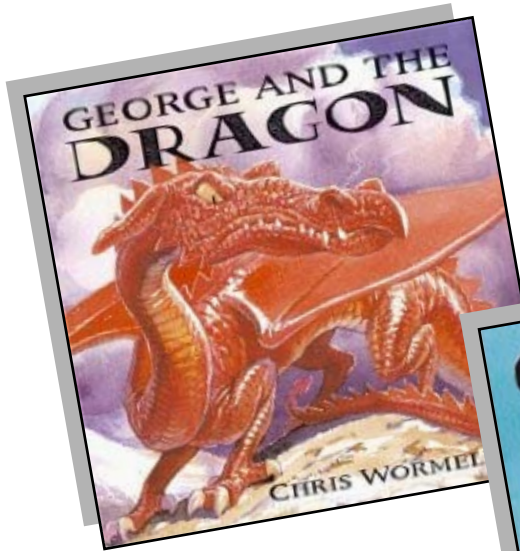
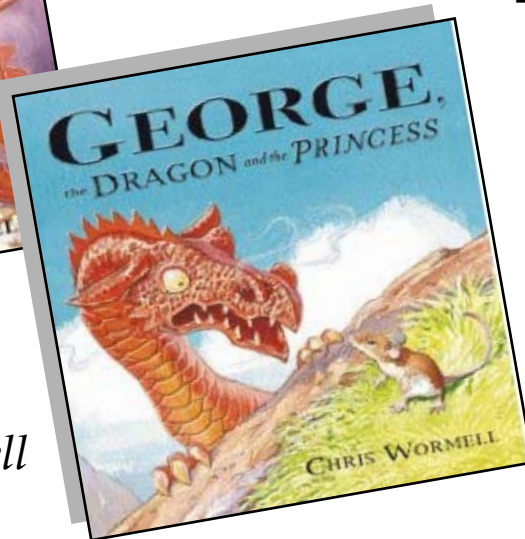


TEACHING GUIDE by NIKKI GAMBLE



GEORGE AND THE DRAGON

GEORGE, THE DRAGON AND THE PRINCESS



by Christopher Wormell



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CURRICULUM CONTEXT

George and the Dragon and its Sequel *George, the Dragon and the Princess* could be incorporated into a narrative unit on stories with fantasy settings (Y1).

THE BOOK

Synopsis:

George and the Dragon is a straightforward story, which challenges preconceptions about dragons and makes the point that even the most ferocious creatures can have their own fears and that these fears may not be very rational.

The story starts as a traditional place in a land long ago and far away. We are quickly introduced to a fearsome dragon that is responsible for the chaos and

Christopher Wormell was born in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, in 1955. On leaving school in 1973 he studied painting with his father while working at numerous temporary part time jobs. In 1982, inspired by the work of Thomas Bewick, Reynolds Stone and Charles Tunnicliffe, he took up wood engraving. He became a full time illustrator in 1984 and began writing and illustrating his own picture books in 1999. Recent work includes a stamp design for the Royal Mail millennium set, Neighbourhood Watch images for the Metropolitan Police Force, package designs for Waitrose and a billboard poster campaign for Adnams Beer.



His work has been exhibited at The Victoria and Albert Museum (1998), The Fouts and Fowler Gallery, London (1990) and The Artworks Gallery, London.

Recent picturebooks include: *Molly and the Night Monster* (2008) *George and the Dragon* (2003) *George, the Dragon and the Princess* (2008) *The Wild Girl* (2006) *The Sea Monster* (2006) *Henry and the Fox* (2007) and *The Big Ugly Monster and the Little Stone Rabbit* (2004)

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destruction of the land. On one raid, the dragon captures the princess and takes her back to his lair. In fact it turns out that the dragon is afraid of mice and when a mouse called George moves next door the dragon decides it is time to make a quick exit. The princess returns to her castle and the mouse, George makes himself at home there. It's a happy and satisfying ending.

George, the Dragon and the Princess is the sequel to *George and the Dragon*. In this story, we have a close-up of George's world. We see that in fact he is quite timid himself and very clumsy. However, his ability to scare dragons is very handy and when the dragon returns to try and capture the princess, George is on hand to put a stop to it. In fact it all looks like an enjoyable game.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Display

Set up a classroom display featuring dragons. Include a range of books including fiction, picture-books and poetry. See resources below. Add to the display, reproductions of Dragon's in art such as Uccello's *George and the Dragon*; images of Chinese dragons; fantasy art; dragons in heraldry and the Welsh flag.

Include dragon words in the display e.g. Dragon's den, dragon's lair, fire-breathing, talons.

See also the Write Away In Focus article on Dragons's

George and the Dragon

Before reading

Talk to the class about stories they have read or heard which feature dragons. What do dragons look like? What do they do?

Map out their ideas on the whiteboard or a large sheet of paper.

Ask if anyone knows the story of George and the Dragon.

Have available a reproduction of Uccello's *Saint George and the Dragon*

The painting featured in The National Gallery's Take One Picture project and there is a full set of teachers' notes available on the National Gallery website, if you want to do some work related to the painting
http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/education/teachers_notes/uccello.htm

Talk to the children about the story that the painting tells draw attention to details.

First reading

Look at the front cover of *George and the Dragon*. Ask the children what they imagine this story will be about.

Invite them to suggest words to describe the dragon e.g. fierce, strong, frightening etc. and list them.

What are the clues that give us this description for the dragon? (his teeth, expression, eyes)

Open the book at the title page. Have a look at the vignette of the castle. Ask the children who they think lives there. Why do they think that?

Start to read the story expressively and allowing time for the children to explore the illustrations. Possible prompts:

- What would it be like to live in the high, high mountains, far, far away?
- Can you see the dark, dark cave?
- Who lives here? How can you tell? (smoke coming from cave)
- Do you think this is a friendly dragon? Why? Why not? (notice bones and skulls outside the dragon's cave)

Read up to 'A big secret, well, actually, a very small secret...'

In pairs, invite the children to suggest what secret they think the dragon has. Allow about 30 seconds and then share some suggestions. Keep this brisk so that it doesn't slow down the pace of the story.

Emphasise the drama as you turn the page to reveal the dragon's secret.

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Read on to the end of the story.

Invite first responses. What did the children like about the story? Were there any surprises?

Retelling the story: story ingredients

Have available a big cooking pot. This can either be a picture, an actual cooking pot or a super-sized model.

Have a set of cards on which you have written the ingredients (elements) of the story:

- Setting
- Characters
- Beginning
- Problem
- Resolution

Explain that making a good story is like making a cake – you need to have the right ingredients and if you mix them together properly you get a great story.

So, what are the ingredients in a good story?

Take the first card – setting. Ask the children where is the story set? ‘Far, far away in the high, high mountains’: that’s the first ingredient to put into the pot.

Take the second card – character. So who are the characters in the story? Dragon, George and the princess. Encourage the children to tell you as much as they can

about each of the characters. Then put them in the pot.

Next take the beginning – how does the story start? Again, add the beginning to the pot.

Now take the problem card. What’s the problem in this story? The dragon captures the princess

Finally take the resolution card. How is this story resolved? The dragon is afraid of mice and when one moves in next door he abandons the princess and she is free to return home to her castle.

When all the ingredients have been put into the cooking pot, give it a big stir to mix up the ingredients. Invite children to stir with you. You might say a few magic story words to help make a really good story.

You can use the story cards to play a game: children take it turns to pick a card out of the story pot. They use the card as a prompt to tell that part of the story.

From telling to writing

In pairs, ask the children to make their own story ingredient cards but explain that instead of writing on the cards they are going to draw the ingredients. So, for characters, they will draw the characters, for setting, they will draw the setting etc.

When the children have a complete set of story ingredient cards,

model how they can use the cards to put together a planning framework which will help them to write the story.

To do this, take the first card – setting and demonstrate how to write a paragraph about the setting. Using supported composition, ask the children to work in pairs to write a short paragraph for the introduction of the character (dragon). Share ideas. Now the children can work independently to write paragraphs for the beginning, problem and resolution of the story.

Review the children’s work and tell them that story ingredients are one technique they can use to help them plan their stories.

George the Dragon and the Princess

Before look at the front cover and use it to help recap the first story.

What do the children remember about the characters?

Read the story giving the children time to spot the dragon in each picture.

After reading allow time for first responses. What does the story have in common with George and the Dragon? In what way is the story different?

Note that this story is ‘George’s story’ whereas the previous story was the dragon’s story. You might

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pick out some of the language to make this point:

'There lived a mighty dragon.'

'There lived a little mouse called George.'

'He could fly higher than the clouds...'

'George.... Was not dangerous or fierce at all.'

Exploring characters

Prepare 3 large sheets of paper with a picture of one of the following characters drawn in the middle:

Dragon

George

Princess

Reproduce A4 or A3 copies for the children to work on.

Ask the children who the characters are in this story. (dragon, George, princess). They may also mention the beetle even though it isn't mentioned in the text.

Use the George sheet of paper and annotate. Ask the children to suggest words that describe this character. Take time to look at the illustrations for ideas.

Children can then work in groups to annotate sheets for the other characters.

Note that we haven't had a story

from the princesses' point of view, although she appears in both stories.

What happens next?

Writing a new story based on the George stories could take place in shared and independent writing lessons over the period of one week.

After reading both George stories, invite the children to suggest what might happen next.

Use the structure of *George and the Dragon* to map out a story from the princess's point of view. One way to do this is to make a 32 page dummy book (fewer pages could be included). Use the same layout as the original book: text running along the bottom and illustration above. Note the dummy book is to help with the mapping of the story and therefore the events are sketched out rather than drawn perfectly.

Using a supported composition approach, demonstrate how the first two George stories can help us map out a story using the same structure and layout put written from a different perspective. For example,

Spread 1 Far, far away over the high, high mountains at the top of a tower in an old castle,

Spread 2 there lived a beautiful princess.

Spread 3 She was a beautiful and very clever princess

Spread 4 and she like to look after the castle gardens

Invite the children to suggest what the illustrations accompanying the text would show.

Ask the children to suggest ideas for the 5th spread, which will tell us something about the princess. This should be a problem e.g.

- She didn't like grand balls
- She didn't want to marry a prince
- She couldn't leave her tower because of the fierce dragon that lived in a cave

Select and write one of these suggestions on spread 5 and take ideas for the accompanying illustration.

Working with a talk partner, ask the children to write the text for the next spread.

Again, take suggestions and select one to write in the book, drawing attention to features such as spelling, punctuation and layout as appropriate.

Spread 9 Write the text:

But there was one thing the princess could do well.....

Draw attention to the word 'but' what does this tell us about what will come next?

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The text for the spreads 10 – 13 show what the princess does well

Brainstorm possibilities and select the 3 ideas that work best.

Finally, ask the children to write their own endings for the story.

Books can be made, illustrated, covered and put into the class or school library for other children to read.

Dragon Books

Ronda Armitage (2008) *Small Knight and George Orchard*

Ronda Armitage (2008) *Small Knight and George and the Royal Chocolate Cake Orchard*

Jane Clarke *Knight Time*

Ben Cort (2008) *The Dragon Tamer's Castle* Scholastic

Cressida Cowell (2003) *How to Train Your Dragon* Hodder

Lynley Dodd (1990) *Dragon in a Wagon* Puffin

Vivian French, Chris Fisher (2000) *The Snow Dragon* Random House

Debi Gliori (2008) *The Trouble With Dragons* Bloomsbury

Kenneth Grahame (2008) *The Reluctant Dragon* Egmont

Gareth Jones *The Dragon Detective Agency*

Ogden Nash (1998) *The Tale of*

Custard the Dragon Little Brown

Natalie Jane Prior *Lily Quench and the Dragon of Ashby*

M P Roberston (2006) *The Dragon Snatcher* Frances Lincoln

M P Robertson *The Dragon and the Gruesome Twosome*

Peter Yarrow, Lenny Lipton, Eric Puybarat (2008) *Puff the Magic Dragon* Macmillan

Other resources

Beatrix Potter *The Tale of Mrs Tittlemouse*

Nikki Gamble is lecturer, writer and education consultant specialising in children's literature, drama and arts education. She taught undergraduate and postgraduate students on primary teacher training programmes for eleven years.

Nikki is Director of Write Away, an organisation that seeks to promote literature and the arts in education. She is currently Associate Consultant at the University Of London, Institute Of Education. Nikki is Congress Director for the IBBY World Congress 2012 and recently elected member of the IBBY Executive Committee.

Recent Publications include *Family Fictions* (2001) (with Nick Tucker); *Exploring Children's Literature* (2008) (2nd edit) *Writers' Secrets* (2008).