



Tales of Hans Christian Andersen



Hans Christian Andersen

Age 5-9

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Introduction

Tales of Hans Christian Andersen

Hans Christian Andersen, 1805-1875

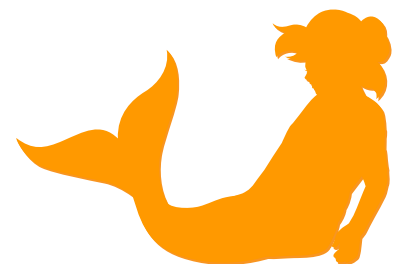
Hans Christian Andersen was born in humble surroundings in Odense, Denmark, on 2 April, 1805, the son of a shoemaker and a washerwoman. His father loved literature and encouraged young Hans to write tales and put on puppet shows. However, he died when Hans was just 11, which meant that the boy was sent out to work in order to support the family. He worked in a tailor's shop and tobacco factory, but was deeply unhappy, often being teased about his appearance (tall and thin with a long nose and close-set eyes) and his effeminacy.

At age 14 Hans moved to the capital city Copenhagen in an attempt to pursue a career in the theatre. Initial success as a singer came to a halt when his voice broke, but associates complemented him on his poetry and he also began to write plays.

One of the theatre directors arranged for some formal education to be paid for and Hans attended Copenhagen University. Hans was also able to travel widely around Europe, meeting various famous writers including Victor Hugo, Alexandre Dumas and Charles Dickens. Andersen continued to travel extensively throughout his adult life and often drew inspiration from his travels to aid his writing.

Andersen's best known works are his 'Fairy Tales and Stories', written between 1835 and 1872. His earliest stories were based on traditional folk tales - much like the tales of the Brothers Grimm, published twenty years earlier, had been. However, the bulk of his tales are original, with the most famous having passed into common parlance as metaphorical phrases (for example, 'The Ugly Duckling' and 'The Emperor's New Clothes').

A common theme of Andersen's work is the unfortunate or the outcast. This is likely to have arisen from the experiences of his own life - the teasing he suffered as a child and the rejection he suffered in his personal life as an adult. Despite proposals made to several women, Andersen never married. He died of cancer on 4th August 1875, and was subsequently commemorated in his home city of Copenhagen through the statue of his character the Little Mermaid, which can be found by the harbour there.



Fairy Tales

Origin, audience and purpose

Information from:

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/>

The oldest forms of fairy tales were originally intended for adults and children. These early folk tales were passed down orally from generation to generation and later became increasingly associated with children as their audience. Their primary purposes are to amuse and to convey cultural information that influences behaviour (mountains can be dangerous places to travel alone, unselfish behaviour benefits the community and is rewarded, do as your parents tell you and all will be well).

Later adaptations, written in a more literary and sophisticated style, are also among the traditional stories known as fairy tales although the often gory and frightening content of the original stories was sometimes sanitised by those who composed new, written adaptations. Fairy tales are found in most cultures and many derive from the oldest stories ever told. New fairy tales are still being written today although some of these texts with fairy-tale elements (such as 'The Hobbit') could be included in the more recently categorised genre of fantasy.

Theme

The familiar themes of many traditional stories are prevalent in fairy tales:

- magic and skill
- safe and dangerous
- good and evil
- weak and strong
- rich and poor
- wise and foolish
- old and young
- beautiful and ugly
- mean and generous
- just and unjust
- friend and foe

- family/home and stranger/far away
- the origins of the Earth, its people and animals
- the relationship between people and the seen or unseen world around them.

Character

Fairy tales consistently include some of the most familiar and traditional archetypes of all folk tales (hero, villain, mentor, trickster, sage, shape shifter, herald). Human characters are simply the people who lived in the castles, cottages and hovels of the original stories: kings and queens, princes and princesses, knights and ladies, poor farmers, youngest sons, wise old women, beggars, tailors, soldier, a goose-girl. The main character is often humble, melancholy or hard-working and wants to make life better.

Characters also include a wide range of magical folk including animals or creatures who may have mystical powers yet behave with human characteristics. The names given to the inhabitants of the fairy world vary in different cultures but they include the 'little folk' (elves, imps, fairies, leprechauns, pixies/piskies, goblins and dwarfs) as well as the larger and often more sinister trolls, giants, ogres, wizards and witches. Interestingly, the presence of fairies or talking animals is not necessarily the best way to identify a traditional tale as a fairy story. Many fairy stories do not include fairies as characters and the main characters in fables are often talking animals.

Plot and structure

The setting and details about when events took place are nearly always vague. (Once upon a time... A long, long time ago... It happened that... Once there was a small cottage in the middle of a forest...)



The stories tell the adventures of people in the land of fairy folk so plots usually include the use of magic, fantastic forces and fanciful creatures. Sometimes the inhabitants of the magical land of 'faerie' venture into the world of humans and this disruption of the status quo triggers a far-fetched sequence of events. Enchantments are common and rule-breaking has consequences.

Often the hero or heroine is searching for something (a home, love, acceptance, wealth, wisdom) and in many tales dreams are fulfilled with a little help from magic. 'Fairy tale endings' (where everything turns out for the best) are common. Heroes overcome their adversaries and girls marry the prince of their dreams but many fairy tales are darker and have a sad ending. ***The fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen, for example, include many where things go from bad to worse even for 'good' characters or where people's negative characteristics are their downfall at the end. (The little match girl dies tragically in the snow, the fashion-obsessed emperor becomes a laughing stock when he parades through the city wearing nothing at all, the toy soldier melts away to a lump of lead.) This means that careful selection of texts is required to ensure age-appropriateness.***

Style

Fairy tales include good examples of the repetitive, rhythmic and patterned language of traditional stories. Phrases or expressions are repeated for emphasis or to create a magical, theatrical effect (so she went over the gate, across the meadow and down to the stream once more... not once, not twice, but three times...).

Fairy stories use:

- rich, evocative vocabulary
- the language of the fairy world (magic spells, incantations, charms)
- the spoken language of the ordinary people (dialogue, regional accent and dialect vocabulary, informal expressions)
- memorable language (rhyme, alliteration, assonance, repetition)

- formulaic openings and endings; imagery: simile, metaphor and symbolism.

Fairy tales are commonly presented as implausible but it is important to remember that in cultures where the inhabitants of the magical world are perceived as real, the stories may be interpreted more as legends, so that storyteller and reader/audience understand them to have some historical, factual basis.





Primary Literacy Framework Links

Assessment focuses for speaking and listening Levels 1-5, selected for relevance to the texts

AF3 – Talking within role-play and drama. Create and sustain different roles and scenarios, adapting techniques in a range of dramatic activities to explore texts, ideas and issues.

Level 1

In some contexts

- engage in imaginative play enacting simple characters and situations using everyday speech, gesture, or movement

Level 2

In some contexts

- extend experience and ideas, adapting speech, gesture, or movement to simple roles and different scenarios

Level 3

In most contexts

- show understanding of characters or situations by adapting speech, gesture, and movement, helping to create roles and scenarios

Level 4

- convey straightforward ideas about characters and situations, making deliberate choices of speech, gesture, and movement in different roles and scenarios

Level 5

- show insight into texts and issues through deliberate choices of speech, gesture, and movement, beginning to sustain and adapt different roles and scenarios

Assessment focuses for reading Levels 1-5, selected for relevance to the texts

AF2 – understand, describe, select or retrieve information, events or ideas from texts and use quotation and reference to text

Level 1

In some reading, usually with support:

- some simple points from familiar texts recalled

Level 2

In some reading:

- some specific, straightforward information recalled, e.g. names of characters, main ingredients

Level 3

In most reading:

- simple, most obvious points identified, though there may also be some misunderstanding, e.g. about information from different places in the text
- some comments include quotations from or references to text, but not always relevant, e.g. often retelling or paraphrasing sections of the text rather than using it to support comment

Level 4

Across a range of reading:

- some relevant points identified
- comments supported by some generally relevant textual reference or quotation, e.g. reference is made to appropriate section of text but is unselective and lacks focus



Level 5

Across a range of reading:

- most relevant points clearly identified, including those selected from different places in the text
- comments generally supported by relevant textual reference or quotation, even when points made are not always accurate

AF3 - deduce, infer or interpret information, events or ideas from texts**Level 1**

In some reading, usually with support:

- reasonable inference at a basic level, e.g. identifying who is speaking in a story
- comments/questions about meaning of parts of text, e.g. *details of illustrations, diagrams, changes in font style*

Level 2

In some reading:

- simple, plausible inference about events and information, using evidence from text e.g. *how a character is feeling, what makes a plant grow*
- comments based on textual cues, sometimes misunderstood

Level 3

In most reading:

- straightforward inference based on a single point of reference in the text, e.g. *'he was upset because it says "he was crying"'*
- responses to text show meaning established at a literal level e.g. *"walking good" means "walking carefully"* or based on personal speculation e.g. *a response based on what they personally would be feeling rather than feelings of character in the text*

Level 4

Across a range of reading:

- comments make inferences based on evidence from different points in the text, e.g. *interpreting a character's motive from their actions at different points*
- inferences often correct, but comments are not always rooted securely in the text or repeat narrative or content

Level 5

Across a range of reading:

- comments develop explanation of inferred meanings drawing on evidence across the text, e.g. *'you know her dad was lying because earlier she saw him take the letter'*
- comments make inferences and deductions based on textual evidence, e.g. *in drawing conclusions about a character's feelings on the basis of their speech and actions*

AF4 - identify and comment on the structure and organisation of texts, including grammatical and presentational features at text level**Level 1**

In some reading, usually with support:

- some awareness of meaning of simple text features, e.g. font style, labels, titles

Level 2

In some reading:

- some awareness of use of features of organisation, e.g. beginning and ending of story, types of punctuation

Level 3

In most reading:

- a few basic features of organisation at text level identified, with little or no linked comment, e.g. *'it tells about all the different things you can do at the zoo'*

Level 4

Across a range of reading:

- some structural choices identified with simple comment, e.g. *'he describes the accident first and then goes back to tell you why the child was in the road'*



Level 5

Across a range of reading:

- comments on structural choices show some general awareness of author's craft, e.g. *'it tells you all things burglars can do to your house and then the last section explains how the alarm protects you'*

AF5 – explain and comment on writers' use of language, including grammatical and literary features at word and sentence level

Level 1

In some reading, usually with support:

- comments on obvious features of language, e.g. rhyme and refrains, significant words and phrases

Level 2

In some reading:

- some effective language choices noted, e.g. *'"slimy" is a good word there'*
- some familiar patterns of language identified, e.g. *once upon a time; first, next, last*

Level 3

In most reading:

- a few basic features of writer's use of language identified, but with little or no comment, e.g. *'there are lots of adjectives' or 'he uses speech marks to show there are lots of people there'*

Level 4

Across a range of reading:

- some basic features of writer's use of language identified, e.g. *'all the questions make you want to find out what happens next'*
- simple comments on writer's choices, e.g. *'"disgraceful" is a good word to use to show he is upset'*

Level 5

Across a range of reading:

- various features of writer's use of language identified, with some explanation,

e.g. *'when it gets to the climax they speak in short sentences and quickly which makes it more tense'*

- comments show some awareness of the effect of writer's language choices, e.g. *'"inked up" is a good way of describing how the blackberries go a bluey black colour as they ripen'*

AF6 - identify and comment on writers' purposes and viewpoints, and the overall effect of the text on the reader

Level 1

In some reading, usually with support:

- some simple comments about preferences, mostly linked to own experience

Level 2

In some reading:

- some awareness that writers have viewpoints and purposes, e.g. *'it tells you how to do something', 'she thinks it's not fair'*
- simple statements about likes and dislikes in reading, sometimes with reasons

Level 3

In most reading:

- comments identify main purpose, e.g. *'the writer doesn't like violence'*
- express personal response but with little awareness of writer's viewpoint or effect on reader, e.g. *'she was just horrible like my nan is sometimes'*

Level 4

Across a range of reading:

- main purpose identified, e.g. *'it's all about why going to the dentist is important and how you should look after your teeth'*



- simple comments show some awareness of writer's viewpoint, e.g. 'he only tells you good things about the farm and makes the shop sound boring'
- simple comment on overall effect on reader, e.g. 'the way she describes him as "ratlike" and "shifty" makes you think he's disgusting'

Level 5

Across a range of reading:

- main purpose clearly identified, often through general overview, e.g. 'the writer is strongly against war and wants to persuade the reader to agree'
- viewpoint in texts clearly identified, with some, often limited, explanation, e.g. 'at the end he knows he's done wrong and makes the snake sound attractive and mysterious'
- general awareness of effect on the reader, with some, often limited, explanation, e.g. 'you'd be persuaded to sign up because 25p a week doesn't seem that much to help someone see'

AF7 – relate texts to their social, cultural and historical traditions

Level 1

In some reading, usually with support:

- a few basic features of well-known story and information texts distinguished, e.g. what typically happens to good and bad characters, differences between type of text in which photos or drawing used

Level 2

In some reading:

- general features of a few text types identified, e.g. information books, stories, print media
- some awareness that books are set in different times and places

Level 3

In most reading:

- some simple connections between texts identified, e.g. similarities in plot, topic,

or books by same author, about same characters

- recognition of some features of the context of texts, e.g. historical setting, social or cultural background

Level 4

Across a range of reading:

- features common to different texts or versions of the same text identified, with simple comment, e.g. characters, settings, presentational features
- simple comment on the effect that the reader's or writer's context has on the meaning of texts, e.g. historical context, place, social relationships

Level 5

Across a range of reading:

- comments identify similarities and differences between texts, or versions, with some explanation, e.g. narrative conventions in traditional tales or stories from different cultures, ballads, newspaper reports
- some explanation of how the contexts in which texts are written and read contribute to meaning, e.g. how historical context influenced adverts or war reports from different times/places; or how a novel relates to when/where it was written





Primary Literacy Framework Links

These tales can be listened to and enjoyed in their own right and/or integrated into a unit of literacy.

As part of an ongoing unit of literacy, these tales could be used to support the following Primary Literacy Framework units of work:

Year 1 Narrative Unit 3

– Traditional and fairy stories

Year 2 Narrative Unit 3

– Different stories by the same author

Year 3 Narrative Unit 3

– Myths, legends, fables, traditional tales

Year 4 Narrative Unit 4

– Stories which raise issues/dilemmas

Year 5 Narrative Unit 2

– Traditional stories, fables, myths, legends

Primary Framework for Literacy – Learning Objectives for Years 1-5, selected for relevance to the texts

The following learning objectives can be delivered through use of this audio series of *The Tales of Hans Christian Andersen*. These tales could be used in whole or in part across the whole primary range, but the following strands are relevant to using the recordings. Other strands could be delivered through a unit of literacy work, further developed from the text, available in the episode transcripts.

1. Speaking

Y1

- Retell stories, ordering events using story language
- Tell stories and describe incidents from their own experience in an audible voice

Y2

- Tell real and imagined stories using the conventions of familiar story language

Y3

- Choose and prepare poems or stories for performance, identifying appropriate expression, tone, volume and use of voices and other sounds

Y4

- Tell stories effectively and convey detailed information coherently for listeners

Y5

- Tell a story using notes designed to cue techniques, such as repetition, recap and humour

4. Drama

Y1

- Explore familiar themes and characters through improvisation and role-play
- Act out their own and well-known stories, using voices for characters
- Discuss why they like a performance

Y2

- Adopt appropriate roles in small or large groups and consider alternative courses of action
- Present part of traditional stories, their own stories or work drawn from different parts of the curriculum for members of their own class
- Consider how mood and atmosphere are created in live or recorded performance



Y3

- Present events and characters through dialogue to engage the interest of an audience
- Use some drama strategies to explore stories or issues
- Identify and discuss qualities of others' performances, including gesture, action and costume

Y4

- Create roles showing how behaviour can be interpreted from different viewpoints
- Comment constructively on plays and performances, discussing effects and how they are achieved

Y5

- Perform a scripted scene making use of dramatic conventions
- Use and recognise the impact of theatrical effects in drama

7. Understanding and interpreting texts**Y1**

- Identify the main events and characters in stories, and find specific information in simple texts
- Make predictions showing an understanding of ideas, events and characters
- Recognise the main elements that shape different texts

Y2

- Draw together ideas and information from across a whole text, using simple signposts in the text
- Give some reasons why things happen or characters change

Y3

- Infer characters' feelings in fiction and consequences in logical explanations
- Identify and make notes of the main points of section(s) of text

Y4

- Deduce characters' reasons for behaviour from their actions and explain how ideas are developed in non-fiction texts

- Explain how writers use figurative and expressive language to create images and atmosphere

Y5

- Make notes on and use evidence from across a text to explain events or ideas
- Explore how writers use language for comic and dramatic effects

8. Engaging and responding to texts**Y1**

- Visualise and comment on events, characters and ideas, making imaginative links to their own experiences

Y2

- Explain their reactions to texts, commenting on important aspects

Y3

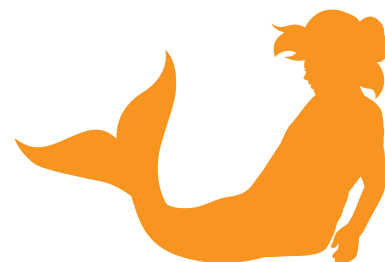
- Empathise with characters and debate moral dilemmas portrayed in texts

Y4

- Interrogate texts to deepen and clarify understanding and response

Y5

- Compare how a common theme is presented in poetry, prose and other media



Explanation of drama techniques

Hot seating

A character is questioned by the group about his or her background, behaviour and motivation. Even done without preparation, it is an excellent way of fleshing out a character. Characters may be hot-seated individually, in pairs or small groups. The technique is additionally useful for developing questioning skills with the rest of the group. The traditional approach is for the pupil playing the character to sit on a chair in front of the group (arranged in a semi-circle), although characters may be hot-seated in pairs or groups. It is helpful if the teacher takes on the role of facilitator to guide the questioning in constructive directions however the teacher could take on the role of the character themselves.

Freeze-frame

Working in small groups or a whole class, the children create a moment that shows the action in a narrative frozen in time, as if the pause button has been pressed. This allows them to think about what is going on for each of the characters in the frame, or to consider what is happening from different points of view. The moment itself may be the interesting thing, or they may be asked to think about what has just happened or is about to happen. Make sure children have sufficient background knowledge of the context for the freeze-frame to understand their own role in the action or to discuss it.

Thought tapping

When the freeze-frame has been created the teacher moves quietly and slowly between the characters in the scene. At the teacher's given signal to an individual child, that child – in character – voices their thoughts aloud in a few words. This allows all the children to hear what some or all of the characters are thinking at that very moment. It gives clues about the role each child has chosen and can raise issues about different viewpoints. It also deepens children's engagement with the learning context being established.

Slow motion

Select one of the characters in the freeze-frame and ask the child to begin the action again showing what happened next for that person, but moving slowly so that the rest of the class, still 'frozen', has time to think not only about what is happening but why. Another option is for the teacher or a child to narrate the slow-motion action that is taking place for one character.

Thought tracking

Similar to thought tapping, this approach allows the class to follow one character's train of thought through the action for longer. For example, one or two children move through the freeze-frame in slow motion, speaking their thoughts aloud as they continue to reveal their feelings, viewpoints and/or motivation. Alternatively, other children track the freeze-frame players' thinking by speaking their thoughts aloud for them.

Role on the wall

A character is depicted and developed in a visual way using a large format note-making strategy. The teacher can use a flipchart, whiteboard, large screen or a big piece of paper displayed 'on the wall'. A simple character shape such as a stick person is drawn. The character may already be partly developed, for example through reading the first chapter of a class novel (What do we already know about this person?), or the children may be creating the character from scratch (What do we want this character to be like?). As children contribute their own ideas, the teacher adds brief notes to the visual in an appropriate position. Encourage children to talk and think about different dimensions of the character. For example, if they focus on physical description ask them what kind of person this might be.



Collective voice

The class sits in a circle and the teacher takes on the role of one speaker in a conversation. The whole class takes on the role of a single, second speaker. The teacher begins the conversation, talking to the 'other person' (the class) and any child can speak to continue the dialogue. A common purpose is for the children to find out some information from the first speaker or for them to give advice.

This sounds complicated but is a powerful teaching convention and most children quickly adopt the strategy to take turns at speaking. If more than one child speaks at once, the teacher decides how to answer one or both. Children usually manage the 'corporate role' well because they are focused on what the first character (the teacher) has to say and they want to find out more.

Once children are familiar with this convention, the class can take on the more responsible role of the character with information to pass on.

Overheard conversations

The children hear a conversation that they would not usually have access to and can use this extra information to consider its impact on a narrative or a situation. For example, they have been using conscience alley to explore two different sides of an argument. The teacher introduces two or more characters who are in some way connected with whatever the situation is, and the class is able to listen to a conversation they have. For example, when the main character reaches the end of the conscience alley, the children all sit down and 'accidentally overhear' the conversation between two people walking along the road.

An overheard conversation often needs to include specific information that impacts on the situation. The teacher can ensure that the right information is included, by taking part in the dialogue. Conversations can also be overheard to provide a range of different viewpoints about the same issue.

Generic activities for use with any of the eight tales

Speaking and listening

- Orally tell and retell the story using props, puppets, masks etc.
- In pairs/small groups, retell the story as fast as you can.
- Orally retell the story from the point of view of a different character, e.g. a minor character.
- Play 'Word Tennis' – in pairs, retell the story one word at a time, each child saying the next word in the sentence.
- Play 'Who Am I?' – take turns to provide clues about one of the characters in a story; the others have to guess who it is.
- Listen to a tale and make brief notes of the main events. Use as the basis for orally retelling or reinventing the story.
- Retell the story around a circle, each member of the group adding the next part.
- Research a tale and present the information to a specified audience.
- Identify features common to the different tales, or versions of the same tale.
- Take on the role of 'theatre critics' and comment constructively on performances of the tales.
- Watch a film version of the tale and make comparisons.
- Make comparisons between a few/all of the audio tales. Extend to making comparisons between the audio and the original written versions.
- Use recording equipment to create and present a mock TV version of a story.
- In pairs, create a dialogue for some or all of a tale.



Drama

- Use drama as a 'talk for writing' strategy. Drama activities can be used to support discussion and oral/written outcomes of a unit of work.
- Use drama techniques to promote discussion about the tales and/or to prepare for the writing of these/your own fairy tales.
- Hot seat the characters. Video Conferencing may be used to hot seat characters across, or between, schools.
- Prepare and present a monologue in role.
- Play 'Author's Chair'. Take on the role of H.C. Andersen and answer questions in role.

Reading

- Make multiple copies of the transcript and use as a whole-class/guided reading text.
- Additional suggestions for using the transcripts include:
- Listen to the audio version alongside the transcript.
- Text marking – highlight traditional/fairy story language.
- Read part of the story and predict what might happen next.
- Chop up the text and rearrange in correct order.
- Compare and contrast the tales: settings; characters; fairy story openings and endings, and investigate the language used.
- Analyse character: appearance, behaviour, motivation, feelings etc. Text mark/list appropriate words or phrases.
- Take on the role of one or more of the characters and write about them using information that you have gathered from reading the story.

Writing

- Use the tales as the basis of a unit of literacy work. Outcomes may include:
- creating a class anthology of fairy tales (retold or reinvented);

- developing your own class/school radio station, record your tales and enjoy;
- constructing multimedia/interactive fairy tales using multimedia presentation software such as PowerPoint or similar.
- Rewrite the story as a playscript and act out in groups. Alternatively, create theatre programmes, tickets, posters etc. and put on a show.
- Produce animated fairy tales using simple stop-frame animation software.
- Create contemporary adaptations of the tales.
- Create character profiles.
- Create a cartoon depicting one of the tales.
- Create 'mixed-up' fairy tales, selecting elements from across the tales to create a 'new' fairy tale.
- Create a 'Wanted Poster' for the 'baddies'.
- Write in role: postcards, letters, emails, notes, messages in bottles, songs.
- Write poems around a tale.
- Create a story map of a character's journey taken through the story.
- Reverse stereotypical gender roles within a tale. How might your story read now?
- Write a non-chronological report/biography/first-person autobiography about Hans Christian Andersen.
- Summarise the tale. Extend to summarising in 100 words.



1: Thumbelina

Adapted by Sue Reid, read by Anne-Marie Duff

Background

- *Thumbelina* was first published as 'Tommelise' in Denmark in 1835 as part of Hans Christian Andersen's second volume of *Fairy Tales, Told for Children*.
- Tomme means 'inch' in Danish. It was first translated into English in 1847.
- Animated films include 'Thumbelina', Warner Bros (1994).
- Music includes Danny Kaye singing Frank Loesser's 'Thumbelina'.

Synopsis

A tiny but beautiful girl grows from a barleycorn which has been enchanted by a witch. She is found when a woman kisses the petal on the flower and is named Thumbelina on account of her size. She is kidnapped by a toad, who wants her to marry her son and is left on a lily pad. Fish rescue her by gnawing the lily pad loose so that it floats downstream but she is snatched again by a beetle. She is later abandoned by the beetle, after other beetles convince him that she is ugly because she is not like them.

When winter comes Thumbelina is dying of cold and starvation before being taken in by a field mouse. The mouse's neighbour is a mole, who is blind, but falls in love with Thumbelina because of her beautiful singing voice. In a passage he has dug between the mouse's home and his own, the mole finds a swallow, who he believes to be dead. Indeed, the mole is happy that the bird is dead because he thinks that birds make a terrible din. Thumbelina disagrees and nurses the bird back to life.

Later, the mole proposes to Thumbelina and the mouse believes that she should marry him on account of his wealth. However, Thumbelina does not want to live underground and, when taking a last look at the sunshine above ground on the

day of her wedding, is rescued by the swallow who takes her to a beautiful field of flowers. Here, she meets the Prince of the Flower People, who she does agree to marry and she is given a pair of wings so that she can fly with the rest of the flower people.

Sequence of events

Suggestions for use include: cues for oral storytelling, support for storyboarding, story planning/writing etc.

- Enchanted barleycorn is planted
- Girl emerges when woman kisses flower
- Kidnapped by toad
- Left on lily pad
- Floats downstream after fish release lily pad
- Kidnapped, then abandoned by beetle
- When winter comes, starving and dying of cold
- Taken in by field mouse, meets mole
- Nurses swallow back to life
- Betrothed to mole, goes for last look at sunshine
- Rescued by swallow
- Meets Prince of the Flower People in field of flowers
- Marries the Prince and gets wings from the flower people

Characters

- Thumbelina
- Toad
- Beetle
- Field Mouse
- Mole
- Swallow
- Fairy Prince



Theme(s)

- The unfortunate outcast, ostracised for her appearance and 'different-ness', (an autobiographical theme arising from Andersen's own experience and which recurs in many of his tales).
- Being true to one's heart, (rather than accepting an arranged marriage).

Understanding, interpreting and responding to texts

- Who is telling the story? How do you know?
- Why is Thumbelina so small?
- Why do the different creatures kidnap Thumbelina?
- Why does the beetle abandon Thumbelina?
- How do you think Thumbelina feels when she is told she needs to marry the mole? What makes you think that? How do you think you would have felt in this situation?
- Why do you think the swallow rescues Thumbelina?
- Why do you think Thumbelina gets wings at the end? What do you think the wings represent?

Additional text-specific activities

- Hotseat the different animal characters from the story and ask them about the motivations for their actions:
 - Toad
 - Beetle
 - Field Mouse
 - Mole
 - Swallow
- Re-write the story from Thumbelina's point of view.
- Write diary entries for the field mouse and the mole, describing how they find Thumbelina and how they feel when she disappears.
- Overheard conversation activity – between the mole and the field mouse.

Location of episode transcript:

<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/thumbelina.pdf>





2: The Little Mermaid

Adapted by Rob John, read by Anne-Marie Duff

Background

- *The Little Mermaid* was first published in 1837 and translated into English in 1872.
- The best-known film adaptation is the Disney version from 1989, featuring songs such as 'Part of your world' and 'Under the sea'.
- The most famous and popular tourist attraction in Denmark is a statue - 'The little mermaid' - set on Copenhagen's waterfront.

Synopsis

The Sea King has six mermaid daughters – the youngest is most beautiful and has the best singing voice. On her 15th birthday the Little Mermaid is allowed to make her first trip to the surface. She watches a party taking place on a boat and falls in love with the handsome prince she sees there. A storm comes, the boat is wrecked and the prince seems sure to drown. The Little Mermaid rescues him and leaves him on a nearby beach, where he is found by a girl who fetches help.

The Little Mermaid wishes to become human so that she can see the prince again – even though the life of a human is much shorter than that of a mermaid. She visits a sea witch, who provides a potion that will give her legs, but at the cost of her voice. Furthermore, every step on her legs will cause great pain – and should the prince marry someone else the mermaid will disappear, becoming bubbles on the sea.

The Mermaid takes the potion, and when found on the beach, is taken to the palace. The prince enjoys her company but will not marry her as he is waiting to find the girl who had found him on the beach years before. This turns out to be a princess from a neighbouring kingdom. On the day of the wedding the mermaid's sisters appear

and give her a knife that they brought from the sea witch. The mermaid must kill the prince with the knife and allow his blood to drip on her feet – she will then regain her tail and her voice. She cannot bring herself to kill the prince, so throws the knife away and disappears. Later, the prince imagines he can see her face when looking at bubbles on the sea.

Sequence of events

Suggestions for use include: cues for oral storytelling, support for storyboarding, story planning/writing etc.

- Mermaid goes to surface on 15th birthday, witnesses party
- Mermaid rescues prince, who is found on the beach by girl (who we later discover is a princess)
- Mermaid visits sea witch; takes potion which gives her legs in exchange for voice
- Mermaid meets the prince but learns that he cannot marry her, as he is to marry the princess from the neighbouring kingdom
- Mermaid's sisters arrive with knife that she must use to kill the prince
- Mermaid throws the knife away and disappears

Characters

- Little Mermaid
- Sea King
- Mermaid's sisters
- Sea Witch
- Prince

Theme(s)

- Unrequited love and the inability to express oneself to those that you love, (both autobiographical)
- Self-sacrifice in the name of love



Understanding, interpreting and responding to texts

- Compare the benefits and drawbacks to the Little Mermaid of becoming human – what do you think you might have done in her situation...and why?
- The mermaid cannot speak to the prince to tell him how it was she that rescued him – in what other ways might she have been able to convey this message to him? Why do you think she does not use these other ways to communicate?
- Discuss the ending of the story. Why might Andersen have created an unhappy ending in which the Little Mermaid has sacrificed her life for that of the Prince?
- How could the ending be changed to make it happier? Would this make it a better story?
- What are the motives for the sea witch for taking the mermaid's voice?
- Compare and contrast this version with other versions of the story you might have seen or heard. How does the story differ? Why do you think the other versions have these differences?

Additional text-specific activities

- Write a biography of the Prince, describing how he was nearly lost at sea and how he lost his wife.
- Write entries from the diary of the Sea King – what do you observe about your daughter before and after her trip to the surface? What do you think has happened? How do you feel when she disappears and when you find out where she has gone?
- Find out what you can about the Little Mermaid statue. Where is it? How big is it? Who had it made – and why?
- Collective voice activity: speaking as the mermaid, discussing her actions with regard to the knife; starting with the teacher and passing on to class members.
- Act out a scene where the mermaid's sisters are seeking help from the Sea Witch, (and come away with the knife).

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/the_little_mermaid.pdf





3: The Emperor's New Clothes

Adapted by Rob John, read by Sir Derek Jacobi

Background

- First published in 1837, alongside *The Little Mermaid*, as part of Hans Christian Andersen's third volume of *Fairy Tales, Told for Children*.
- It was based on an earlier Spanish tale dating from medieval times.

Synopsis

A foolish emperor doesn't spend any time doing the things an emperor ought to do – he is only interested in trying on new clothes and parading them in front of his people.

One day two strangers arrive, offering the chance to try some magical cloth, which will be invisible to anyone who is a fool, or not fit for their job. The Emperor orders some cloth to be prepared, paying two bags of gold for it. The Chief Minister and a servant cannot see the cloth, but neither wants to admit to this lest they be regarded as no good at their jobs. The Emperor thinks the same thing, and orders a suit of clothes to be made, (at the cost of more gold).

The cheating strangers help him into the imaginary clothes and he goes on a procession through the town. None of the townspeople want to admit that they can't see the clothes, until a small boy pipes up that the Emperor has nothing on at all. This causes the rest of the crowd to start whispering and laughing – they realise the boy is right. The Emperor just carries on with his parade – thinking the people must all be fools.

Sequence of events

Suggestions for use include: cues for oral storytelling, support for storyboarding, story planning/writing etc.

- Swindlers arrive at the palace
- Swindlers convince Emperor that they can make magic cloth which is invisible to fools
- Chief Minister and Servant pretend to see magic cloth
- Emperor orders suit of magic cloth
- Emperor parades new 'suit' through the town
- Small boy says what everyone is thinking – that the emperor is wearing nothing

Characters

- Emperor
- Two Swindlers
- Chief Minister
- Servant
- Small Boy
- Small Boy's Father

Theme(s)

- Honesty and dishonesty
- Being true to what you think rather than going along with what others are saying
- Foolishness and pomposity

Understanding, interpreting and responding to texts

- Describe the different reasons why first the minister, then the servant, then the Emperor and finally the townspeople pretend that they can see the Emperor's clothes.
- Why does the small boy's father initially say that his son is wrong?
- Why do you think it takes a child to point out what all the adults can see?



- How do you think you would have acted if you had been...
 - ...the minister?
 - ...the Emperor?
 - ...the small boy's father?
- Describe the two swindlers. What is their appearance? Who do you think the tall one might represent - and why?

Additional text-specific activities

- Create an advertising campaign for the amazing magic cloth – what else could you make from it and how would you advertise this?
- Act out a news report from the procession. Does the reporter pretend to see the clothes? What happens when (s)he hears the small boy?
- What would happen if the cloth really was magic? Re-write the story in such a way that only *some* people can see the cloth – who *can't* see it and what happens as a result?
- Freeze-frame the point where the Emperor is parading his new clothes. What is going on in the heads of the different characters – the Emperor, his courtiers, the swindlers, the small boy and his father
- Thought tracking – follow on from the freeze frame moment with an individual character, showing how their thoughts progress.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/the_emperors_new_clothes.pdf



4: The Brave Tin Soldier

Adapted by Sue Reid, read by David Tennant

Background

- The tale was first published in 1838 and has since been adapted into films and ballet.

Synopsis

25 toy soldiers are made from an old tin spoon – they are all alike except for one, who was last to be made. He has only one leg (as they ran out of tin) but stands as straight as his brothers. The soldiers are a birthday present for a little boy, who stands them on a table with other toys, one of which is a pretty dancer made of paper. The soldier falls in love with the dancer, but says nothing – he thinks she will be too grand for him, since she lives in a castle while he lives in a box.

At night a goblin pops out of a jack-in-the-box. He warns the soldier that he shouldn't wish for what does not belong to him and should wait to see what happens in the morning. When morning comes the boy puts the soldier on the window sill. He is blown out of the open window and when it starts to rain he is put into a paper boat by some other boys and washed away down a drain, where a rat tries to take a toll from him. He plunges into a canal and is eaten by a fish – but the fish is caught and sold at market. The fish is taken to the house where the soldier began his journey and is found when the fish is cut open.

The soldier is put back where he started but one of the other children – perhaps having been whispered to by the goblin – throws him on the fire. A gust of wind blows the paper dancer on to the fire and she is immediately consumed by flame. The soldier melts into a lump of tin in the shape of a heart.

Sequence of events

Suggestions for use include: cues for oral storytelling, support for storyboarding, story planning/writing etc.

- Soldiers given as birthday present
- One-legged soldier sees paper dancer on table
- Goblin speaks to soldier that night
- Soldier placed on window sill and knocked out of window
- Soldier put in paper boat and washed away
- Soldier eaten by fish
- Fish caught, sold, and cut open – soldier found inside
- Soldier taken back to playroom – thrown onto fire
- Paper dancer blown onto fire
- Soldier melts into heart shape

Characters

- Tin soldier
- Paper dancer
- Jack-in-the-box goblin
- Rat

Theme(s)

- The inability to express oneself to those that you love (autobiographical)
- Unfortunate outcast, marked out by physical differences (autobiographical)
- Behaving according to convention when to do something different might bring you more happiness



Understanding, interpreting and responding to texts

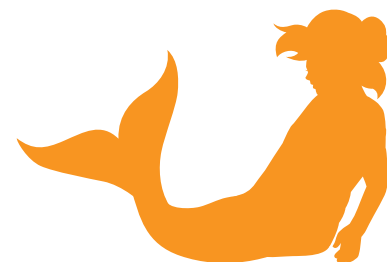
- Why does the soldier only have one leg?
- On what occasions during the story does the soldier say or do nothing, when more decisive action might have brought a better outcome? Why is the soldier so reluctant to act?
- How might the story have turned out differently had the soldier acted differently on those occasions?
- Why does the dancer *appear* only to have one leg?
- How do you think the dancer feels about the soldier and why?
- What is the motive for the goblin's actions?

Additional text-specific activities

- Imagine the tin soldiers and the paper dancer and her castle were bought in a toy shop. Create packaging and advertising material for the toys.
- Re-write the story from the point of view of the paper dancer.
- Hot-seat the soldier – explore why he does not act more decisively.
- Hot-seat the jack-in-the-box goblin – find out what he does to make the soldier fall out of the window and the boy throw him on the fire – and why he does it.
- Collective voice activity: speaking as the tin soldier, discussing his action (or lack of action); starting with the teacher and passing on to class members.
- Role on the wall activity – describe what we know about the character of the tin soldier, using a simple drawing on a flip chart and adding notes around it.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/the_brave_tin_soldier.pdf



5: The Wild Swans

Adapted by Kate Stonham, read by Penelope Wilton

Background

- First published in 1838.
- Has since been adapted into films, TV shows and ballet.

Synopsis

A king has eleven sons and one daughter, the princess Eliza. When he remarries, the new queen is jealous of the children. Eliza is sent away to live with peasants and the queen places a spell on the princes to turn them into ugly birds. The princes are too good for the spell to work, so are turned into beautiful swans.

Eliza is allowed to return home when she turns 15, but the queen puts a smelly green ointment on her. The king does not recognise her and she is sent away again. Walking through a forest she washes off the ointment, and then meets a kindly old woman – a fairy – who suggests that she follows the river to find her brothers. On reaching the sea, she sees eleven swans flying towards her. As the sun goes down, they turn into her brothers. They fly as swans by day and turn back into humans by night. They carry Eliza away with them to a faraway land, where they live in a cave.

The fairy returns to Eliza in a dream and tells her to weave eleven coats from nettles that grow around the cave or in churchyards. If she places the coats on her brothers the spell will be broken. However, she must not say a word whilst working on the coats – if she does, her brothers will die. She starts to gather nettles and make the coats. Her youngest brother cries for her and his tears soothe her stung hands.

The next day a young huntsman finds Eliza working at the cave. He is the king of this land. He takes her to his castle, and allows her to continue working on the coats. He believes he is

falling in love with her. She runs out of nettles on the last coat, so creeps out at night to find a churchyard and more nettles. Found by the king's men, they accuse her of witchcraft. She is to be banished from the kingdom. On her last night she completes the last coat and as she is being carried away in a cart, the swans arrive. She throws a coat over each of them, and they turn back into her brothers. Able to speak at last, she can tell her story. The king asks her to marry him and she accepts.

Sequence of events

Suggestions for use include: cues for oral storytelling, support for storyboarding, story planning/writing etc.

- Eliza banished and princes turned into swans
- Eliza returns, is turned green, and is banished again
- Eliza meets the fairy in the forest
- Eliza meets her brothers by the sea and is carried away by them to a faraway land
- Eliza starts to work on the nettle coats
- The king of the faraway land finds Eliza and takes her to his castle
- Eliza runs out of nettles and goes to a church by night to find more
- Eliza is accused of witchcraft and is to be banished again
- Eliza finishes the last coat and turns the swans back into princes
- The king proposes marriage and Eliza accepts

Characters

- Eliza
- Eliza's 11 brothers
- Eliza's father, the king
- Wicked queen
- Fairy
- Huntsman / King of Faraway Land



Theme(s)

- The unfortunate outcast, ostracised for her appearance and being different
- An inability to express oneself to those that you love (both themes autobiographical)
- Self-sacrifice in the name of love
- Birds as a symbol of freedom

- Thought tracking – follow on from the freeze frame moment with an individual character, showing how their thoughts progress.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/the_wild_swans.pdf

Understanding, interpreting and responding to texts

- What was the queen's motive in banishing Eliza and turning the princes into birds?
- Why do you think the princes turn into beautiful swans, rather than the ugly birds that the queen intended?
- Why does the king not recognise his daughter on her 15th birthday?
- How does Eliza come to be accused of witchcraft?
- Why do you think the huntsman king brings the nettles and coats to Eliza?
- How is Eliza able to make the coats, even though the nettles sting her hands?

Additional text-specific activities

- Write a diary entry for the huntsman/king on the day he discovers Eliza at the cave
- Write a continuation of the story – what happens when the eleven princes return home?
- Act out the scene where the coats are thrown onto the swans and they transform into princes
- Imagine the wicked queen is put on trial – describe her crimes as if presenting your case to a jury
- Create a news report from the royal wedding between Eliza and the huntsman king
- Freeze-frame the point where the nettle coats have just been placed on the swans. What is going on in the heads of the different characters – Eliza, her brothers, the king, his men?





Episode 6: The Nightingale

Adapted by Kate Stonham, read by
Sir Derek Jacobi

Background

- First published in 1843, it is thought by many to be Andersen's tribute to the opera singer Jenny Lind, with whom Andersen was in love.
- It was unrequited, with Jenny thinking of Andersen as a brother, and herself being in love with the composer Chopin.

Synopsis

The Emperor of China has a wonderful porcelain palace and a garden that goes on for miles. The garden leads to a great forest, in which a nightingale lives. The nightingale sings so beautifully that visiting travellers are moved to write about her song.

One day the emperor reads one of these written accounts and is surprised, for he has not heard the nightingale himself. He orders that the nightingale is brought to him, and a kitchen maid leads the Emperor's servants to where the bird can be found. They are surprised that the bird is so small and grey, but when she sings for the Emperor he is moved to tears. The nightingale is to live in a cage at the palace so that the Emperor can continue hearing her song.

One day the Emperor receives a clockwork, jewelled nightingale as a gift. It also sings well, but only one rather mechanical tune. The real nightingale escapes and flies back to the wood. The Emperor thinks this does not matter now that he has the mechanical nightingale, but he listens to it so much that it breaks down and can only be played once a year.

Soon the Emperor falls ill and is dying. He calls out for music, but there is nobody to wind the clockwork nightingale. The real nightingale

returns to the trees outside and her song revives the Emperor. She sings to him about the people in the empire that he never meets and so he becomes a more informed and better Emperor.

Sequence of events

Suggestions for use include: cues for oral storytelling, support for storyboarding, story planning/writing etc.

- Emperor hears about the nightingale and orders for it to be brought to him
- Nightingale caged in palace
- Clockwork nightingale arrives; real nightingale escapes
- Clockwork nightingale breaks down
- King falls ill; is revived by the song of returning real nightingale

Characters

- Nightingale
- Emperor

Theme(s)

- Bird as a symbol of freedom
- Beautiful song coming from small, nondescript bird
- The love of nature as distinct from the love of mechanical things

Understanding, interpreting and responding to texts

- Why do you think the Emperor had not heard the nightingale before?
- Where will it be more appropriate to hear a nightingale's song – inside the palace, or in the forest? Why?
- In what ways does the clockwork nightingale compare to the real one? How is it different?



- Why do you think the Emperor over-uses the clockwork nightingale, so much that it breaks down?
- Why does the real nightingale return to the Emperor?
- How will the nightingale's song help him to be a better Emperor?

Additional text-specific activities

- Write an instruction manual for the mechanical nightingale – how does it work and how do you maintain it?
- Re-write the story from the point of view of the nightingale.
- Create a news report about the 'premiere' royal performance of the nightingale.
- Collective voice activity: focusing on the nightingale
- Freeze frame activity – the moment where the nightingale to sing in duet and the real nightingale escapes
- Thought tracking for the nightingale – why does it return to the Emperor when he is ill?

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/the_nightingale.pdf





7: The Ugly Duckling

Adapted by Jeff Capel, read by Penelope Wilton

Background

- Published in 1843, in a collection alongside *The Nightingale* and other tales, it is one of Andersen's best-known works.
- It is seen by many as highly autobiographical, as Andersen was tall and considered himself ugly after being cruelly teased as a child.
- It has been the subject of several musical and film adaptations, and the well-known song 'The Ugly Duckling' by Frank Loesser, sung by Danny Kaye in the 1953 film *Hans Christian Andersen*.

Synopsis

One summer, a mother duck watches her eggs hatch. The ducklings are beautiful. The last egg is bigger and takes longer to hatch. When it does, the last duckling is bigger than the others and a dull grey rather than a pretty yellow. The next day the mother duck takes the ducklings to the farmyard. Other birds are rude to the duckling and peck at him. After a while his brothers and sisters and even the farmer's daughter are cruel to him.

He wanders away and is almost caught by a hunter's dog, but the dog thinks he is too ugly for his master to want to eat. He shelters for a while at an old woman's house, but her cat and hen insult him and make him feel unwelcome. He wanders further, enjoying swimming, but making no friends.

In the autumn, he watches swans migrating and wishes he could be like them.

He is cold and hungry over winter, but when spring comes he feels stronger. Seeing the swans returning, he resolves to talk to them even though he fears that they will insult or attack him. In fact, they welcome him, because he has

become a swan like them – in fact, he is the most handsome swan of all.

Sequence of events

Suggestions for use include: cues for oral storytelling, support for storyboarding, story planning/writing etc.

- Ugly duckling hatches – after his brothers and sisters
- Trip to farmyard – insulted and attacked by other birds
- Wanders off, encounters hunting dog
- Stays at old woman's cottage, but is insulted by cat and hen
- Sees swans migrating in autumn
- Spends winter alone
- In spring joins swans having been transformed into one of them

Characters

- Ugly Duckling
- Mother Duck
- Other farmyard birds
- Hunting Dog
- Old Woman
- Cat
- Hen

Theme(s)

- The unfortunate outcast, ostracised for his appearance and being different (an autobiographical theme arising from Andersen's own experience and which recurs in many of his tales).
- Birds as a symbol of freedom
- Transformation for the better
- Bullying



Understanding, interpreting and responding to texts:

- Why do you think it might be that a swan's egg was being hatched by a mother duck?
- How do you think the duckling felt on his first trip to the farmyard and why?
- Why were the other farmyard birds so rude to the duckling?
- Why do his brothers and sisters start being cruel to him after the trip to the farmyard, when they had not been before?
- How could the story have been different had the duckling's brothers and sisters stood up for him and prevented him from leaving the farmyard?
- Why is the bird's appearance such an important influence on the way other creatures react to him? What does this tell us about the other creatures?
- If someone at your school was treated like this, what would we call it? What should we do about it?

Additional text-specific activities

- Act out a scene where the ugly duckling, now a swan, returns to the farmyard. How does he act, and why?
- Retell the story in the first person, from the point of view of the duckling.
- Hotseat the duckling – how does he feel about his treatment in the farmyard and cottage?
- Hotseat one of the other farmyard birds - challenge them on their treatment of the duckling.
- Overheard conversation: act out a conversation between two of the farmyard birds, about how they are treating the duckling. Try placing this before and after his transformation.
- Thought tapping activity based on the scene in the old cottage (with the cat and the hen).
- Use for PSHE- and Citizenship-related activities.

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/the_ugly_duckling.pdf



8: The Fir Tree

Adapted by Jeff Capel, read by David Tennant

Background

- First published in 1844, regarded as the first of Andersen's tales to be unremittingly pessimistic.

Synopsis

In a forest, a small fir tree is not happy being pretty – it wants to be taller, tall enough that hares are not able to jump over it. It feels no pleasure in sunshine and birdsong, only yearning to be taller. When woodcutters cut down the taller trees, the fir tree wonders where the trunks are going. A stork tells him are to be made into masts onto boats and sail over the sea. The fir tree now yearns for that. The sun and wind encourage the tree to be happy with life as it is but it takes no notice

When Christmas comes, *smaller* trees are taken away by woodcutters. Sparrows tell the fir that they are decorated and placed in houses. The fir now yearns for this to happen to him – even more than he wants to cross the sea as part of a boat. The following Christmas, the tree is cut down. It feels sad to be leaving the forest, but thinks a better life is waiting.

The tree is placed in the centre of a nicely furnished room, is decorated by children and topped with a star. Candles are lit, carols are sung and the tree is very happy; but this does not last. It is soon stripped, taken down and placed in an attic. It feels sad and alone for a while, but makes friends with mice and rats, who ask about life in the forest. This makes the tree realise how it had actually been happy there.

After a while, the tree is hauled outside. It is happy to see the sun and thinks it is to be replanted, but soon realises it is withered and old. It is thrown in a far corner of the garden,

where one of the children removes the Christmas star which had been left on it. Soon it is chopped up and burned.

Sequence of events

Suggestions for use include: cues for oral storytelling, support for storyboarding, story planning/writing etc.

- Tree grows in forest
- Yearns after life as a mast on a ship
- Yearns after life as a Christmas tree
- Becomes a Christmas tree
- Abandoned in attic, befriends mice
- Taken outside, chopped up and burned

Characters

- Fir tree
- Stork
- Sparrows
- Mice and rats

Theme(s)

- The unhappiness of people who cannot live for the moment, but always yearn for something better around the corner
- The need to take pleasure in your surroundings

Understanding, interpreting and responding to texts:

- Why does the tree not feel happy in the forest? Is it right to yearn for the different lives that the trees that are taken away will lead? Why?
- Do you think the tree would be happier as a ship's mast than as a Christmas tree? Why?



- Why does the tree think that the happiness it feels at Christmas will go on forever?
- Why do the mice in the attic think the tree must have been happy in the forest?
- Why are the children in the garden not happy to see the tree again?
- What would you say are the turning points in this story?
- Why do you think some people find it difficult to be happy and contented with what they have, even though others think they should be?

Additional text-specific activities

- Act out a scene where sparrows tell other fir trees of what happened to this tree – and why they should be happy where they are
- Write an alternative version where the fir tree is made into a ship's mast. Where does it sail to, and what does it see?
- Thought tracking for the fir tree as it observes other trees being chopped down and sent away
- Overheard conversation – act out a conversation between the fir tree and the mice, about why the tree wasn't happy in the forest

Location of episode transcript:

http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/transcripts/the_fir_tree.pdf

