

Teacher notes

Full teaching sequence: The story of Baba Yaga

Model Text - A Mother's Blessing by Margaret Bateson-Hill

In this two-week unit, pupils will read a version of a tale of Baba Yaga, a folklore character from Russian and Slavic storytelling. They will have an opportunity to learn some vocabulary connected with traditional food preparation. It will culminate in them writing their own retelling of a Baba Yaga folktale or an original story involving similar themes. This unit could be used as part of a geography topic about another European country.

Two fully resourced lessons are included for Year 3 English objectives:

1. Using a thesaurus to find synonyms
2. Writing direct speech where the reporting clause follows the speech.

Teacher notes, teaching slides and activity sheets are included to deliver these in a fun and interesting way, linked to the model text where appropriate.

There are opportunities to revisit previous writing skills such as the use of expanded noun phrases for description and specification and commas for lists. There are also opportunities to teach other aspects of the year 3 curriculum, such as extending sentences with a wider range of conjunctions, the use of conjunctions, adverbials and prepositions to express time and cause, the development of settings, characters and plot, and the use of paragraphs organised around a theme, scene or period of time.

Phase 1 – Familiarisation with the text

Activity	Teaching points	Task
1) Hook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introduce a range of props, one at a time. Does anyone know what connects these items: pestle, mortar, chicken leg, doll, witch's hat, skull, lantern (or any alternative items from the story)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In groups, explore images/videos and discuss what children can see.
2) Read the model text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What type of writing is this? (Folktale). How do pupils know? ➤ Read the model text together. ➤ Explore the verb forms and tenses (past tense for the storytelling but imperative verbs for the commands and some present tense within dialogue). ➤ Revisit other skills from previous years (commas for lists, coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions) and find examples if these in the model text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pupils highlight examples of words and phrases revisited in the teaching points (noun phrases, prepositional phrases, conjunctions, direct speech, descriptions and figurative language).
3) Discuss new vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use the word cards showing Tier 2 vocabulary (wisdom, delicious); Tier 3 (pestle, mortar) linked to traditional methods of food preparation; and statutory spelling words (believe, promise, strange, notice, separate). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Find examples of these words in the model text and use clues in the sentences to infer their meanings. ➤ Complete the vocabulary match activity included with the vocabulary cards.
4) Writing opportunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Look at a pestle and mortar image (included in the magical potion writing activity) and think how it might normally be used (as opposed to Baba Yaga's weird flying device!). 	

Phase 1 – Familiarisation with the text

Activity	Teaching points	Task
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss possible ingredients for making a magic potion, especially ones that might need to be ground into a powder (sharks' teeth, dragonfly wings, etc.) ➤ What might the magic potion do? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pupils invent a recipe for preparing a magic potion. ➤ Encourage them to write four or five stages using imperative verbs and as much of the tier 2 and tier 3 vocabulary as possible. ➤ Pupils complete the task using the writing magical potions activity sheet.

Phase 2 – Teaching and rehearsing writing skill

Activity	Teaching points	Task
1) Vocabulary Using a thesaurus to find synonyms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ See resource 1 	
2) Grammar Writing and punctuating direct speech.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ See resource 2 	
3) To use a range of descriptive techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Discuss how noun phrases, prepositional phrases and figurative language can help to create rich descriptions of settings and characters. ➤ Find examples in the model text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pupils write a paragraph, describing a witch's house that is different from, but just as weird as, Baba Yaga's, making sure that they use noun phrases, prepositional phrases and figurative language.

Phase 3 – Application Of Writing Skills

Activity	Teaching points	Task
1) Investigate the features of a folktale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Reread the model text as a class. ➤ Look at the how to write a folktale poster. Can children find examples of these features in the model text? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Look at other examples of folktales and find examples of features from the poster included in the resource pack.
2) Plan writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Look at the writer's craft task using the instruction sheet and introduce the task (to retell a folktale). Pupils should use the 'report margin planner' to organise their writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pupils plan their own retelling of the Baba Yaga folktale or an original folktale following similar themes, using the margin planner.
3) Writing a folktale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Remind pupils what is needed for their writing, using the how to... poster, and recapping writing skills where necessary. ➤ Look at the writing skills check as a class and discuss how they could use these skills in their writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Give pupils opportunity to write their folktale over several sessions. ➤ Allow pupils time to proofread and edit their writing using the writing skills check at regular intervals. Ask them to focus on changing grammar, punctuation and vocabulary when editing their work.