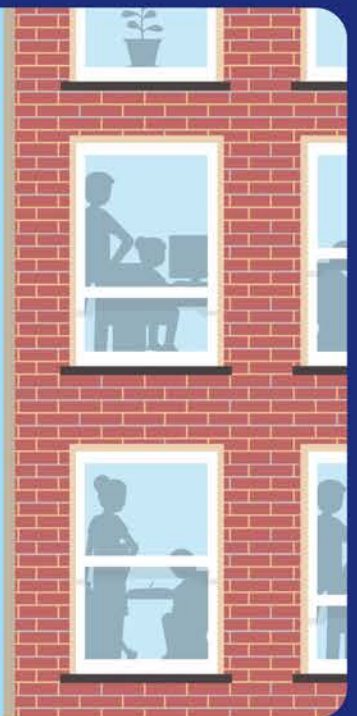
# Supporting schools, parents and pupils with Rising Stars

Allocate ebooks, activities and quizzes to pupils at home and measure progress, with 3 months free access to selected resources.

- Put together lessons that children can do at home with or without their parents.
- Measure progress with self-marking quizzes and online reporting tools.
- Allocate ebooks and etextbooks to pupils at home via email.

## 3 Simple Steps to Sharing with Pupils at Home

1. Request a free trial for *Reading Planet Online*, *Cracking Comprehension*, *Achieve SATs Success* or *Rising Stars Mathematics Online* and sign in using *My Rising Stars*.
2. Select the resources you want to allocate and the pupils you want to allocate them to.
3. Send the unique URL home to the parents and pupils.



» Find out more and sign up for 3 months



# What's available free of charge for 3 months?



Choose from over 500 *Reading Planet eBooks* to allocate to pupils from KS1 and KS2. Use to practise and improve comprehension skills and vocabulary acquisition with interactive, self-marking quizzes for each eBook.



Allocate quizzes, texts and modelling software activities to your class so they can consolidate knowledge and continue to boost comprehension skills from home.



Keep Year 5 and 6 pupils up-to-speed with English and Maths using self-marking quizzes and easy, 4-step animations to teach new skills with a fun and focussed approach.



Allocate colourful and fun eTextbooks to pupils so that they can maintain an enthusiasm for Mathematics and learn new skills as they go.

free at [risingstars-uk.com/3-months](https://www.risingstars-uk.com/3-months)

# Moving ON UP

How do you prepare Y6 pupils for secondary during the lockdown? Here's how I've solved the problem...

EMILY WESTON

I'm a Y6 teacher and the hardest thing about this lockdown has definitely been losing my leavers early. The last year in primary is always that little bit different: hoodies, yearbooks, parties, performances, SATs. It's a fast, fun-filled time that is both exhausting and extremely rewarding.

When schools closed the first thing that dawned on me was that none of this was going to happen. Even if the children do come back before the end of this academic year, it won't be the same. We've missed that pivotal moment when they sit their tests; the build-up to any performance would be very different; transitions will be rushed at best, or, at worst, not able to go ahead. Transition to secondary has always been something I am passionate about. I want to enable Y6 children to not only be academically prepared, but also ready emotionally and socially for such a big step in their educational journey.

Terms five and six are my favourite of the school year. This is when I normally run 'secondary week', 'Y7 ready' lessons and a careers week to help enable my class to feel prepared and excited for what's ahead. Last year, the children loved the transition activities we provided. They told us that it helped them organise themselves, learn more about how secondary works and understand the importance of homework and equipment. I even received letters from ex-pupils (see panel, right) telling me how glad they were to have received

this preparation and how it helped them to settle in.

## Virtual careers week

Recently I began thinking how I can help my Y6 pupils get ready for secondary despite the circumstances we currently find ourselves in. One evening I was struck by the idea of a virtual careers week. I asked some friends if they'd be happy to contribute and the idea began to take shape. Friends and family members were so generous with their time and knowledge and wrote Powerpoint slides packed with information about what their specific job involves. I created a matching activity for each career which children could complete, linking to the curriculum in various ways.

It has been really exciting to see the project come together. It's turned into a really useful resource that can be used by children at home but also utilised in the classroom once we get back to normal.

## Collaborative project

The success of my virtual careers week got me thinking again. Could I do something similar to aid transition? I wanted to develop something that would help children learning from home to understand the process. It was important that they got an insight into a range of subjects: the teaching they might see; examples of activities they might be expected to complete. The most important thing I wanted to provide was work from real secondary teachers – this needed to be a collaborative project.

Dear Miss Weston,

You were right when you said secondary was harder than primary. There's so much homework. It's not hard or anything but there's a lot. I miss primary so much – it was hard to leave it behind. On the night before I started secondary I was so nervous, but then I remembered I had nothing to worry about. Thank you for letting me know what secondary is like. If you hadn't told me I would have ended up crying on my first day.

Dear Miss Weston,

I am now a few weeks into secondary and it's not as scary as I thought. I've settled in alright so far. When I left primary I was very nervous because it was going to be different. On the first morning I was very scared but found it was OK as the day went on. I enjoy PE and Spanish but am still getting used to everything. My form is great and has a few familiar faces. I just wanted to say thank you for helping me move from primary to secondary. You built up my confidence a lot. I wouldn't have settled in so well if it wasn't for you.

This year I've become even more aware of the importance of what happens both before and after transition. In January I spent two mornings at our local secondary, observing Y7 English and maths lessons. It's something I would recommend to all Y6 teachers. It was really helpful to see teachers' expectations and witness the

kind of lessons my pupils would experience once they'd moved up. The staff were really helpful and showed me some fabulous new lesson ideas.

Now that my pupils will potentially not be back before transition happens, I realised we needed to be more collaborative than ever to ensure that the children feel





# 5

## tips for transition during lockdown

- Reach out to your colleagues in both primary and secondary. What can you learn from each other? How can you work effectively together?
- While it may not be possible to deliver pastoral support in person at the moment, letters and emails make a great alternative.
- Download my bank of transition resources via my Dropbox account at [tinyurl.com/tpemily](https://tinyurl.com/tpemily)
- Find online resources that will help children to revise Y6 content or access some Y7 curriculum so that they can begin to process what their learning might look like next year. I like Learning By Questions ([lbq.org](https://lbq.org)) and Seneca ([senecalearning.com](https://senecalearning.com)).
- Use the support networks you have. It's more important than ever to ask for, and accept, help from our colleagues.

*“The hardest thing about this lockdown has definitely been losing my leavers early”*

as confident as possible about moving to a new school that they've possibly never even set foot in before. I reached out on Twitter to ask for willing secondary teachers from a range of subjects to be involved. Lots of people were willing to take part and each teacher created a short presentation introducing their subject, a topic from it and a short activity children could complete at home.

The slides and activities were all designed to be suitable for children to complete at home (download them for your pupils at [tinyurl.com/tpemily](https://tinyurl.com/tpemily)). I've also suggested to my class that they use the Learning By Questions app – this features curriculum-aligned questions (including some Y7 content) and provides instant feedback.

Over 30 secondary teachers got involved and the

resources they created are a comprehensive look at the Y7 curriculum, including details of subjects pupils might not have seen before.

The careers week and secondary transition resources I've created are by no means a complete solution. However, they are hopefully a very useful starting point that children will learn from and enjoy completing. **TP**



*Emily Weston is a Y6 teacher and reading lead in Swindon. She has*

*been teaching for six years and is interested in transition and English.*

 @primaryteachew



# BACK TO SCHOOL AND BEYOND



## During lockdown, what have pupils learned or forgotten?

### Also, how will you:

- Manage variations in attendance and social distancing?
- Manage and avoid excessive marking and workloads?
- Teach different abilities and groups?
- Cope without a full staff?

### LbQ offers solutions to these questions while reducing workload.

We provide 80,000 high-quality questions that are aligned to national curriculum objectives. Pupils receive instant feedback to accelerate their progress. Teachers can view real-time lesson analysis and automatic marking will reduce workload.

### What teachers are saying about LbQ...

"Just received my weekly @LbQorg report via email - last week our children answered 80,000 questions - ALL FROM HOME!"

Masefield Primary School  
@MasefieldCP

"LbQ has been a fantastic resource during our 12 weeks of e-learning but you can't beat it back in the classroom."

#COVID 19  
#backtoschool  
Miss P

"We use @LbQorg and I couldn't imagine teaching without it. No planning or marking. Children totally engaged and challenged and most importantly the results are unbelievable!"

Miss E

How can we cope with the phased return and manage pupils both in class and at home?

Find out more and book a  
**FREE** online demo  
[lbq.org/backtoschool](https://lbq.org/backtoschool)



T: 01254 688060  
E: [info@lbq.org](mailto:info@lbq.org)  
@LbQorg





# I've got a question...

How to foster a culture of openness and honesty during RSE lessons while still protecting pupils' innocence

ANDREW HAMMOND

Childhood seems to be getting shorter. From inappropriate language and innuendo on TV programmes to overly-sexualised song lyrics, the early 'adultification' of children is a trend that none of us wants to see, and certainly no teacher wants to accelerate.

Which is why some of the subject matter of the new RSE curriculum – mandatory in all schools from September – might cause concern for some. We want childhoods to be innocent, unsullied and free of worry for as long as possible. As a parent of four and a former teacher of 20 years, I recognise this dilemma and I too hope that 'grown up' issues will be introduced to them at an age and stage when they won't be unsettled by them.

But if we push past some

of the alarming headlines, we see that the truth about this new RSE curriculum is quite different. The shorthand way in which we refer to this new subject as RSE (relationships and sex education) implies that all children, whatever their age, will be taught the latter, but the reality is that there are two programmes in the new government's statutory regulations and the 'SE' component is only compulsory for secondary pupils.

## Keeping calm

Of course, as part of the established KS2 science curriculum, most primaries already teach the life cycle of reproduction in animals, including humans. How our bodies grow and change, and the different challenges this brings, is an important part of a KS2 curriculum. Similarly, children in Early Years and KS1 are taught the correct names for their body parts, and this is done without stigma or embarrassment.

One thing we can be sure of is that the new RSE curriculum will be taught sensitively by teachers who know their children. As the DfE's

guidance says, 'Children of the same age may be developmentally at different stages, leading to differing types of questions or behaviours. Teaching methods should take account of these differences.' Teachers know this.

What we parents and carers cannot be so sure of is what the classmate sitting next to our child may say during those lessons. How does a teacher foster a culture of openness and honesty, wherein children can ask the questions that are on their minds, at the same time as protecting the innocence of all pupils?

Deftly, is the answer. Over 20 years of teaching and leading in schools, I observed hundreds of lessons. One thing I always noticed was how skilfully teachers dealt with questions that were often asked in all innocence but which could have led to wholly inappropriate discussions. This is the bread and butter of classroom life. Well before this new curriculum was conceived, children were saying things in class that revealed a naivety and vulnerability. Good teaching is about how we deal with those comments – saying, "That's an interesting question, James, let's have a quick chat about that afterwards." Provided there is another person in the room – a TA for example – then it's wholly appropriate to allow James to share what's on his mind after the lesson. In fact, we have a moral duty and safeguarding obligation to do so. But nipping questions in the bud within a whole class environment is often wise.

## Playground gossip

Inappropriate ideas are shared in the playground all the time, whether we like it or not. You can set the curriculum, but you can't prescribe the playground discourse. Creating a forum in which children's concerns can be aired in class is vitally important. The new RSE curriculum creates opportunities for teachers to promote values of kindness, tolerance and respect within a framework of knowledge and understanding about positive relationships and living healthily. One might say that, at last, there is a script with which we can deal with the content that was already being peddled around playgrounds. Provided those values of mutual respect and personal privacy are established first, then an RSE lesson will be beneficial to all. Guidance around how this subject is taught will be key. Like in so many other aspects of life, open, honest and non-judgemental communication is the answer. **TP**



*Andrew Hammond is senior director of learning and community at Discovery Education.*

*Visit the website for more information about its health and relationships programme.*



@andrewjhammond



discoveryeducation.co.uk







LIMITED AVAILABILITY!

Inspire your kids to code using nothing more than pen and paper...

# FREE\* DETECTIVE DOT MEGAPACK BUNDLE

when you subscribe to

teach  
PRIMARY

AS SEEN  
IN THE  
INDEPENDENT



**Each bundle includes...**

- Stickers
- A personalised letter
- A verified CIA membership card
- Six fun missions to complete

# 3 EASY WAYS to subscribe...

- 1 [teachprimary.com/E143](http://teachprimary.com/E143)
- 2 0800 904 7000  
Quote: E143
- 3 Send us your order form

\*Terms and conditions apply, see online for full details Freephone lines are open Monday-Friday 8am-6pm, Saturday 9am-5pm | [aceville@dctmedia.co.uk](mailto:aceville@dctmedia.co.uk)



**4** ISSUES FOR ONLY  
**£18.99**

# That guy OFF THE TELLY

**Baasit Siddiqui** is using a decade of classroom experience and the hook of Gogglebox to raise disadvantaged pupils' aspirations

**A**t the risk of sounding like Troy McClure from the Simpsons, you may know me from Channel 4's Gogglebox. I have been truly blessed to share the screen – well, the sofa – with my dad Sid and brother Umar for over seven years now. It's been a genuine privilege to be a part of the show and to act as a voice of the nation on both historically defining moments such as Brexit and new prime ministers, to slightly more trivial matters like the reformation of the Pussycat Dolls on X Factor.

What you may not know about me is that I've been involved in education for over a decade now. Prior to Gogglebox, I was a secondary business, ICT and computer science teacher and head of department.

I made the decision two years ago to set up my own education business. It gave me the chance to combine my passion for education and my link to the world of television in a fun and exciting way. Leaving the safety net of a full-time teaching job and leaping into the unknown has been thrilling and terrifying in equal measures.

Since starting my business I've delivered talks to children, university students, teachers, business owners, sales teams and everyone in between and have also been able to stretch my literary muscles by writing for a variety of publications. I've also

developed both physical and digital school workshops, all while getting to grips with the inner workings of running a business – corporation tax, national insurance, accounts, setting up a website, getting business cards, networking (oh lord, the networking!) and selling both myself and my products.



binary to hexadecimal last period on a Friday isn't salesmanship, I don't know what is. The main focus of my workshops is raising the aspirations and confidence of disadvantaged students, while at the same time helping to educate them about potential careers and developing their

*“I am so grateful to have been a part of a profession that has not only shaped the lives of the children I have taught, but influenced who I am today”*

## **Raising aspirations**

Despite all of these new experiences over the last two years, I've never felt completely out of my depth. I firmly believe that working in education for as long as I did developed my resilience, patience, adaptability, communication and yes, even my sales skills, without me even knowing it. Let's be honest, if keeping a group of students not only engaged but excited about the importance of converting

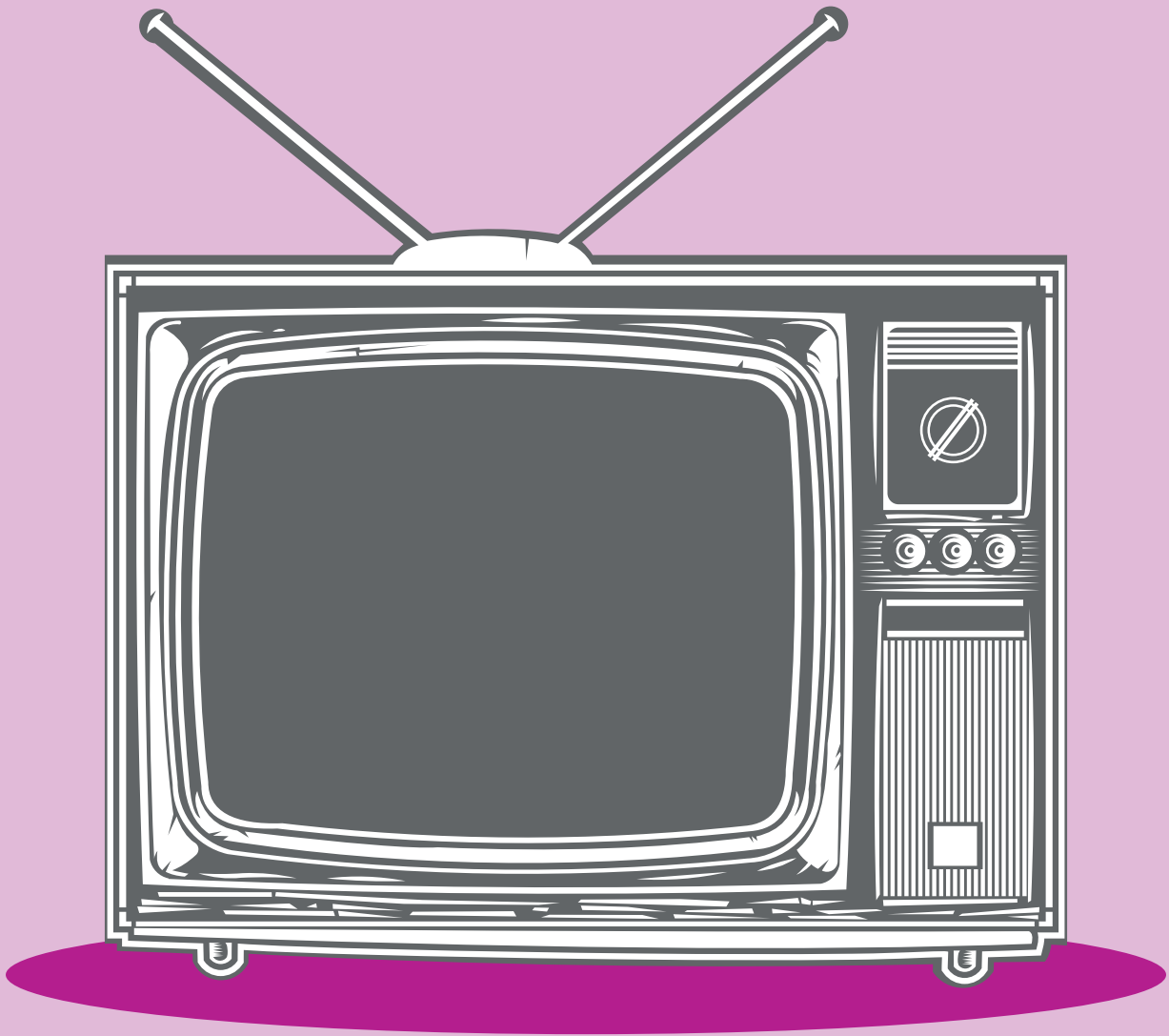
digital and entrepreneurial skills. I'm lucky enough to have the unique hook of 'being that guy off the telly' which has helped me develop a rapport with children up and down the country.

One of my workshops involves working with students in groups to research, plan and pitch an idea for a television show. The creators of the best ideas across the academic year get the chance to visit London and meet the creator

of Gogglebox. To be honest, it's an excuse for these kids to have a bit of a jolly around London, which they deserve. When developing the idea I knew I couldn't rely on the fact that I used to be a teacher and am now on television to sell it to schools – there needed to be more to it. Thankfully, this gave me the chance to develop my understanding of pedagogy. Derby, where I live, is an opportunity area. This meant that I was able to visit a fantastic research school – Wyndham Primary – where I got to share my workshop and gain some much-valued feedback. If you've not had the chance to visit a research school, I'd strongly urge you to make a link with one, be it physically or through social media. I learnt so much in my short time there that I still use when creating resources, with a focus on supporting our most disadvantaged students.

Visiting the school really made me understand the value of CPD; something I certainly took for granted in my teaching role. There aren't many other occupations that celebrate the development of their employees in quite the same way. Being able to put new theories into practice in the context of your own classroom can be incredibly exciting. Since my business started I've developed resources that support social mobility, students





with autism, deaf children, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, universities and edtech companies. This has only been possible through the support of professionals in a variety of fields.

### Supporting transition

A while ago I was lucky enough to attend a networking event about supporting pupil premium students which saw schools from across the midlands come together to share best practice. A common area of concern that kept coming up was the worry around disadvantaged Y6 students transitioning to secondary. Many teachers felt more could be done to ensure the most vulnerable and

disadvantaged students had additional support.

This inspired me to organise and deliver a series of workshops to support transition. I applied for an opportunity area grant and decided to focus my workshops around developing students' digital skills through creating a podcast. I've always appreciated podcasts as a fantastic resource for learning and revision. Anyone with a recording app on their phone or tablet can create one. During the workshops, Y6 pupils were invited to visit their future secondary schools to plan, record and edit a podcast. This was done as a weekly extracurricular session over a four-week period, with prizes for the best ideas, hardest working and most

technically skilled teams.

One benefit of the sessions was that it allowed the most disadvantaged students to visit their secondary school more often and become more familiar with a potentially intimidating surrounding. It also allowed secondary pastoral leads to build an early rapport with these pupils.

Relationships between the teachers at the primary and secondary schools involved also developed over the four-week period, and pupils got the chance to interact with new peers in a fun, non-threatening environment.

Overall I was really pleased with the outcome.


### Shaping lives

My main message to teachers, whether you're a veteran

educator or brand new to the classroom, is to never downplay the skills, talents and experiences that you bring to a situation, whether that's in school, business or your personal life. I am so grateful to have been a part of a profession that has not only shaped the lives of the children I have taught, but influenced who I am today.

It's easy to get lost in the negative press associated with teaching, but take some time every now and then to think of all you've accomplished and give yourself a pat on the back. **TP**

*Baasit Siddiqui is a star of Channel 4's Gogglebox and director of Siddiqui Education.*

 [siddiqui-education.co.uk](http://siddiqui-education.co.uk)

 [@siddiquiedu](https://twitter.com/siddiquiedu)

# Sounds like A PLAN

Forget flashy lessons – simple can be beautiful,  
and can give you your life back

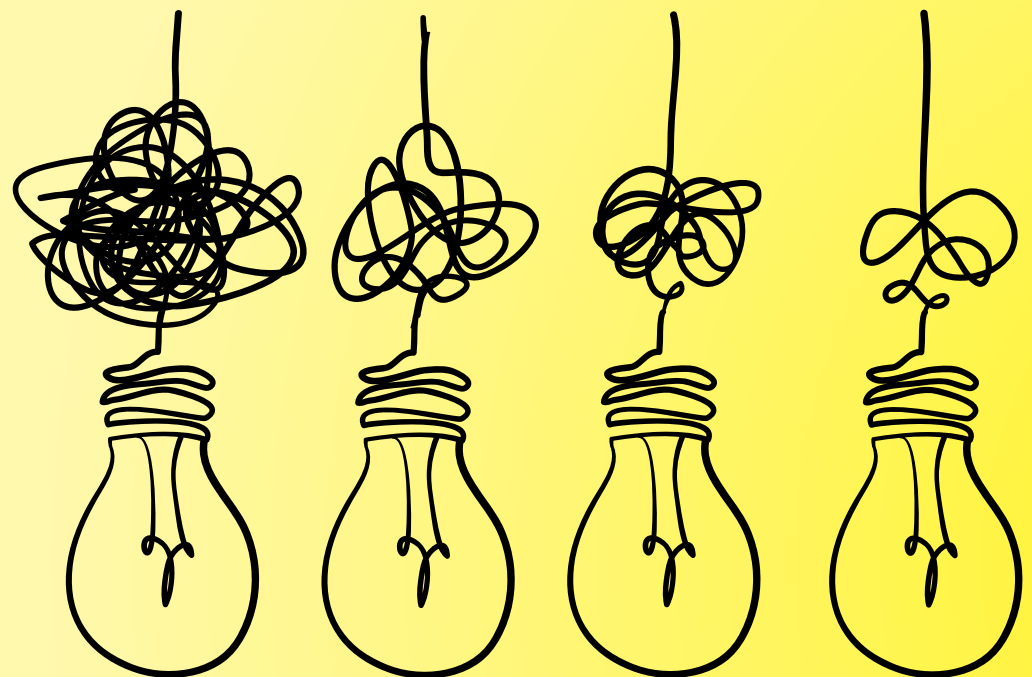
AIDAN SEVERS

Imagine a way of working that was not only more responsive to children's needs, but was also better for teacher wellbeing. If there was such a way, surely we'd all want to be doing it? I'd like to suggest it is possible; that by planning learning sequences and designing lessons flexibly we can provide for individual needs without it being a huge burden on our time and energy.

In order to ensure that our planning and teaching doesn't impact negatively on our wellbeing, we have to find an efficient way to work. And in order for something to be efficient, it usually needs to be simple. However, teaching can often be overcomplicated by myriad solutions for how to engage children, manage behaviour, include technology, make links to other subjects, and so on.

Often we begin lessons with an activity idea that we've seen on social media or used elsewhere in the past. Sometimes we come with preconceived ideas about what makes an outstanding lesson and we pull out all the stops and try to plan all-singing, all-dancing session. Other times, often due to time pressures, we just don't think carefully enough about what children need. All of these approaches can lead to a lesson being insufficiently structured to support learning.

The true way to simplify teaching begins at the planning stage. There are several things to think about when you're sitting in your PPA session. Begin by asking yourself a simple set of questions. Here's the first:



*What do the children need to learn?*

You'll probably come up with several answers, because different children will need to learn different things. This is where workload can begin to triple or quadruple: as soon as you identify the fact that one handful of children need to go over previous work whereas others are ready to move on, it can be easy to start thinking that you need to plan several different tasks.

This is where planning teaching sequences comes into play. Rather than planning five lessons, plan a sequence of activities that will help

children to work through from not knowing how to do something to being fluent in it to being able to use and apply that knowledge or skill. The next question to ask yourself will help you think about learning as steps towards a final goal:

*How can I break this down and teach it in the simplest way possible?*

If you produce a sequence of activities that build to an end point, you most probably have something relevant for each child in the class to attempt, therefore negating the need for differentiation and removing that potentially damaging way

of providing for children that perpetuates the learning gap. As you plan each step, take into account the answers to the following questions:

*How can pupils practise this in the simplest way possible? Is this aspect of the lesson really necessary for children to achieve the intended outcome?*

Try to make each step and task as simple as possible, ensuring that the sole focus of the sequence is on exactly what the children need to learn. Your learning steps don't need to be full of flashy activity ideas. Enjoyment and engagement of learning can, and should be,



## “The true way to simplify teaching begins at the planning stage”

when planning a learning sequence can prove difficult. One group of children could end up working on step one, another on step two while yet another moves on to step three. How do you keep a handle on this in the classroom?

Flexible lesson design is the answer here. For example, if on day two of teaching your planned learning sequence you have several groups of children all working at different steps in the sequence you will need to work out how to use that hour in the classroom to the best effect for all.

Start working with one group while others begin the next task – clearly written or visual instructions will help with this. Once this is done, set a task for the group you were working with then check the work done by other groups. Then, based on your assessment, give an input to another group while others continue with the initial task. The ‘lesson’ (although no longer a lesson in the traditional, three-part sense) can continue this way until all children are working, at which point you can begin to give one-to-one feedback.

### Reduce the burden

At any point a child might be ready to move on to the next step in the sequence. And they can, because the tasks have all already been prepared at the beginning of the week. If you’ve also taken the time to provide answer sheets children can even self- or peer-mark to reduce the burden on you and ensure that pupils aren’t waiting around for their work to be seen.

Planning a sequence of activities for all children to work through at their own pace means that you won’t be planning and preparing five days’ worth of three or more lots of differentiated tasks – it’ll just be around five tasks that you will support everyone to access, perhaps with an extra one on top to stretch children who need a challenge. That’s a lot less work to plan and prepare.

By asking yourself the above questions as you plan, the activities you prepare within a sequence should be simple. This means that you can spend far less time decorating and laminating your resources. Simple can be beautiful, and it can give you your life back.

Teaching lessons flexibly should mean that you begin to use lesson time more effectively, particularly for giving feedback. In doing this, you remove the need for so much time to be spent on marking outside of lessons. Any assessment information you do gather will simply inform you which task in the pre-planned sequence each child needs to work on next, rather than causing you to plan another new activity in response. **TP**



*Aidan Severs is primary deputy head at an all-through academy in Bradford.*

 @thatboycanteach

 thatboycanteach.co.uk

## Learning sequences in practice...

### SCENARIO:

Your Y3 class needs to learn how to add common prefixes to words and use them in their work. Note that the national curriculum mentions four: ‘in’, ‘un’, ‘dis’ and ‘mis’.

### ACTIVITY 1

Pupils will have covered ‘un’ in their spellings already so this makes a good starting point.

- Add the prefix to selected words (this will remind children that it changes the meaning of a word to its opposite and that the spelling of the root word remains intact)
- Add root words to the prefix
- Give a definition for a selection of words beginning with the prefix

These three tasks will give you an opportunity to assess what children remember of previous learning. Some will need more teaching on the prefix ‘un’ at this point, whereas others will be ready to move on.

### ACTIVITIES 2 + 3

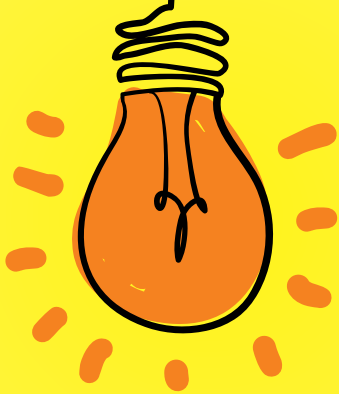
Rather than mixing things up to make them more interesting, repeat the above sequence with the prefixes ‘dis’ and ‘mis’. One meaning of the ‘in’ prefix departs from the ‘not’ definition the pupils have found in the other prefixes, so leave this one for another learning sequence.

### ACTIVITY 4

Contextualise the words pupils have learnt by:

- Choosing the correct prefix to complete a sentence
- Writing a sentence including one of the new words

The idea is to make each task as simple as possible so that the sole focus of the sequence is on exactly what the children need to learn.



intrinsic: the act of learning is enjoyable and engaging, providing that you are actually learning. A simple sequence almost guarantees that learning will take place and the children will feel good about it. They won’t miss the flashy teaching techniques you’ve used in the past as they will just be enjoying the feel-good factor that comes with mastering something new.

### Flexible lessons

That’s the planning phase sorted, then. But trying to use the activities produced

# Over the MOON

## INSIDE THIS SECTION



P54

Teacher and resources creator Sue Drury covers nine ways to teach similes and metaphors with confidence



P56

We review five brand new titles that primary-age children will love, including both fiction and non-fiction



P58

This low-stakes analogue grammar game will sharpen pupils' minds and lead to greater engagement



P61

Go on an adventure with our book topic activities based on Jeffrey Alan Love's evocative picturebook, *The Hero's Quest*

## HOME LEARNING

→→→ **RECOMMENDED**

## RESOURCES

Our team of teachers has created new learning packs, especially designed to be used at home. With versions for children in Y1-2 and 3-6, they include activities designed to hit key curriculum targets, as well as feed children's creativity and curiosity. The first set focuses on the weather. Find it at [plazoom.com/collections/home-learning](http://plazoom.com/collections/home-learning)



It's vital we immerse children in nursery rhymes – they play a vital role in reading and spelling success later down the line

**TRISHA LEE**

**L**istening and speaking are the bedrock of reading and writing. I have spent many years witnessing the truth in this through my work with schools and I've always believed that if children grow up in a language-rich environment, their vocabulary will grow accordingly. But this alone is not enough. Rhythm and rhyme play a hugely important role in the development of literacy skills, and yet research shows a decline in the number of children regularly hearing stories and rhymes.

The Bring Back Bedtime Stories campaign, created by a primary teacher, found that in many classrooms, less than a third of children have stories read to them and over half go to bed with the TV on. And while it may have been second nature for parents to sing and chant to their babies for many years, according to recent research many children are not hearing these rhymes as often as they used to (and when they do, the number they hear is greatly reduced). As a result, kids are not benefiting from a rich oral culture in the same way they used to. I decided to explore the use of poetry to help support literacy, and I was hooked.

### Amazing response

From October 2018, I began introducing more and more poems to the children I worked with and was amazed at the response. The children couldn't get enough of them. They pushed me to learn more, always wanting to hear the latest one. It was hard to keep up with their appetite and this spurred me to research the role of poetry, rhythm and rhyme in literacy. As the

children's enjoyment of the poems grew, the idea for our online course *The Poetry Basket* was born. The intention was simple – I wanted to share what I'd learnt.

I'm far from the first to look into the role of poetry in literacy. In a Radio 4 documentary on the neuroscience of learning, former teacher Kate Prentice discussed the role of rhyme and poetry in building essential literacy skills.

During her PhD studies, she conducted a two-year intervention project, examining the hypothesis that regular interaction with the sounds and rhythms of poetry helps to enhance the literacy skills of five to seven-year-olds.

"We think of sound as a continuous stream of noise," explains Kate. "Rhythm helps us work out where the words are and then within that where the syllables are, and within that where the intrasyllabic units are. Having a good rhythmic perception will allow you to hear those individual units more clearly."

*“Research shows a decline in the number of children regularly hearing stories and rhymes”*







### Joint exploration

There are a number of tools that we can use in the classroom to boost phonological awareness – rhymes, storytelling and shared book reading are all excellent ways to introduce the concept to children. As pupils progress, we can further investigate phonological awareness concepts through joint exploration of syllables, rhymes, and sounds. Familiarising ourselves with the patterns of rhythm and sound used in poetry helps us understand the patterns of stress and intonation in a language.

Ultimately, if we want children to read or write we have to make it irresistible, purposeful and relevant. We can't do this by forcing children into it – instead, we need to do it by encouraging a love of story, poetry and rhyme and by asking children to speak about things that matter to them. **TP**



*Trisha Lee is the founder of theatre and education charity MakeBelieve Arts.*

 @trishaleewrites

 [makebelievearts.co.uk](http://makebelievearts.co.uk)

### Phonological sensitivity

There has been plenty of other research in this area over the years. A 1989 study by PE Bryant took longitudinal data from a group of 64 children from the age of three to six and found a strong relation between early knowledge of nursery rhymes and success in reading and spelling over the next three years, even after differences in social background, IQ and the children's phonological skills at the start of the project were taken into account. As Bryant put it, "Knowledge of

nursery rhymes enhances children's phonological sensitivity which in turn helps them to learn to read."

Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds of spoken language. It's our understanding of the very structure of language at its most basic level; the sounds that make up the words, that make up the sentence. With good phonological awareness, children can blend sounds together and segment words (breaking them down into syllables and phonemes).

### Try it yourself

Introduce pupils to this simple rhyme and invent some actions as a class...

Popcorn, popcorn, sizzling in the pan  
Shake it up, shake it up  
Bang, bang, bang  
Popcorn, popcorn,  
now it's getting hot  
Shake it up, shake it up  
Pop, pop, pop!



# Bright as a BUTTON

Nine ways to teach similes and metaphors with confidence

SUE DRURY

**S**imiles and metaphors are key features of descriptive language. The question is, are you confident that you can help your pupils to weave them seamlessly into their writing? Even if you think you are, check through this list of ideas. There's usually something to magpie from someone else's thoughts. See what I did there?

**1 Explain why**  
It is important to sprinkle descriptive writing with similes and metaphors because it makes it clearer and more interesting to read. It's about creating images in the reader's mind and the clearer those images are, the more effective the writing. For example, think how much more appealing it is to write "sprinkle descriptive writing ..." than "add some

similes and metaphors". 'Sprinkle' suggests a lightness of touch; something that might make the writing sparkle.

**2 Give a clear definition**  
What are similes and metaphors? Broadly speaking, they are examples of descriptive language (others include personification, onomatopoeia and hyperbole). Their job is to bring descriptions to life by comparing one idea to another.

**3 Explain the difference**  
If they both do much the same job, how can you get pupils to remember which is which? I've found it helps to draw on the way 'simile' shares a

root with the word 'similar'. Things that are similar are like each other, so there's your clue: similes are the ones that say one thing is like the other. Alternatively, they can use the word 'as' to draw the comparison. 'Like' often works with verbs (swim like a fish, run like the wind) while 'as' often works with adjectives (tall as a tree, brave as a lion), but this is not always the case.

Metaphors, on the other hand, simply state that something is something else, without using 'like' or 'as'. For example, 'a river of tears ran down her cheek'.

**4 Provide examples**  
If you're anything like me, you might find that you're only able to come up with unsatisfactory or clichéd examples when put on the spot, so try and have a few good examples up your sleeve in readiness. See the panel, right, for some resource ideas that may come in handy.

**5 Partner work**  
There's nothing like having to explain something to see whether you have properly understood it yourself. Make sure your pupils can demonstrate what they have learnt by orally defining both terms to a partner. Alternatively, they can write their own definition.

**6 Show you know**  
Of course, pupils will need to demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge. For this, they will need a writing task that calls for creative, descriptive language. So, not a formal letter to a bank manager, then!  
During the planning stage, set children the challenge of preparing similes and metaphors to be inserted at appropriate times. Not only will this remind them to include figurative language, but it should also get them into an expressive frame of mind. Emphasise that they need to blend their ideas into the writing so that it doesn't feel too clunky or contrived.

*"Using a comparison that is too contrived or makes no sense will only confuse the reader"*



*“There’s nothing like having to explain something to see whether you have properly understood it yourself”*

## 7 Spot examples

There are two ways you could do this. One is to find a suitable text and get pupils to underline examples of similes and metaphors, ideally in different colours to show they can identify both sorts. Alternatively, get children to read each other’s work and act as a critical friend. If they feel that their partner’s simile or metaphor doesn’t work or could be improved, challenge them to make a suggestion of their own.

## 8 Encourage good choices

The trick with similes and metaphors is finding a common feature between the thing you are describing and the one you are comparing it with. However, the skill is in choosing the right feature and comparison. Remember, the whole point is to provide descriptions that create accurate or vibrant pictures in the reader’s mind. It’s no good comparing things that are so similar that it adds nothing. For example, “The wizard’s wand was like a short, straight stick.” Yes, we know.

Equally, using a comparison that is too

contrived or makes no sense will only confuse the reader. “The wizard’s wand was a horizon of wood,” does not enhance clarity, no matter how straight both concepts are. Similarly, “The wizard’s wand was like about nine used matches laid end on end, carefully glued together,” does nothing to help our mental images of a wand.

## 9 Avoid clichés

This is not necessarily as easy as it sounds. Just because you’ve heard something before doesn’t mean that it should be discounted. Perhaps the best thing to do is go back to the OED definition of cliché: “a phrase or idea that has been used so often that it is no longer interesting or effective”.

For example, I would suggest that “a blanket of snow” is still effective, even though it has been used extensively. “As good as gold,” on the other hand, is probably a cliché, not least because gold is not obviously connected with goodness. Moreover, a capable writer would probably have found a more interesting adjective than ‘good’ in the first place. **TP**

# plazoom

## RESOURCES TO HELP



Get a conversation started in your classroom with these attractive poster resources. Featuring speech bubbles around a fun image, they give strong examples that really emphasise the difference between similes and metaphors,

while throwing in personification for good measure. There are also blank balloon templates so you can use pupils’ own ideas or add to the existing examples. Download from Plazoom at [tinyurl.com/plazoomposters](http://tinyurl.com/plazoomposters)



These writing review worksheets are an excellent way to revise and practise using metaphors and similes. They contain examples of metaphors and similes and five different challenges which can be used during one lesson or spread over a number

of teaching sessions. Questions encourage creative responses as well as revision, and include interesting images to stimulate ideas. Download from Plazoom at [tinyurl.com/plazoommetaphors](http://tinyurl.com/plazoommetaphors) and [tinyurl.com/plazoomsimiles](http://tinyurl.com/plazoomsimiles)



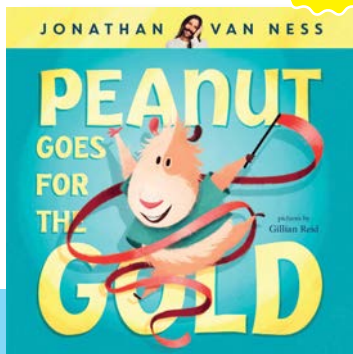
*Sue Drury is a teacher and resources creator at Plazoom.*

[@plazoomshop](https://twitter.com/plazoomshop)  
[plazoom.com](http://plazoom.com)

# Book CLUB

We review five brand new titles that your class will love

KS1

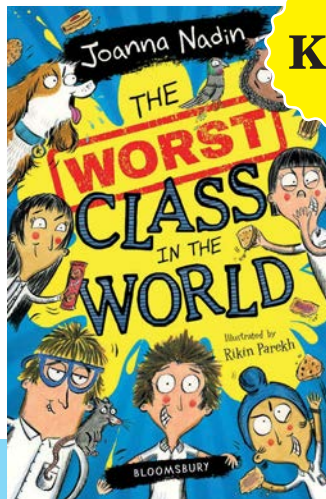


## *Peanut Goes for the Gold*

by Jonathan Van Ness  
(£12.99, Harper)

If you've indulged in a few episodes of Netflix series *Queer Eye* during lockdown, you'll no doubt have fallen a little bit in love with exuberant grooming and self-care expert Jonathan Van Ness. The presenter and podcaster has now penned his first picture book, following the adventures of Peanut, an enthusiastic guinea pig who wants to take up rhythmic gymnastics. The story is simple yet heartfelt, encouraging children to be true to themselves, even when others don't quite understand them. Van Ness has written the character of Peanut as non-binary and uses the pronoun 'they' throughout to refer to the protagonist, making this a gentle way to introduce the idea of gender identity to children. Van Ness says, "Growing up, the things that made me unique were not always celebrated, and I wanted to do something that would inspire kids to celebrate the things that make them special."

KS2

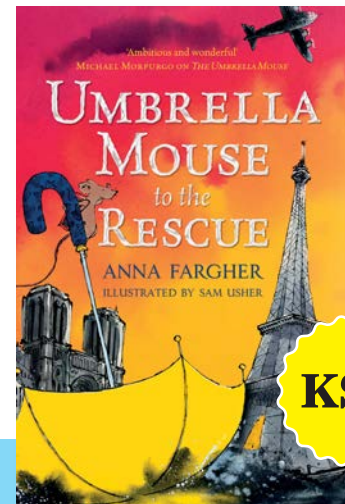


## *The Worst Class in the World*

by Joanna Nadin  
(£5.99, Bloomsbury)

For any of your pupils who are missing the hubbub of a busy classroom at the moment while we're all in lockdown, this slice of school life from Joanna Nadin will be most welcome. Perfect for fans of *Horrid Henry* and *Kes Gray's Daisy* books, this new series follows class 4B who are, according to their headteacher Mrs Bottomley-Blunt, the worst in the world. Children will giggle at the boisterous pupils' exploits and nod knowingly at the little details of school life. Author Nadin is a former broadcast journalist and special adviser to the prime minister and has written more than 70 books. This tale is a celebration of learning and friendship, bolstered by Rikin Parekh's chaotic illustrations, that will cheer children up and get them looking forward to returning to school – and getting up to mischief with their friends – in the not-too-distant future.

KS2



## *Umbrella Mouse to the Rescue*

by Anna Fargher  
(£6.99, Macmillan Children's Books)

This is the eagerly-anticipated sequel to Anna Fargher's award-winning novel *The Umbrella Mouse*, which was written on an iPhone during the author's daily commute and described by legendary children's author Michael Morpurgo as "ambitious and wonderfully-well achieved". Based on the true stories of the animals caught up in the conflict of the second world war, our hero, young mouse Pip, is fighting for the French Resistance group Noah's Ark, a secret gang of animals operating beneath the feet of human soldiers. She's determined to reach her ancestral home in Italy - with hopes of finding her long-lost family - but the journey through occupied territory is perilous. Beautifully illustrated throughout with artwork by Sam Usher, Anna's story takes children on a journey through a war that reaches even the smallest of creatures. This classic-feeling novel will appeal to fans of *Watership Down* and *The Animals of Farthing Wood*.



## HOME LEARNING

Our teacher-made home learning packs contain enough literacy work to cover five mornings, with minimal adult supervision. Differentiated by year group, each pack contains a reading comprehension task, using extracts from classic books such as Robin Hood and The Sword in the Stone. Download them for free at [plazoom.com/collections/home-learning](https://plazoom.com/collections/home-learning)

## →→→ RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



## Meet the author

### PATRICK SKIPWORTH ON THE SURPRISING ETYMOLOGIES OF ENGLISH WORDS



How did you select the 12 words included in Literally?

If you take a closer look at the story behind any word

you'll usually find out something surprising, so picking 12 words from a whole language wasn't easy! I stuck to a rigorous criteria which helped me reduce a list of hundreds of entries down to just a dozen. I wanted to make sure that linguists were mostly in agreement about the etymologies for every word in Literally. For this stage, I'm indebted to Dr Benjamin Suchard at Leiden University in the Netherlands (where I also studied) who reviewed each entry. I also wanted to get a broad spread of origins from around the globe in the book, as well as looking for words with a variety of different types of etymologies, from onomatopoeias to compound words.

### What did you think when you first saw Nicholas Stevenson's illustrations?

The enchanting atmosphere of Nicholas' illustrations were perfect for Literally as we knew that they would need to be surprising and a bit otherworldly, while still being appropriate for a non-fiction book. I had some initial ideas for most of the spreads but some of these didn't work as well as I had hoped. Nicholas' ideas here were crucial – some spreads went through several iterations to get the concept right.

### How would you like teachers to use the book in the classroom?

I hope that Literally will be an engaging introduction to etymology that makes readers want to find out more about their own languages, whether that's English or something else. In the classroom there's definitely scope for students to research the etymologies of words and draw their own illustrations which reflect both the current meaning and the origin of the word. Since some etymologies are more problematic than others, teachers could come up with a list of words and share them out among students – the Oxford English Dictionary is a good resource for the etymologies of English words.

KS2



### Earth-Shattering Events

by Robin Jacobs  
(£14.95, Cicada Books)

It's easy to take our domination of the planet for granted, but sometimes nature reminds us that this is an illusion. Tectonics rip open the earth, vast waves sweep away coastal towns, magma spews from volcanoes and hurricanes lay waste to entire countries. This book by Robin Jacobs explores nature at its most destructive. Clear, coherent explanations break down the science behind phenomena including hurricanes, tornadoes, avalanches, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes, while informative illustrations by Sophie Williams bring the information to life. Our favourite fact? In Japanese mythology, it is said that earthquakes are caused by a giant, underground-dwelling catfish called Namazu who thrashes around, causing the ground to shake. The publisher has produced a guided reading resource for teachers (download it at [tinyurl.com/tpshattering](https://tinyurl.com/tpshattering)) containing a vocabulary list, introductory questions, activity ideas and further reading recommendations.

KS2



### Literally

by Patrick Skipworth  
(£11.99, What On Earth Books)

Subtitled 'Amazing words and where they come from', this eye-catching picturebook from children's book editor Patrick Skipworth introduces pupils to the rich history and cultural diversity of the English language and reveals the diverse origins of 12 words. Each spread zeroes in on a specific word and explains the hidden stories contained within. Words investigated include 'companion' (original meaning: with bread), 'ukulele' (jumping flea) and 'safari' (journey). The author explores each word's cultural, geographical and historical connections, as well as what they literally meant a long time ago. Nicholas Stevenson's painterly illustrations depict both the old meaning of the word and the new one, enabling children to piece together the incredible puzzle that is our language. At the back of the book is extra information about language families, including a large world map depicting where different ones are spoken.

# Human SENTENCES

This low-stakes analogue grammar game sharpens pupils' minds and leads to greater engagement

CHRISTINE CHEN & LINDSAY PICKTON

Philip Pullman once wrote of an “attitude ... towards language” engendered when adults give time to sharing picture books with children, whereby “you trust it and find it exciting and full of possibilities and fun, something to play with and speculate with and take risks with and delight in.”

We wholeheartedly agree with Mr Pullman’s views on taking time over delicious picture books and want this feeling for language for all children; it inspires much of our work with schools. One way of enhancing this attitude – particularly but not exclusively for the growing number of children who don’t have adult support like this at home – is through word games: low-stakes ways of trying out new vocabulary and grammatical structures, testing them for impact on meaning and delighting in outcomes.

## Physical manipulation

A form of grammar and vocabulary play that encourages language manipulation in a

very literal sense is the ‘human sentence’: a strip of paper onto which a main clause has been written, held at the front of the class by children, to which further words, phrases and clauses may be added (plus appropriate punctuation, of course). This practice was commonplace around 15 years ago, but when we model it now, colleagues tend to have never seen the strategy, or they remark, “Don’t know why we stopped doing that!”

And we really shouldn’t have. In our experience, the physical manipulation of sentences in this way leads to greater engagement, and better application in writing, than digital alternatives. Even when children come to the front to move parts of sentences on an interactive board, it just doesn’t seem to have the same impact. And compared to written grammatical exercises? Well, there is no comparison.

The strategy takes a bit of in-class training, naturally. Children need to hold the paper strips fairly steadily, and they need to be ready to join the sentence

with their suggestions promptly; they need to write clearly on mini whiteboards (until they can, you’ll have to do this – see ‘tips for success’, right). We find that these sessions run best when the class is clustered on the carpet, as it takes less time to swap and add children to the sentence at the front.

## Meaning shifts

The crucial thing is that you take the time to explore the shifts in meaning that additions and swaps create. For example, imagine two sentence strips displaying a main clause each:

**the Billy Goat tiptoed**

**the Troll heard him**

Note that there is no sentence demarcation as this fixes the sentence. The children must now try out different coordinating conjunctions (‘and’, ‘but’, ‘so’) to join the two clauses, and you can lead the discussion on the impact of each. You might then extend this by looking at the use of

subordinating conjunctions like ‘because’, ‘when’, and ‘although’: where would each of these work best for the meaning we’re trying to achieve?

Similarly, the arrangement of adverbials around a main clause may be examined for emphasis and even ambiguity:

**the wolf huffed and puffed (main clause)**

**in front of the door (adverbial for where)**

**while the piggies cowered (adverbial for when)**

From this, we can arrange:

**While the piggies cowered, the wolf huffed and puffed in front of the door.**

And:

**While the piggies cowered in front of the door, the wolf huffed and puffed.**

Now explore the impact of a comma after ‘cowered’ in that





second sentence. Note also that the teaching of punctuation here is integral to the teaching of grammar and the teaching of meaning-making. Children can be creative in their options within the focus grammatical area, but we'd recommend sticking to that grammatical focus. The extent to which this sharpens the mind and develops creative thinking can take your breath away. Once, when asked for an adverbial to express 'when' as part of a ghost story, a child offered, "when they were least expecting it"!

### Gimmick-free games

Why does holding bits of paper, moving positions, remembering to put punctuation marks in and arguing about the merits of a different word order seem to work so well in terms of memory and application? It's multi-sensory, of course, but not in a gimmicky, distracting way; everything is purposeful, and every addition and change must be considered for impact on meaning and context. And it's really, truly collaborative: lots of minds focused on the impact of a single sentence, irrespective of individual 'writing ability'.

So why did so many of us stop using this strategy? Observationally, it seemed to disappear when interactive whiteboards reached ubiquity, around 2006. But we also wonder if it never received the promotion that more

commercially-packageable grammar strategies have had. Human sentences, after all, require only big bits of paper, pens, good classroom management and sound grammatical knowledge.

### Tips for success

**Select the grammar to be taught.** Things that work well with this technique include clause structure (and using conjunctions to join them); adding a relative clause; adding and trying phrases in different positions (particularly how-when-where adverbials and avoiding ambiguity); adding adjectives and/or changing modal verbs. Human sentences lend themselves less well to changing tenses and exploring the passive.

**Be clear about the grammatical feature you're teaching.** And almost always stick to it. Allow children to try different devices in the sentence only once they have secured their understanding of clause structure and your main teaching point.

**Have strips of paper ever-ready.** A pile of them makes lesson prep quicker and easier – and they'll be there if you want to lead an impromptu session to explore a usage or address a misconception. One sheet of flip-chart paper with three vertical slices produces four perfect sentence strips.

## GIVE IT A GO TODAY

### →→→ RECOMMENDED RESOURCES



Download this ready-made set of human sentence makers from Plazoom. The resource focuses on relative clauses with sentence fragments that can be cut up for children to reassemble - making both simple and more complex sentences. [tinyurl.com/tphuman](https://tinyurl.com/tphuman)

**Always start a session with a simple sentence.** This reinforces the all-important sense-of-a-sentence and teaches children to start from a main clause and then make additions in their own writing.

**Never use a capital or full stop on starting-point sentences.** This fixes the sentence and means nothing can be added at either end. Instead, have the children holding the strips use a simple physical (and moveable) reminder, eg a fist for stop; a hand-on-head (a "cap") for a capital (note that this will require two children to hold even a short sentence). Other punctuation marks may be devised with appropriate hand positions!

**Planning to 'drop in' a word, phrase or clause?** Pre-doctor the sentence strip so that it may easily be split at the crucial part. Score it ready for tearing or cut it and lightly affix the pieces with small bits of tape.

**Mini whiteboards are perfect for adding words and phrases.** Model what you want so that children don't write too small, don't rewrite the whole sentence and don't capitalise or use full stops to demarcate. In classes where children are not yet ready to use mini whiteboards themselves, take oral suggestions and write them on boards yourself.

**Keep circulating the children.** Many will enjoy being at the front of the room, holding the strips and mini whiteboards, but when they are there they don't get to see the evolving sentence.

**If working with a small group, use smaller paper strips.** Move them around on the table, devising other moveable markers for punctuation. Children can still contribute their own words and phrases. Use extra small whiteboards or small blank paper strips.



Christine Chen and Lindsay Pickton are primary education advisers supporting English development nationally.

 [primaryeducationadvisers.co.uk](https://www.primaryeducationadvisers.co.uk)

NEW!

# plazoom

making great literacy lessons easy

Start your  
14-day  
FREE trial\*  
TODAY!

Join Plazoom today  
and take back your time!

At Plazoom, we're passionate about making great literacy lessons easy; as a member of our community, you'll get a stack of brilliant benefits...



"I'm really impressed with the range and quality of resources – activities are imaginative and relevant to the curriculum."

Sarah Armitage,  
Y5/6 teacher



SAVE HOURS  
OF PLANNING!

600+ literacy  
resources, created and  
checked by teaching  
experts



ENGAGE, INSPIRE  
AND CHALLENGE  
EVERY PUPIL

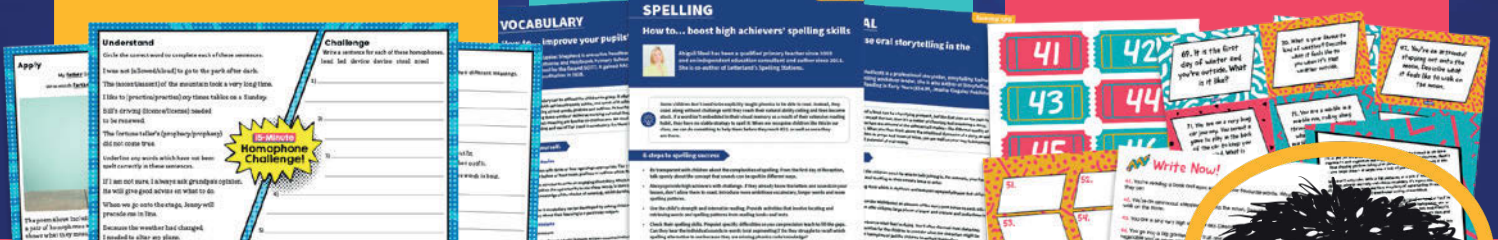


FULL coverage of the  
English vocabulary,  
spelling, grammar and  
punctuation curriculum  
from Years 1-6

CPD ESSENTIALS  
over 80 training and  
development guides

Exclusive resource  
collections – including  
Write Now!

worth £29.95



Sign up now at [plazoom.com/tp](https://plazoom.com/tp)

\*Terms & conditions apply, refer on line for more detail.







# The Hero's Quest

Go on an adventure with Jeffrey Alan Love's evocative picturebook

CAREY FLUKER HUNT

*"This story begins, as all stories must, with a rider appearing from out of the dust..."*

Whether we're reading about them, playing them in videogames or watching their adventures on film, tales of daring heroes still captivate us, just as they did when people first told stories by prehistoric fires. From Hercules and Mulan to Zelda, Frodo and Luke Skywalker – not to mention real-world icons and celebrities – we seem to be hard-wired to love and learn from tales of quests and courage.

In this picturebook, Jeffrey Alan Love distils 'essence of heroic tale' into a pacy, dramatic and hugely appealing

reading experience. Engaging rhythms, evocative language and rhyme invite participation and performance, but it's the iconic artwork that really sets *The Hero's Quest* apart. Love also creates graphic novels for adults, and while the illustrations for this book are age-appropriate, they don't pull their punches. Using a largely monochromatic palette, Love plays with scale and viewpoint to increase tension: dramatic forms are silhouetted against white backgrounds and there's plenty of brooding disquiet beneath the narrative. With every page turn come

new settings and challenges. Many focus on familiar tropes – watchful dragons, ravening wolves – but Love's sophisticated artwork brings novelty and impact to every spread, and there are some unusual (and genuinely unsettling) dangers to be confronted.

*The Hero's Quest* delivers an intensely theatrical experience that will please a wide age range, and makes a great starting point for cross-curricular activities. It's worth saying that this story can be read in a non-gendered way – details could be interpreted as 'boy meets girl', but our hero really could be anyone.



## How to share the book

Which books, films and other media do children know that feature quests? They may suggest Star Wars, Lord of the Rings, The Wizard of Oz, Finding Nemo, Frozen; stories about Beowulf, Hercules, Mulan; The Legend of Zelda. What sort of characters, objects and events would pupils expect to find in a quest story? Gather ideas on a whiteboard. Who or what is a hero? Describe them.

Show children the cover. What can they see? What kind of story does this suggest? Read the whole book for enjoyment and impact. Then re-read, drawing attention to details and inviting responses. What do pupils like about this book, and why? What does it remind them of? Did it surprise them? How?

## Practical activities

### Find the drama

Working together, create a 'bare bones' plot summary. What's been added to bring this story to life? Think rhyme, rhythm, exciting vocabulary, gestures, dramatic viewpoints, close-ups, colour and contrast, blank spaces, variations in scale.

Recreate these spreads as freeze frames, paying attention to body posture and gestures. What do they tell us about each character? Read the text aloud (independently and as a class), exploring changes of pace, dynamics and expression. Record your best

version, then play back as you present your freeze frames.

If this book were a film, what soundtrack would it have? Investigate sound effects using your voices or found objects and musical instruments, then weave them together to produce a soundscape for one of the pictures. What are the characters thinking and saying in each spread? In groups, write thoughts and dialogue on sticky notes and add to pictures. Use them to help you write a script.

### Whose story?

Group children and allocate a character-type to each: dragons, elves, dwarves, gods, kings and queens, creatures of magic, wolves, fate. Who are these characters? Interrogate the book to discover everything you can. What is happening in the picture showing each group's interaction with the hero?

What do these characters want from him/her? What don't they want? How would the elves (and other characters) tell the story of their picture? How did events appear to them?

Allow groups to practise telling their part in the narrative, then visit each group in role as the hero and listen to their stories. Feed back and discuss, then build on the experience through creative writing. Alternatively, playing the role of a TV news reporter, interview each group to discover what happened and present their point of view.

### Mapping the quest

Follow the hero's journey through the book's locations. Which landscapes must be navigated? Present this journey as a sketched map, diagram or infographic. How many ideas have you come up with? What works best? Write travel adverts for each location.



## Take it further → → →

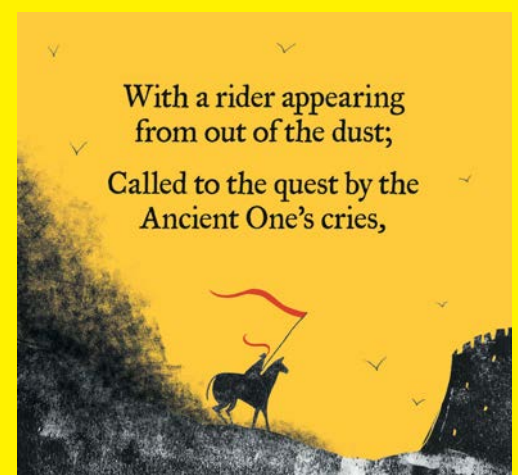
### QUEST-THEMED ZINE

Zines are booklets inspired by graphic novels in which words and pictures work together to tell stories and jokes, communicate facts or share an autobiography. They're often self-published using photocopiers. Inviting children to design, make and distribute a quest-themed zine will give them a taste of the skills and techniques involved in creating graphic novels. Kickstart mini enterprises by allocating a budget for

materials and asking children to charge a small amount to cover costs.

### STORYTELLING GAMES

Magical quest-themed games are great for developing literacy and numeracy. Dungeons and Dragons relies on a leader to prepare and map the story in advance, then narrate and manage the action by asking players to make decisions at key points. Outcomes are determined via polyhedral dice, which offer many possibilities for work around 3D shapes and probability, as well







## Loved this? Try these...

- ❖ Norse Myths: Tales of Odin, Thor and Loki by Kevin Crossley-Holland and Jeffrey Alan Love
- ❖ The Atlas of Heroes by Sandra Lawrence and Stuart Hill
- ❖ Beyond the Deepwoods by Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell
- ❖ Quest by Aaron Becker

the rhythm. What happens if you change pace? What do the pictures show that isn't mentioned in the text? What do the words tell us that isn't communicated in the artwork?

Choose a picture, describe what you can see and share how it makes you feel. Have a go at expressing the effect this creates, or its impact on the book. Is the hero bigger or smaller than other characters and objects? Why? If these images were photographs, where would the photographer be standing to get each shot? What shapes do you notice? How would you describe them? Can you spot any straight or curved lines? Do they point at something or frame an object, character or scene?

Are the backgrounds white or coloured? Where are the empty spaces? How big are they? Ask children to write about one or more of the spreads, including some of the ideas you've discussed. **TP**



*Carey Fluker Hunt is a freelance writer, creative learning consultant and founder of Cast of Thousands, a teachers' resource featuring a selection*

*of the best children's books and related cross-curricular activities.*

[castofthousands.co.uk](http://castofthousands.co.uk)

Draw your own map of an invented story-quest world, then write a story set there.

Share a collection of story-maps from quest-themed books (Lord of the Rings, How To Train Your Dragon, Beyond the Deepwoods). What do they have in common? How do they differ? Which of these storyworlds would you most like to explore? Why?

### Ruling as you please

Look at the 'kings and queens' spread. What do you notice? What could these kings and queens be thinking? Generate ideas, then add thought-bubbles to the picture using sticky notes. If kings and queens can rule 'just as they please', will their decisions be right? How do rulers and leaders make good decisions? If you were a powerful ruler and could do anything, what would you do? Why? Write stories about leaders who make selfish or disastrous decisions.

### Other heroes

Share stories about Achilles, Heracles, the Norse sagas, King Arthur, Mulan and other heroes from far away and long ago. What do these stories tell us about their worlds? What can you discover about the cultures that produced them?

### Exploring silhouettes

Roll black ink onto thick card shapes and use to print onto a plain white background. What effects can you produce? What happens if you use thick black paint instead of ink, or add white? What happens if you change the background? Sponge black or grey paint onto white card, then cut silhouettes and arrange to create a collage. Do pupils prefer printing or collage? Why?

Use printing or collage to create action scenes inspired by this book. Write about what you've done and display alongside your artwork. Could you retell the story using shadow puppets cut from printed card?

### Picturebook detectives

A picturebook like *The Hero's Quest* is very carefully crafted. Text and images work well independently but together they have more to say and greater impact, and it's worth exploring how this is achieved. Observing, questioning, sharing insights and debating interpretations will develop children's oracy and critical thinking skills, as well as preparing the ground for follow-up activities.

What do you notice about the text? Choose your favourite words and images. What kind of rhyme scheme does this poem have? Read the text aloud, marking

as storybuilding. Alternatively, children could design, test and produce quest-themed board games based on Snakes and Ladders or make a set of storytelling cubes inspired by *The Hero's Quest*.

### QUEST TRAIL

Create a trail with tasks to be accomplished along the route. Plan thoroughly, then provide a map and enough supervision to keep children safe while allowing them to make their own decisions. Theme your trail around a particular story and explore your school, grounds, or local park.



# Wellbeing SPECIAL

## INSIDE THIS SECTION



Take charge of your professional life and improve your wellbeing with this advice



If we want to improve teachers' lives we need to tackle the root cause of stress



We're having to consider wellbeing in a way we could never have predicted...



Don't miss our STEM special next issue, on sale 3rd July 2020



## Works like MAGIC

The positive education movement is helping children worldwide become more resilient

**JULIE HURST**

**A**s we neared the end of the lesson Michael raised his hand. "Please Miss, can we end the lesson with a serotonin rush? We've worked hard today, and we could do with some extra happiness."

His request was echoed by his classmates who chimed in with cries of: "Yes Miss, serotonin – let's have some before we go home." "Come on Miss, let's make serotonin."

As I agreed to the children's requests, a glance to my right showed puzzlement on the face of the teacher who'd come to visit us that afternoon.

She turned to the deputy head who was conducting her tour of the school and asked: "Do the children here often ask for neurotransmitters?" "They do in this class," was the immediate reply.

I'm a positive psychologist and for the last four years I've been working with a number of schools, including this particular primary, where I deliver weekly lessons, initially to nine- and ten-year-olds but now encompassing much of KS2.

### Understanding emotions

Positive psychology is the scientific study of human flourishing. It is an





evidence-based discipline that seeks to help people create lives of meaning, happiness, wellbeing and optimism. When this science is applied in schools it is called positive education. It helps children become more resilient when faced with setbacks and challenges, and to cope more easily with failures. None of this is at the expense of academic progress. Rather, positive education underlines the fact that if we want children to perform at their best, they need to feel at their best, and that includes understanding how their brains work.

In positive education classes it's not unusual for children to discuss the role dopamine plays in determination, serotonin in happiness and oxytocin in friendship and connection. They can also tell you how the right amount of adrenaline helps them perform well in a test, but too much and their 'thinking brain' shuts down.

It is not just 'positive thinking'. It encompasses teaching children to cope with difficult emotions such as frustration, anger, sorrow and worry. Understanding all emotions, and their temporary nature, is a key component of mental wellbeing, and it is the idea of promoting mental wellness that lies at the heart of the success of positive education.

### Broaden and build

Although less well known in the UK, positive education is in fact a worldwide movement encompassing schools from many countries, including Mexico, Peru, Bhutan and the USA. There is an International Positive Education Network that holds several events each year as more and more schools experience the benefits that positive education brings to their whole community.

So, how easy is it to introduce some of the positive

education tools and skills into your classroom? Surprisingly easy if you start in the right place. Positive education's main model is based on the acronym PERMA. This stands for:

- Positive emotion
- Engagement
- Relationships
- Meaning
- Accomplishment

To fully embrace PERMA, aspects of these qualities are built into everyday interactions at school, supported by specific lessons where the focus is on one or more of these underlying principles. A key notion of positive education is understanding that the more frequently we experience positive emotions the more optimistic, creative and resilient we become. It is based on Barbara Frederickson's 'broaden and build' theory. In keeping with this, teachers can challenge children to set positive-emotion goals for themselves. This involves working together to draw up a list of positive emotions (including some the children may find a stretch, such as inspiration, serenity, compassion or self-compassion). Ask the children to choose a different emotion each day and work out how they could feel it, whether working alone or in small groups. Some are easier than others.

The children will need to give some thought to what makes them feel happy, calm, loved, joyful, peaceful or whatever the chosen emotion is. In doing this activity, pupils learn what sparks certain feelings for them, and that they can have an impact on how they feel through the choices they make. Realising they have the ability to bring about positive feelings in their lives is amazingly important for children and a cornerstone of creating good mental wellness.

### Serotonin spike

As for that serotonin spike, it's a wonderfully simple exercise. Thanks to American psychologist Fred Bryant, we

know that savouring a positive moment – immersing ourselves in it fully – has a wonderful impact on happiness and even improves mental and physical health. When we savour joyful moments, we can relive our happiness all over again. Ask the children to think of three things that make them happy and write them down. They don't have to be big things – playing with a pet, eating an ice cream or watching a favourite movie are all great examples. Then ask pupils to use their imaginations to recreate one of their choices in as much detail as possible. Encourage them to see, hear and feel it as fully as they can, and then stay focused on it for a few moments. As little as 30 seconds can be enough to raise their serotonin levels.

That's the thing about positive education. It works quickly and effectively, without the need for special equipment. It can be part of everyday school life and teachers often tell me it works life magic. There is a wealth of research evidence about its impact on wellbeing at a time when there is an increasing focus on children's mental health from both the government and regulatory bodies. With time pressures on curriculums, budget pressures across the board and teachers being asked more and more frequently to become involved in pastoral care as well deliver great academic results, positive education could be the answer schools are searching for. **TP**



*Julie Hurst is a positive psychologist who works with schools throughout the UK.*

*She is working with St Bede Teaching School in Bolton to run a six-day positive education course. For more information email [bradburyj@stbedeacademy.org](mailto:bradburyj@stbedeacademy.org)*

 @juliewlbc

 [thewlbc.com](http://thewlbc.com)

# Look after *YOU*

Five ways to take charge of your professional life and improve your wellbeing

ADRIAN BETHUNE

**W**e hear a lot about the importance of teacher agency and autonomy but they are two different things. Autonomy is about having the freedom to make decisions without having to constantly ask for permission, or having your work continuously scrutinised. Agency, on the other hand, is about having the capacity, or exerting the power, to make decisions and take positive action.

As teachers, we may work in an environment where we lack autonomy, but we can still exert our professional agency by doing what we think is right, regardless of what others may think. A prime example of teacher agency was the decisive action many teachers and school leaders took in the face of the coronavirus school closures, despite the lack of clear direction from the DfE.

Given that teachers in the UK largely operate in a system that does not give us the freedom to control most of the aspects of our work (think learning walks, observations, Ofsted inspections, league tables), it raises the importance of teacher agency.

It means we must do what we can to take control of the important aspects of our professional lives. Moreover, with the whole of the UK currently experiencing a national lockdown due to Covid 19, with the restrictions on our lives likely to last for a while, our agency becomes even more important for our wellbeing.

Just the act of doing something to take care of yourself, or the people around

you, can be extremely empowering. It means that small things add up to make a big difference to people's lives. If you feel you lack control over aspects of your professional life, don't despair. Below are five small but effective ways that you can start to take some action to increase your agency and self-efficacy while simultaneously improving your wellbeing.

## Focus on what you can control

And let go of the rest. The serenity prayer is commonly quoted as; "Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." It could be the mantra for effective teacher agency.

There is no point in wasting precious time and energy focusing on the things that are completely out of our control. To do so just creates tension and becomes demoralising as we are reminded how powerless we are. Instead, the most effective teachers spend their time focusing on what educator Steven Covey calls their 'circle of influence' – this is everything, big and small, that we can actually affect some change over. When we do this, Covey argues, our circle of influence actually grows as we become more adept and effective at knowing where to invest our energy and bringing about positive change.

## Be guided by your sense of purpose

In his book *Man's Search For Meaning*, Auschwitz survivor Victor Frankl writes, "Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of human freedoms: to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances." It teaches us that we cannot control how people treat us, but we can certainly control how we respond.

And our response is largely determined by our sense of purpose – the reason we became teachers in the first place. Frankl believed that people are primarily driven by a "striving to find a meaning in one's life", and that it is this sense of meaning that enables people to overcome painful experiences.

So, it is really important for us to remain intimately connected to our reason for being in the classroom. For many, it is to make a difference to young people's lives. When we work in the service of others, guided by a strong moral compass, values and a clear sense of purpose, we find we are able to withstand difficult situations and reclaim our agency because it is for the good of others.

## Take control of your CPD

If school budgets and restrictive timetables mean you don't feel like your school is prioritising your professional development, it's time to take it into your own hands. The growth of weekend CPD events run by teachers means

that it is possible to develop professionally in your own time (not ideal, but needs must).

Many educators and course providers are also delivering free webinars and lectures online during the pandemic. In addition there are many free courses on platforms such as Coursera and Edx, and so many great educational books being published every month, it means that improving your subject knowledge or pedagogy doesn't have to cost you the earth.

## Physician, heal thyself

One thing that is definitely within our 'circle of influence' is the factors that contribute to our physical and mental wellbeing. Professor Laurie Santos, an academic at Yale University and an expert in wellbeing, claims that many people underestimate just how important diet, sleep hygiene and physical activity are for our physical and mental health. These three areas are all, largely, within our control and small tweaks (such as going for a 30-minute walk every day) can really start to improve the quality of our lives.

The key with personal wellbeing is to experiment and work out what works for you. So, try out mindfulness meditation, yoga, a vegan diet, morning PE with Joe Wicks, a warm bath before bed or whatever else takes your fancy. Find the healthy habits of body and mind that contribute to your wellbeing and make them part of your daily routine.



## Start small

However you choose to exert your professional agency, a key is to start small. This is particularly important if you're feeling overwhelmed or lacking confidence. Start by choosing one small task to complete (it could be as simple as tidying your desk drawer). By completing small tasks, we gradually increase our sense of control, agency and mastery over time.

And bear in mind a novel experiment from 1976 that took place in an elderly care home. Researchers gave residents a plant for their room. One group was told to take care of the plant, be responsible for it and look after it. The other group of residents was told that their carers would take care of the plant for them. The first group of residents, whose

sense of control and agency increased as a result of simply taking care of something, reported higher levels of wellbeing and actually lived longer.

The global pandemic we find ourselves in has given us all a chance to step back, pause and reflect.

It provides us with an opportunity to reassess what really matters and maybe the opportunity to reshape the purpose of education and schools in the future.


To fully take advantage of this opportunity, we will need to exert our agency and start to take control of our profession. Doing so may be our best chance to improve our students' lives, and our own lives in the process. **TP**


*“The global pandemic we find ourselves in has given us all a chance to step back, pause and reflect”*



*Adrian Bethune is a part-time primary teacher and education policy*

*co-lead at the Mindfulness Initiative. Alongside Dr Emma Kell he co-authored *A Little Guide To Teacher Wellbeing and Self-Care* (Sage, 2020).*

 @adrianbethune

 [teachappy.co.uk](http://teachappy.co.uk)

# School Staff Wellbeing

We understand, now more than ever,  
how important it is to take care of your wellbeing

Download our **free Stress and Wellbeing** publication  
and receive tips and guidance to help you stay healthy

Available via the Juniper Education App  
for you to complete anytime, anywhere,  
at home or at school



Visit: [junipereducation.org/school-staff-stress-and-wellbeing/](https://junipereducation.org/school-staff-stress-and-wellbeing/)



# Stop talking about wellbeing

Free cake on a Friday is all very well, but if we really want to improve teachers' lives we need to tackle the root causes of stress

KAT HOWARD

From yoga classes and cake on a Friday to free tea and coffee and 'kindness fairies' leaving notes in pigeonholes, wellbeing has become somewhat of a disingenuous franchise within education during the time that I have been teaching. An industry of its own creation, the tokenism of wellbeing in schools infuriated me so much that I sat down and wrote a book about it.

It isn't that I have an issue with cake – far from it – but I do when this plethora of sticking-plaster strategies are used in a feeble attempt to make staff feel less overwhelmed. All too often there is a complete and utter disconnect between how we want people to feel, and how they actually feel. When teachers report sitting through late night wellbeing Insets, thinking about the to-do list waiting for them in the classroom, we have an aching level of irony that cannot be ignored.

Many teachers are leaving the profession, sometimes reluctantly. I spoke to a vast number of teachers about why the job felt insurmountable, and why they were considering leaving, and it became apparent that it wasn't that they didn't *want* to teach anymore, but that they didn't feel that what they did with their majority of their day *was* teaching. Instead, their time is taken up with burdensome, extended administration to log or track behaviour and marking

that feels both unsatisfying to complete and incapable of aiding improvement.

## Finding a balance

Alternatively, some teachers feel alienated by the complexities of working with people in schools: relationships with middle or senior management that gear towards the hierarchal or obstructive; a difficulty in navigating the turmoil of the shift from term time to the holidays and back again, or simply being able to find a balance between being a teacher and being a person in their own right. These tasks take teachers further and further away from the very reasons that brought them to be in the profession to begin with, and it ends up as nothing more than sheer

disillusionment.

In addition, as reports in the media share stories of teachers working 50+ hour weeks, we have to ask to what extent the teaching methodology of working around a family is genuine or authentic anymore. The largest proportion of leaving teachers are women between the ages of 30-39, where teaching has lost its shine as the profession to be a part of while raising children. Instead, we spend more time with the children of others than we do our own.

## Shining a light

We could be doing so much more to retain teachers than we do, but that is not to say that schools are without compassion and care; there is

merely a sense of disconnect at present. When I wrote my book, *Stop Talking About Wellbeing*, I wanted to highlight a range of ways that senior leaders and teachers can work symbiotically to improve conditions in schools. I explored aspects such as curriculum planning, feedback and how to build purposeful relationships between students, staff and parents. I wanted to shine a light on various schools that I had come across during my research that were getting things right, and taking a keen focus on valuing teachers as their most valuable commodity.

If we are to keep incredible teachers in schools, we must take a far more no-nonsense approach to partaking in an honest dialogue around complications, and work collaboratively to find solutions. Wellbeing is about being in a school where a sense of collective purpose is the status quo, and anything that doesn't help students to learn, or support teachers to teach, is disregarded as superfluous. **TP**



*Kat Howard is assistant principal at The Duston School in Northampton and author of*

*Stop Talking About Wellbeing (£15, John Catt Educational).*



@saysmiss



saysmiss.wordpress.com

# A new *NORMAL*

In these strange times we're having to consider the wellbeing of pupils and staff in a way we could never have predicted

ANDREW COWLEY

**A**s a global community we are living through unprecedented and frightening times. The word 'pandemic' in itself is alarming enough, and even those with a rudimentary knowledge of history will know of the Black Death in the 14th century and the inaccurately entitled 'Spanish Flu' of 1918-1920. Knowledge at the time of these two outbreaks was restricted, the first by speed and ignorance, the second by wartime censorship. Now however, we are dealing with an international outbreak in an era of 24-hour news, social media and endless conspiracy theories.

While the whole country unites in drawing together a strategy to deal with this unusual situation, schools have to make consideration of the wellbeing of their children and staff in ways we would never have imagined and were never trained to support. There are three factors which will help schools to manage fast changing and challenging events: being empathetic, being realistic and being proactive.

## Raiding cupboards

Many schools could see closure coming, not because of the clamour to do so and the declining rates of attendance as isolation became a strategy, but because we recognised that young children and social distancing don't sit together easily. Cupboards were raided for books to be sent home, teachers sought means to set work remotely and rotas were hastily drawn up so only a skeleton staff remained on site.

By the time of the mid-March announcement, these schools were as ready as they could have been. Some however were not; tales of schools where the whole staff was expected to attend on the first Monday of closure abounded on teacher social media.

Teachers and support staff were as scared as the rest of society, for their own health and that of their families, older relatives and pupils. However, in school this fear was exacerbated, given that as school staff, we were now potentially exposed to the virus even with such small numbers of children. Additionally, we were expected to teach remotely and online, something that none of us had been trained in and only those with the time or inclination to use digital platforms could understand. To expect teachers to function in circumstances they could never have envisaged is close to unimaginable, so to hear of teachers having to submit a daily log of their activities at home, of virtual 'learning walks' of their online lessons and of graded feedback indicated not only a lack of empathy but an unawareness of the harsh realities we now faced. Fortunately there were plenty of examples of proactive thinking to more than outbalance less supportive practices:

- Identifying which members of staff had health vulnerabilities, or with loved ones with similar issues, and insisting they were left off any rota for their own protection

- Planning to give staff not just days, but complete weeks away from school

- Explicit instructions for teachers not to be in front of a screen all day setting work for their students and to look after themselves first

- Virtual staff meetings through a range of online platforms, simply to allow teachers to hear their colleagues' voices

## Fluid situation

The most proactive and empathetic workplaces make the mental, as well as physical, wellbeing of their staff a priority. There is no 'normal' as things currently stand and even the 'new normal' is a constantly shifting and fluid situation.

Of more pressing concern though should be the mental wellbeing of our children. The first week of school closure might have seemed an adventure, and for all our quips about 'parents seeing what it is like for us', the reality for our children is that their isolation means being apart from their friends. The occasional video call, interaction through appropriate computer games or, if they neighbour each other, a socially-distanced conversation over the

fence, isn't going to make up for the daily interaction that playtimes and whole class lessons give our youngsters.

We don't know how long this isolation will last. Within the first fortnight of the enforced closure, parents expressed how difficult their children were finding the situation. Five hours of learning in school each day is supported by interaction with the teacher and each other; five hours with one parent and a differently-aged sibling isn't going to produce the same return. By summer the limited social contact and





confinement will leave an impact we can only guess at.

If we expect our children to have a 'normal' school day from 9am to 3pm with digital learning, we risk making them reliant upon a screen. Many pupils in areas of social deprivation don't have access to a computer or laptop and may not have wifi. Their parents may need access to the only device in the house for their own working-from-home commitments. We've spoken to children and parents for many years about digital safety and safe screen times, yet here we are setting work that in some cases can only be completed online.

### Staggered return

The acid test for schools will come when we return, be that in the summer or September. We will have to face a plethora of challenges that, truth be told, we needed to plan for from the outset of this crisis.

Schools will have a lot of anxiety from children, parents and staff, triggered by months of confinement at home and social circumstances that few, if any of us, were prepared to face or capable of dealing with.

Resilience will have been tested to the nth degree, tempers may be short as the pressures of unfamiliar domestic regimes and the realities caused by the inevitable economic pressures begin to bite. The harshest truth of life in the time of a pandemic is that we are going to have to deal with bereavement in school communities, more than at any time in our careers.

*“Any notion that children will walk into school and pick up exactly where they left off is naive at best”*

Can we return to 'normal' when the children come back? Any notion that children will walk into school and pick up exactly where they left off is naive at best. A staggered return may suit some children better, as six months out will mean they need retraining in the means of learning and of school expectations of behaviour.

Children who normally find attendance a challenge will likewise need support. Parental mental health will have to be recognised and supported, as will that of our colleagues in the most

challenging circumstances we have known. Let's remember too that we aren't merely facing this examination as a school but as part of a community.

The only certainty? That the schools we come back to need to be very different from those we left behind. We began with a brief history lesson. History will judge us for our role in this story. The schools which will be judged most favourably will be those who have at their beating heart not a spreadsheet but a strong moral compass. **TP**

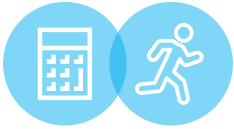


*Andrew Cowley is deputy headteacher at a primary school in south*

*London and co-founder of the Healthy Toolkit Twitter account and blog. He is also the author of The Wellbeing Toolkit (Bloomsbury Education).*

 @healthytoolkit

 healthyteachertoolkit.wordpress.com



# Use sports stats to teach data handling



Set your class challenges and use the results to create charts and tables, says **Ian Goldsworthy**

@ian\_goldsworthy

## WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Generate measurable data from sporting events
- Record data in a table
- Identify the headings to be used for a table
- Draw a bar chart

There are two types of sports fans in the world: those who derive hours of pleasure from watching the best in the world do their thing before going out and trying to replicate these athletic feats; and those who keep spreadsheets about them. Yes, sport has an almost unparalleled ability to unify and inspire, but it's a monument standing on a foundation of statistics. Encouraging your class to break a sweat exploring world record data is a great way to introduce pupils to different ways of handling and presenting data.

If pupils have a potato and enough space to toss it, you've got a shot put. If they don't have enough room to lob a spud you can always scale it down to counter-flicking level. While the weightlifting is no more, half an eggshell can support a massive amount of weight. Get

## START HERE

The Olympics have been postponed to next year when the world is hopefully back on its axis, but just because we're missing the Olympics this year, doesn't mean there can't be an Olympics.

Begin this lesson by exploring history's greatest sporting showcase with your class, starting in Ancient Greece and travelling forward to London 2012 – including the celebration of the NHS at the opening ceremony – and beyond.

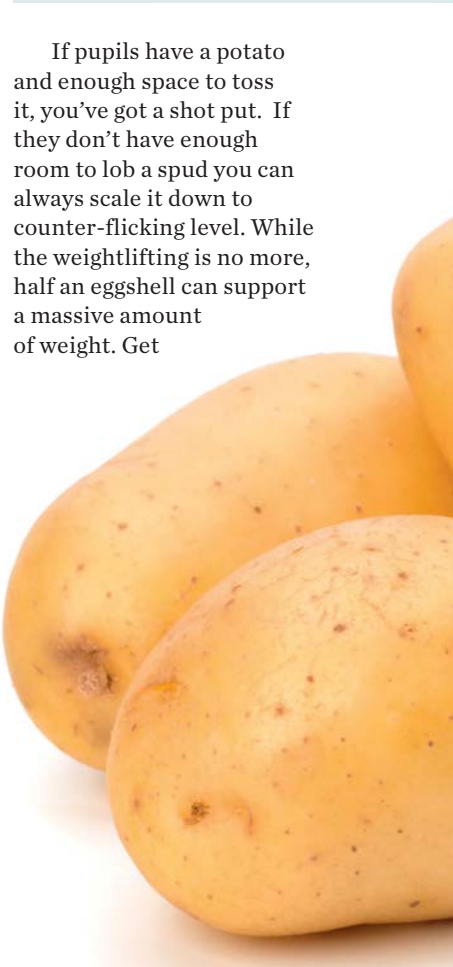


## MAIN LESSON

### 1 | HOME SPORTS

At the moment, events that require a large degree of space or mass participation are out. However, three or four events that can be easily replicated at home by anyone can still provide you with some data to interrogate.

So, while the sailing isn't happening, pupils can easily make boats from some cork, cocktail sticks and a fold of paper. Add a baking tray filled with water and some straws for the wind and you have everything you need for a regatta. Access to one step is all you need for a how-many-steps-can-you-do-in-a-minute event.







*“Whichever events you choose, the important thing is that the children are generating their own data to interrogate”*

four together and you’ve got a competition to see whose eggs can withstand the greatest amount of weight (a big pile of books is great for this).



## 2 | MAKING TABLES

Whichever events you choose, the important thing is that the children are generating their own data to interrogate. This data should be recorded in a table and it’s important to take some time to explain how a table works.

Before asking pupils to draw their own, take the time to look at a number of tables and clearly model how you are able to glean information from them.

It can be very helpful to encourage children to identify the headings required for their tables by getting them to spot what variable is changing (who is throwing the potato) and what we are measuring (how far the potato went).

Being able to read and draw a table is not an innate skill and if the time is not

taken to explicitly teach it early on the whole of data handling is built on very shaky ground.

## 3 | BAR CHARTS

Once you’ve got your data in a table, the time has come to turn it into a graph. Writing the headings from your table onto sticky notes can be a great trick for getting children to see how the labels from one way of presenting the data can be carried over to another.

Take it slow with drawing a graph and heavily scaffold what you are expecting them to do. Start off with a bar chart that is already complete to which they just have to add one more bar, then move to one with the axes already drawn and labelled.

Only once they have demonstrated the understanding of the building blocks of a bar chart should you consider asking pupils to draw their own (and even then, make sure you present them with a range of scales to help them choose the one that best fits their data).

*Ian Goldsworthy is a Y2 teacher at Manor Lodge School in Shenley, Hertfordshire.*

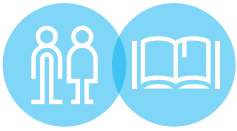
## EXTENDING THE LESSON



- If you need to present this lesson remotely, try recording a video of each of the events you’d like pupils to take part in. This will go a long way towards helping them understand what each event is.
- Video yourself drawing charts and provide children with appropriate paper or templates for each step of the drawing to avoid any misconceptions.
- When doing an event such as the potato shot put, line everyone up along one axis, mark out the other axis with some rope and paint everyone’s potato a different colour. Voila – instant bar chart.
- Repeating the events across a number of days will allow pupils to get stacks of data. With careful modelling, students can be shown how the data from day two can be stacked on top of day one while using the same axes.

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What is being changed in this event?
- What is being measured?
- If I had an additional value of  $x$  to put on your chart, how would you draw it?



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Consider how gender equality contributes to mutual respect
- Explore ideas of gender equality
- Ask relevant questions to extend knowledge and understanding
- Write for a range of different purposes
- Articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions

# Explore an inspirational sport story



Introduce the concept of gender equality by learning about runner Kathrine Switzer, says **Abby King**

[@abbykingwrites](#) [abbykingwrites.com](http://abbykingwrites.com)

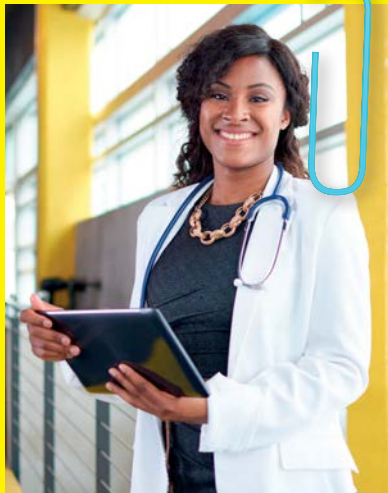
The story of inspirational sportswoman Kathrine Switzer, the first female to compete in a marathon, forms the basis for this engaging lesson. Pupils will discover that women were not always allowed to compete in some sports and will have the opportunity to explore their own attitudes to gender inequality. Asking the children to participate in a drama to persuade the head of the marathon association that women should be allowed to run will appeal to pupils' strong sense of justice and motivate them to produce some fantastic outcomes.



4:25 – How do you think Kathrine felt when she got pushed by the race official? Do you think it's OK to treat someone like that?

START HERE

Prepare for the lesson by downloading our gender and jobs Powerpoint from [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/gender-equality](http://teachwire.net/teaching-resources/gender-equality). It shows people who do different jobs, including a female doctor, male nurse, male ballet dancer and female footballer. Before showing the images to the children, read out the profession and ask the children to draw a picture of the person doing this job. Then reveal the image and talk about any differences. Why do we think some jobs are done by men and some are done by women?



MAIN LESSON

1 | KATHRINE'S STORY

Check that pupils understand the concept of a marathon first, then hook their attention by watching a video of the compelling story of Kathrine Switzer, the first woman to compete in one, at [tinyurl.com/tpkathrine](http://tinyurl.com/tpkathrine).

Stop the video at the following points to discuss:

1:16 – how did Kathrine's father encourage her? How do you think this influenced her attitude to running?

1:58 – Kathrine's coach suggests that women are too weak and fragile to run a marathon. How do you think she felt when she heard that?

Stop the video at 5:23 and ask pupils to retell Kathrine's story and talk about the values she showed, such as courage and perseverance. Explain that this event took place in 1967 and help the children work out how long ago this was. Was it fair that women weren't allowed to run in the marathon?

2 | HOT-SEATING

The sense of injustice in Kathrine's story will be highly motivating for the children. Introduce the idea of interviewing her and ask the children to generate questions they could ask.

Talk about the difference between closed questions, which only have a one-word





*“The sense of injustice in Kathrine’s story will be highly motivating for the children”*

or ask a confident child or another adult to do it.

### 3 | SPEECH WRITING

Download our pre-prepared letter from the Association of International Marathons at [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/gender-equality](https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/gender-equality) and show it to the children after the drama, explaining that they have been invited to argue the case for why women should be able to participate in marathons at their next meeting.

Model writing a short persuasive speech that gives reasons for the argument. Help the children understand that to structure their work they will need an opening statement such as ‘We have come here today to argue that...’ and a concluding statement such as ‘and that’s why we believe...’.

Asking the children to work in threes and providing some sentences starters will be a helpful scaffold for those who might find the activity challenging. Once pupils have completed their speech, ask them to practise reading it aloud, modelling how to use pacing and intonation to emphasise their argument.

When the children are ready, set up a drama where they present their case to the head of the Association of International Marathons. Inject some fun by asking your headteacher to play this role, if possible.

*Abby King has worked in KSI and 2 and is a class teacher at St John’s CE Primary in Birmingham.*

## EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Watch the rest of the video to find out what Kathrine Switzer did after competing in the marathon. Ask the children to create a presentation about her life and work, focusing on how she used her fame to help other women.
- Imagine you are going to present Kathrine Switzer with an award for all her work in women’s sports. Ask the children to design and create the award and explain their reasons for why their design would be appropriate to celebrate Kathrine’s achievements.
- Read Bill’s New Frock by Anne Fine and help the children explore the issue of gender inequality further. Can they think of any examples of this today? Can they see any of these happening in their school or community? What can they do to help change things?

## Free online resources

Download accompanying resources to help you deliver this lesson from [teachwire.net/teaching-resources/gender-equality](https://www.teachwire.net/teaching-resources/gender-equality)



Different jobs



Ballet dancer

answer, and open questions, which will give us more information. Which questions might be better and why? You’ll want to model some examples, so the children feel confident with generating their own questions. Furthermore, doing this in mixed ability pairs will feel supportive for children who might find this more challenging.

Ask each pair to come up with two questions, then take feedback from the class. Are there any duplicates? How can we select our best five or six questions as a class? Ensure there are questions about why women were excluded from marathons and how they felt about it.

Once you’ve clarified who will ask which questions, use drama or hot-seating to interview Kathrine. Play the role of Kathrine yourself

## USEFUL QUESTIONS

- Have you ever felt like you couldn’t do something just because you were a boy or a girl?
- Have you ever seen someone being treated unfairly because of their gender?
- Will that question give us lots of information or not?

Science



WHAT THEY'LL LEARN

- Ask relevant scientific questions
- Set up an investigation, making appropriate choices
- Record findings in tables and graphs
- Identify patterns and explain findings
- Use scientific vocabulary

# Do physical differences affect ability?



Investigate whether certain attributes of sportspeople correlate with ability, says **Julianne Britton**

[@juliannebritton](#) [missbritton.co.uk](http://missbritton.co.uk)

In this lesson, children will use scientific enquiry skills while being active and working in teams to answer questions such as whether children with larger hands throw further. Prior learning should include some knowledge of the skeleton such as naming bones, joints and their functions. Due to the physical element of this lesson, you may decide it is appropriate for children to wear PE kits and carry out their learning in the school hall or outside. Use your results to create scatter graphs that prove or disprove pupils' hypotheses.



START HERE

Play 'Simon Says', asking children to complete a range of simple actions and exercises. Within your instructions, use names of bones to recap prior learning, eg "Simon says, 'Put your hands on your pelvis'". Also, make sure you ask children to complete actions that use different types of joints eg ball and socket, hinge, pivot. At the end of the game, discuss the bones and joints used. Do pupils remember the names of any more bones? What are the main functions of the skeleton? (Protection, movement and support). What other body parts are needed to help us move? Demonstrate how muscles, bones and tendons work together when we move.



MAIN LESSON

1 INVESTIGATION SET-UP

Share a video showing the movements of different athletes. Explain that this lesson will focus on the movements of sportspeople, investigating how physical attributes such as height, leg length and hand size can affect athletic ability.

Ask children what physical attributes they think would make a good runner, thrower or jumper. Using their answers, show pupils how to come up with a hypothesis – an idea they want to test. In groups, they should decide upon a hypothesis in the form of a question, eg:

- Do people with longer legs run faster?
- Do people with larger hands throw further?
- Do shorter people jump higher?

For support, you may want to provide some children with potential investigations to choose from. Once groups have decided on their hypotheses, give children various questions to discuss, eg:

- What equipment will you need?
- What will you measure?
- How will you make sure the test is fair?

Some children may require additional adult support or sentence stems to complete this activity.





## “Ask children what physical attributes they think would make a good runner, thrower or jumper”

correlation. Give children time to enter results and produce their graphs. This is a great opportunity to incorporate IT skills within your science lessons. The graphs can then be printed off at the end of the lesson along with photographs from the investigation.

### 3 DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Looking at their results and the graphs they have produced, each group should be able to come up with a statement to explain their findings, such as ‘We found that the longer someone’s arm, the further they could throw’ or ‘We found no correlation between hand size and the distance thrown’.

Groups should then share their statements with the rest of the class. Do children think that these statements will be true for everyone, everywhere? Why or why not?

Explain that people are different in so many different ways; there is not just one characteristic that will affect their ability to complete different exercises. There are many different factors, such as diet, fitness, experience, health, etc. Because there are so many factors, we can only look for general patterns. Discuss how their investigations could be improved. Children should then write brief evaluations explaining what they have learnt, any problems with their investigations and what they could have done differently.

*Julianne Britton, a qualified teacher with eight years’ experience, is a private tutor and author of educational resources.*

### EXTENDING THE LESSON



- Discuss the importance of looking after our bones and muscles. Talk about the need for different vitamins and minerals and the foods you can find them in, as well as the benefits of regular exercise. Children can present this information in an informative poster, leaflet or presentation.
- Discuss how muscles work with bones and tendons to help us move. Watch a relevant BBC video at [tinyurl.com/tpbones](http://tinyurl.com/tpbones) then create your own model of a moving arm using cardboard tubes and balloons, like the one described at [tinyurl.com/tpballoons](http://tinyurl.com/tpballoons).
- If teaching UKS2, teach a maths lesson with a focus on finding averages. Demonstrate how to calculate the mean, mode, median and range. Use the results from this lesson or collect more data. This is also a good opportunity to take a closer look at scatter graphs and interpreting data.

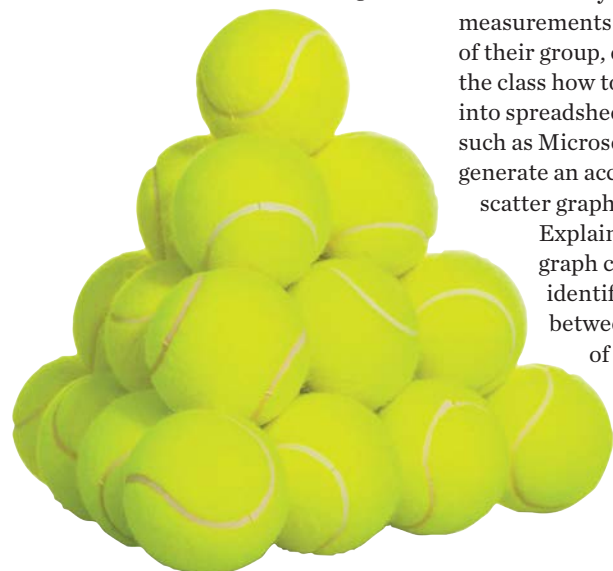
### 2 RECORDING RESULTS

Each group should now carry out their investigation, taking measurements and recording results in a table. During this

time, speak to each group about their investigation. This will help you to assess pupil progress throughout the lesson.

When they have taken the measurements of each member of their group, demonstrate to the class how to enter results into spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel and generate an accompanying scatter graph.

Explain how a scatter graph can help us to identify patterns between two sets of data. Show examples of graphs that show positive, negative and no



### USEFUL QUESTIONS

- What are the three main functions of the skeleton?
- What physical features do you think would make you a better swimmer, athlete or cyclist?
- What data do you need to collect?
- How will you make sure it is a fair test?

# Top of the class

Resources and activities to bring fresh inspiration to your classroom...



1

## Diabetes support

The InDependent Diabetes Trust offers support and information to people with diabetes, their families and health professionals on the issues that are important to them. Its helpline offers a friendly understanding ear when the going gets tough. IDDT supplies information packs to parents and teachers so they understand the needs of children with diabetes in school and provides much-needed aid to children with diabetes in developing countries. Diabetes can cause serious long-term complications and a cure is still elusive, so IDDT funds essential research. As a registered charity IDDT relies entirely on voluntary donations. For more information or to join, visit [iddtinternational.org](http://iddtinternational.org)



3

## Strength to strength

Juniper Education is a comprehensive education support service, established to help schools go from strength to strength. Its award-winning school effectiveness services are proven to help with a wide range of requirements. That's why over 7,000 schools across 20 countries trust it to support them with everything from whole-school improvement to pupil tracking, HR, finance support and much more. [junipereducation.org](http://junipereducation.org)

## Question everything

Learning by Questions (LbQ) addresses two of the big issues facing schools upon reopening: how to quickly identify and narrow gaps in learning, and how to effectively educate learners both in class and at home. The innovative teaching, learning and assessment tool features 80,000 automatically marked curriculum-aligned questions that give constructive feedback to learners as they answer them. This is proven to deepen understanding, accelerate learning and boost progress. Book a free online demo at [lbq.org/backtoschool](http://lbq.org/backtoschool)



4



## One-stop shop

Hope Education provides educational resources to nurseries, schools and parents. There are over 30,000 products to choose from, covering all curriculum areas, as well as arts and crafts, stationery and much more. View the entire range via the website, where you can also visit the blog and view lots of free activity ideas for home learning. Hope Education was voted ERA Supplier of the Year in the Education Resource Awards 2020. [hope-education.co.uk](http://hope-education.co.uk)



## Inspiring spaces

Timotay Playscapes creates inspirational outdoor spaces for schools and early years settings. To support the Sport Premium initiative, it has developed a proven range of engaging products that will motivate children and increase participation in sports and help to reduce obesity. Contact Timotay via email for your free guide and consultation at [enquiries@timotayplayscapes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@timotayplayscapes.co.uk)



# 5 REASONS TO TRY... Manor House & Ashbury Hotels

Pupils will love our sport, craft and leisure facilities



## 30 SECOND BRIEFING

We are a sport and craft complex like no other. With unrivalled indoor and outdoor facilities, we are the ideal place for your next residential. Simply choose the activities you would like to take part in and our dedicated activity coordinator will put together a bespoke programme just for you.

### 1 ENJOY GROUP ACTIVITIES

We have four indoor sports halls and two outdoor pitches (64m x 100m 3G pitch and 54m x 91m multi-use gaming area) so you can enjoy our great range of sports whatever the weather. All activities are run by members of our friendly activity team, allowing you the chance to enjoy quality time bonding with your group. Team sports include five-a-side football, rounders, uni-hoc, continuous cricket, basketball, netball, dodgeball, volleyball and water polo.

### 2 MAKE A RACKET

Our great range of activities provide a fantastic opportunity for children to take part in sports they haven't tried before, and learn new skills in ones they have. All ages and abilities are welcome. Our racket sports, in particular, are unrivalled. We have seven indoor and four outdoor tennis courts, 12 badminton and short tennis courts, squash and junior tennis. We also offer free group tennis coaching with our LTA performance coach. With vast experience, our coach is perfectly placed to provide help and guidance.

### 3 TRY SOMETHING NEW

The best part of any holiday is trying out new things and at the Manor and Ashbury you can do just that. We have an extensive range of activities for you to try, including archery, bowls, roller skating, 'ice' skating, multi-sport



simulators, laser shooting and snooker. The Ashbury hotel is also home to the world's ninth largest golf resort, with a choice of over 99 holes of golf. All of these activities can be enjoyed for free as part of your programme.

### 4 GET CRAFTY

Our unique craft centres give students the opportunity to take part in over 20 different crafts, learn new skills and create some fantastic products that they can be truly proud of. Our selection of crafts includes pottery transfers, candle making, fabric painting and our

#### Contact:

Call 0800 955 0242,  
email [schools@manorhousehotel.co.uk](mailto:schools@manorhousehotel.co.uk)  
or visit [manorhousehotel.co.uk](http://manorhousehotel.co.uk)

latest addition, glass fusion. Tuition from our expert craft tutors is available free of charge. A small charge applies for materials used during the classes, but all finished products can be taken home.

### 5 TIME TO UNWIND

After a busy day of activities it's great to be able to let your hair down. Our range of leisure facilities offer just that. Whether you fancy a late afternoon swim, or an evening in our games zone, there is something for everyone to enjoy. Other facilities include two games zones, pedal karts, flume slides, three indoor swimming pools, ten lanes of ten pin bowling, fun house, table tennis, 18-hole adventure golf course and more - all free of charge!

## KEY POINTS

Full-board dining from our unlimited hot and cold buffets. Vegetarian, vegan, gluten free and other dietary requirements are catered for.

Outstanding choice of 80 free activities. Choose your favourites and your designated coordinator will put together a bespoke programme for your group.

All sports activities and equipment are included in the price of your break, so there's no need to worry about hidden costs during your stay.

Our 3G pitch is FA and WRU accredited, making it perfect for hosting training sessions and tournaments for all levels of football and rugby.

HISTORY →

# The National Archives History Toolkit

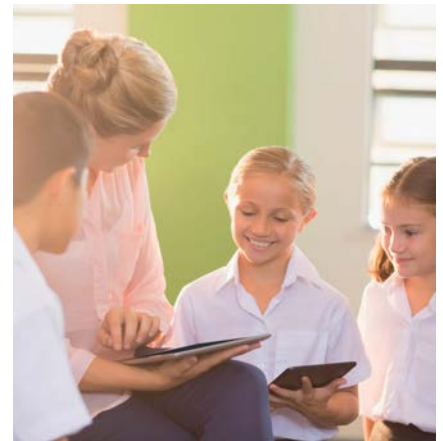
Downloadable historical sources and accompanying KS1/2 lesson plans, activities and worksheets



## AT A GLANCE

- Extensive resource to support the teaching of history at KS1 and KS2
- Detailed plans for high-impact lessons
- Source material from The National Archives
- Photocopiable worksheets and activities
- Closely follows national curriculum guidelines

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



First, I feel that I must declare a conflict of interest: I absolutely love history. One of the great pleasures of teaching has been watching the joy and fascination of children as they connect with the past.

Obviously, one of the best ways to spark pupils' interest is to give them direct access to original sources and significant artefacts. However, there are only so many trips to museums and historical sites you can organise. Anyway, some of the most interesting pieces are either kept locked away or are dispersed around different collections. How marvellous, then, to have them delivered straight into your classroom in one neat package.

The National Archives History Toolkit for Primary Schools (Bloomsbury, 2020) is a superbly conceived history resource for teachers. Written by Clare Horrie and Rachel Hillman – history education experts with strong links to The National Archives – it provides an extensive range of easy-to-follow plans for impactful lessons. It covers all the key areas of study laid out in the national curriculum. Best of all, it teaches through the use of original source material and quality images of unique artefacts.

The questioning approach is particularly appealing. Lessons are often kickstarted by

the early introduction of a document, image or artefact which is used as a stimulus for discussion, rather than being explained straight away. These range from coins and jewellery to written official documents, such as the prison record of a 13-year-old Victorian boy, and can be accessed directly from the Bloomsbury website. The authors even suggest probing questions to ask in case your mind has gone blank.

For each lesson, there are a variety of fascinating sources. Fortunately, the authors also provide transcripts of documents where the lettering is hard to make out or needs to be translated. It is also rather moving to be able to stare into the eyes of real people in photographs from more recent periods.

Some teachers might lament that there is not room to cover every key character or moment from history. We all have our particular favourites, don't we? Nevertheless, there is an impressive range of subject matter covered here and there's no reason why teachers can't adapt the format for their own particular historical hobby-horses, if they so wish. Either way, this book should prove to be an invaluable asset to any primary teacher. And for history addicts like me, it's simply a fascinating resource to browse through.

teach  
PRIMARY

## VERDICT

- ✓ Easy to use
- ✓ Extensive coverage of the curriculum
- ✓ Excellent use of source materials from The National Archives
- ✓ Develops questioning approach to history
- ✓ Stimulates class discussion

## UPGRADE IF...

You want to spice up your history lessons with fascinating source materials from The National Archives.

RRP £39.99, [bloomsbury.com](http://bloomsbury.com)



SCIENCE →

# Primary Science Teaching Trust



Useful free resources from an organisation that champions good science in schools

## AT A GLANCE

- Registered charity that promotes excellence in science teaching
- Known for working with schools and academics to develop best practice in science
- A range of free resources for enhancing science provision
- Fun activities using everyday materials

REVIEWED BY: MIKE DAVIES



Most people would agree that we are going to need skilled and imaginative scientists more than ever over the coming decades. So thank goodness for the Primary Science Teaching Trust (PSTT) which is working to cultivate the fertile ground in which we can nurture future generations of geniuses.

PSTT is a registered charity devoted to promoting excellence in the teaching of science. It is determined to ensure that children do not lose their natural curiosity in, and enthusiasm for, the world around them, regardless of whether they ultimately pursue a career in a scientific field. It aims to do this by working with schools, promoting collaboration with academia and helping to develop teachers that are science experts. However, it also provides a range of free resources to help pupils catch the science bug.

After-school activities are becoming an increasingly important way to expand provision and relieve pressure on jam-packed timetables. PSTT has created a range of free packs to help schools set up science or STEM clubs. They are easy to follow regardless of whether you're a trained teacher, and use everyday materials. Best of all, they're great fun. The resources cover a range of ages and

abilities – I was particularly impressed to see a pack of sensory activities aimed specifically at SEN pupils.

Another set of resources that is bound to be a big hit is the Chain Reaction project. Whether it's complicated domino-toppling tracks or watching Wallace (Gromit's companion) being propelled out of bed and into his trousers, we all love watching eccentric mechanisms. So who could resist the chance to build their own Heath Robinson-style machine? This resource sets children the challenge of combining their DT and engineering skills to create their own mechanical chain reaction.

The learning doesn't stop at the school gate, however. PSTT has teamed up with Science Sparks to create Science Fun at Home, a series of activities to enjoy with the family. Each resource sheet comes with simple, clear instructions for exploring scientific concepts using household resources. What's more, with new activities being released every Wednesday, this is a resource that is set to grow and grow. With such a range of good ideas being offered for free, it's well worth experimenting with PSTT.



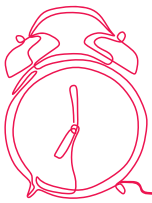
## VERDICT

- ✓ Well-established organisation
- ✓ Free resources that leave your budget intact
- ✓ Created by expert science teachers
- ✓ Easy to follow
- ✓ For use at school, after school and at home

## UPGRADE IF...

You want to develop your staff into science specialists, enhance your provision and inspire your pupils.

Browse free resources at [pstt.org.uk](http://pstt.org.uk)



# DAY in the LIFE



We follow a teacher from first alarm to lights out during lockdown...

## WAKING UP

Structure and routine is important to me. I wake up at 6.45am to help differentiate the working week from the weekend. Before my school closed I got up at 5.45am! The first thing I do is give my cat Oliver a morning snuggle, then I drink coffee, watch the news and have a sneaky look at Twitter before getting dressed.



**EMMA STOKES IS A Y2 TEACHER AND KS1/EY LEAD IN SOUTH LONDON**

[@emmccatt](#)



## MY MORNING

I split my weekly to-do list into daily tasks, then I answer work emails, communicate with colleagues on Slack, plan and prepare online lessons and respond to pupils and parents via email and Seesaw. Being apart from my pupils is heartbreaking so I love being able to respond to the work they send me.

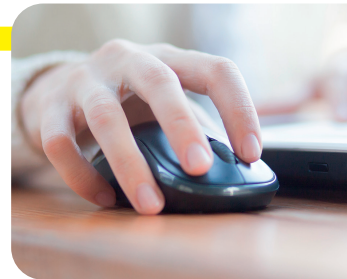
## MY AFTERNOON

I go outside for my hour of exercise. I'm not used to staring at my laptop all day. After that, it's back to the to-do list. I sign off at 4pm and read or watch Netflix.



## LUNCHTIME

I'm really into making fancy sandwiches at the moment. I'm a vegetarian and am always trying exciting new fillings. My boyfriend and I use this time to chat and switch off. After lunch I scroll through social media and message my friends and family.



## MY EVENING

While we're stuck inside I'm trying to cook more and learn new recipes. After dinner I upload my lessons and write a daily message for my class. I then video chat with my family. It's lovely being able to see my grandparents.



## BEDTIME

I get into bed at 10pm. I turn my phone off half an hour before lights out, but I like to play Animal Crossing first – I'd highly recommend it to stressed teachers! It's very calm and peaceful.

## QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

- ❖ **Career plan B?** Penguin zookeeper – I'm a huge animal lover.
- ❖ **Fave podcasts?** Noble Blood about history's most interesting royals; Wolverine: The Long Night, a must for Marvel fans.
- ❖ **Shows you binge?** The American Office, Westworld, Schitt's Creek, classic action films from the 80s.
- ❖ **Must-read books?** The Gendered Brain by Dr Gina Rippon which debunks many sexist myths and stereotypes; Cinderella of the Nile by Beverley Naidoo which retells the earliest known story of Cinderella.



# You are all doing an amazing job!

Marvellous Mobiles



Supplier  
of the Year  
Education Resource Awards  
**2020**

Light Pad



E.a.R.L Coding Robot



Sensory Suitcase



Electronic Phonics



“ We appreciate that parents, practitioners and teachers are having to work extremely hard under exceptionally challenging circumstances. We want you to know your work is appreciated and that we are still here to support you.

You can find all the resources you need for the classroom and for home learning at [www.hope-education.co.uk](http://www.hope-education.co.uk) as well as access to our blog with helpful advice, free activities and ideas.

We are still open for business and processing orders under strict employee care guidelines whilst working hard to keep stock levels high on all key items, ensuring schools and parents can get the resources they need, when they need them.

Should you need anything at all, we are here and proud to help and support you. ”



**Chris Mahady,**  
Managing Director.  
Hope Education

The home of inspirational and best value resources for **Teachers**



Inspire · Create · Educate

Be inspired at [www.hope-education.co.uk](http://www.hope-education.co.uk)





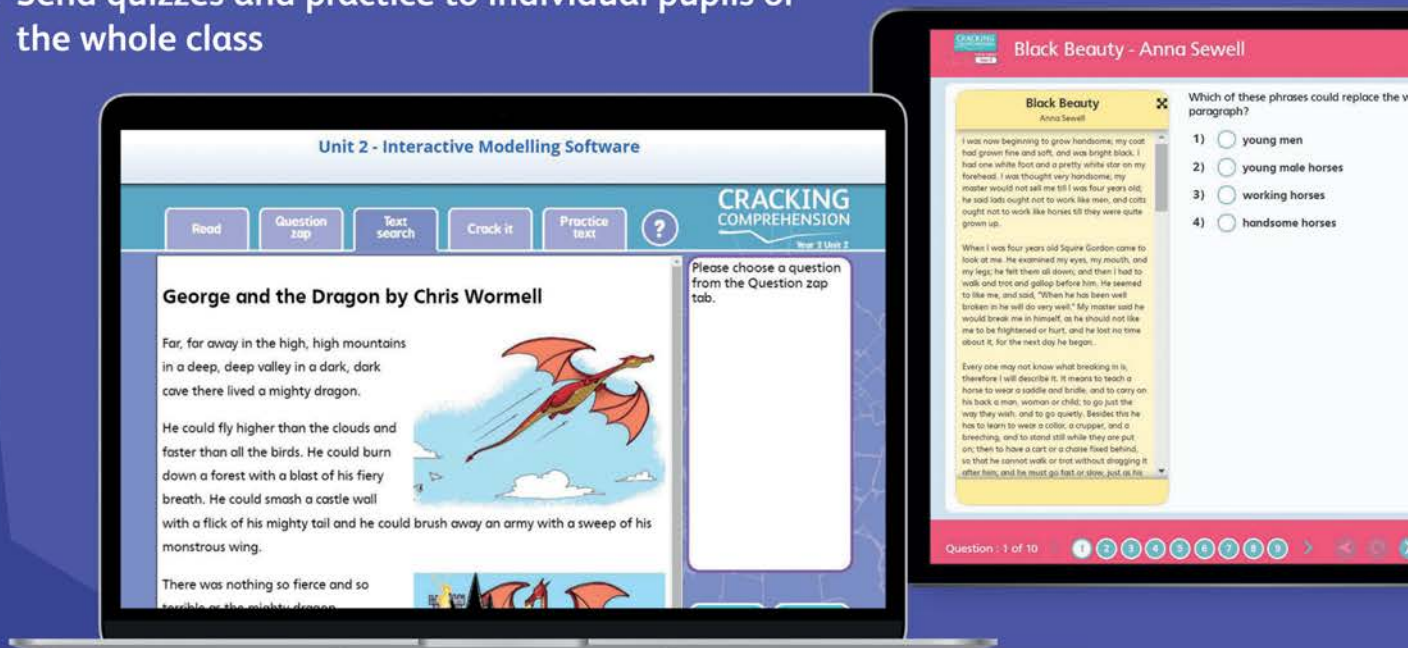
# Boost Comprehension anywhere, anytime

With 3 months free access to  
*Cracking Comprehension*

## CRACKING COMPREHENSION

Continue embedding key reading comprehension skills  
by allocating activities to pupils at home

- Allocate texts, comprehension questions and quizzes to classes at home
- Measure individual and class progress with the reporting dashboard
- Send quizzes and practice to individual pupils or the whole class



Sign-up for 3 months free at  
[risingstars-uk.com/CC-3-months](https://risingstars-uk.com/CC-3-months)



# Boost Comprehension anywhere, anytime

With 3 months free access to  
*Cracking Comprehension*

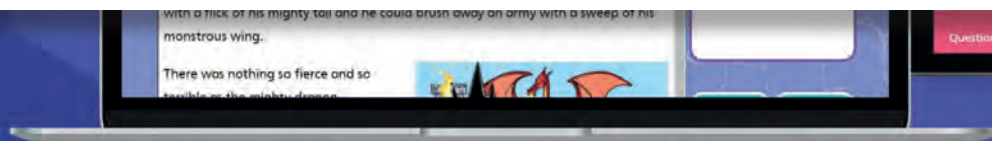
**CRACKING  
COMPREHENSION**

Share resources with pupils at home  
with 3 months free access

[risingstars-uk.com/3-months](https://risingstars-uk.com/3-months)

**RISING STARS**  
Teach ★ Learn ★ Shine

[risingstars-uk.com/3-months](https://risingstars-uk.com/3-months)



Sign-up for 3 months free at  
[risingstars-uk.com/CC-3-months](https://risingstars-uk.com/CC-3-months)

**RISING STARS**  
Teach ★ Learn ★ Shine