

Introduction

Using stories

As teachers we often struggle to be inspiring when teaching the basic rules of punctuation and sentence construction. How could teaching this area be made more interesting for both children and teachers? After much discussion we came up with the idea of using exciting stories to grab and hold children's attention.

These, however, were not just going to be one-off stories. They would all be linked by two central characters, named Emily and Jack. There is a scene-setter which is relevant to both the Ages 5–6 book and the Ages 6–7 book. In this story Emily and Jack discover an old chest in Emily's loft. The label on it says DO NOT OPEN – KEEP OUT. Of course, being inquisitive children, they open the chest and thus the adventures begin. Each new story begins with them taking an object out of the chest, at which point a mist swirls round and they are taken on a different adventure. You will need to read the scene-setter to the children the first time you use these books in class and return to it frequently.

We wanted the adventures to work on two levels: firstly as a gripping story for the readers; secondly for each story to contain one main learning objective as its central focus, with lots of strong visual cues.

For example, for Emily and Jack (and the children listening to the story) to find out about question marks, we created a story called *The dark tunnel*. In this story Emily and Jack discover that the only way to escape from the tunnel is to use question marks after questions. Each time they do, they activate one of a series of question mark-shaped lights, which show them the way out.

About the books in this series

We have highlighted the 12 Literacy Strategy Learning Objectives that are central to Key Stage 1 children's understanding and progress in this area of literacy. This book contains six objectives from the Year 1 objectives. The Ages 6–7 book contains six objectives from the Year 2 objectives. They are as follows:

Year 1 (ages 5–6) learning objectives

- Know that a sentence needs a beginning and an end.
- Use a question mark at the end of a question.
- Use a capital letter when writing I.
- Use capitals for emphasis.
- Put a full stop at the end of a sentence.

- Use a capital at the start of a sentence, names, place names, days of the week and months.

Year 2 (ages 6–7) learning objectives

- Know that exclamation marks make words strong and powerful.
- Use speech marks to catch spoken words.
- Know that there are many different ways to ask questions.
- Use commas in lists and with speech marks.
- Know that organisational devices get things organised.
- Know that speech and thought can be written in bubbles.

For each Learning Objective there is a 12-page unit of work. Each unit comprises:

- a four-page Emily and Jack story (maximum 600 words in the Ages 5–6 book, maximum 800 words in the Ages 6–7 book);
- two pages of teachers' notes;
- six pages of activities relating to the stories.

Within the six activity pages are two core activities that have been differentiated for three ability levels. 1A and 2A are for emergent readers and those who need support. 1B and 2B are for more confident readers. 1C and 2C are for able and more able readers.

A teacher who works through all twelve units will have covered the most essential components of Key Stage 1 sentence formation and punctuation.

On the facing page are synopses of all the stories and on page 6 the scene-setter which introduces the children to Emily and Jack's adventures.

The 'Memory joggers' on the last page of the book list the learning objectives of each story.

The teachers' notes

These are set out using the following headings:

Intended learning

Explains the learning objective for the story.

Preparation and resources

Lists necessary resources and suggests useful preparation for the lesson.

Starting point

Sets the story's scene for the whole class.

Read the story

Suggestions to help you read the story with maximum emphasis to underpin the key learning objective.

Lower order questions

Examples of simple questions that require short answers.

Higher order questions

Examples of open-ended questions to challenge able and more able children.

Points to note

Specific points relating to key aspects of the learning objective.

Group oral work

Interactive questions to reinforce the learning objective.

The activity sheets

Tips for introducing the six differentiated activity sheets.

Plenary

Suggestions for whole class opportunities to reinforce the learning objective and its link to the story.

Cross-curricular activities

Suggested activities where the main idea of the story and its learning objective can be revisited within a different framework. These are particularly beneficial for those children who may be reluctant learners during specified literacy lessons but willing participants in other subject areas.

Story synopses

Sentence formation – *Lost in the maze*

Year 1 Term 1: S5, S6, S7, S8

Emily and Jack find a toy maze, then find themselves lost in one of their own. The coloured paths lead nowhere, until they realise they have been starting sentences but leaving them unfinished. They test out their idea about beginning and finishing sentences properly.

Question marks – *The dark tunnel*

Year 1 Term 3: S7

Emily and Jack are in a very dark, cold tunnel. They discover that by using question marks they activate dim lights. When the questions are answered the lights become brighter and show the way.

The pronoun 'I' – *The tightrope walkers*

Year 1 Term 1: S9

Emily and Jack perform as tightrope walkers in a circus. They overcome their fear with perfect balance, standing tall and straight like a capital 'I'. However, their scheme to thrill the audience by pretending to fall doesn't propel them into the safety net as planned.

Capitals for emphasis – *Marching steps*

Year 1 Term 3: S5

Emily and Jack find themselves at the tail end of a marching column of children. They see important notices in capital letters as they march along. The sergeant tells them why important signs are in capital letters. Then he tells them about the rope swing. They swing together but not to the river bank as expected.

Full stops – *The TV show*

Year 1 Term 2: S4, S5, S6

Suddenly Emily and Jack are contestants in a television quiz show. They are given a bag of marbles. The host explains the marbles represent full stops. In just a few seconds they have to complete sentences using the marbles as full stops. In their haste to beat the clock they drop the bag of marbles. Will they finish the game in time or will they lose and end up in the GUNK?

Capital letters – *The snowfield*

Year 1 Term 2: S7

Emily and Jack find themselves on a hillside of thick perfect snow and want to ride down it. The sledge they find won't slide. Only when they use capital letters properly will the sledge budge – but then they hit a rock and things don't go quite according to plan.

Sentence formation

Intended learning

- To know that every sentence has a beginning and an end.

Preparation and resources

- Have a selection of reading scheme books available.
- On the board write the words and symbols:

Full stop .

Question mark ?

Exclamation mark !

Starting point

Briefly talk about a maze. Ask how many children have been in a maze. In some areas there are mazes in fields of maize. Have any of them been to one?

Tell the children that the story *Lost in the maze* is about Emily and Jack's adventure in a maze. They got lost by using unfinished sentences.

Before you read out the story explain the following words: loft, hatch, gloom.

Read the story

Draw attention to each word that falls before an ellipsis (...) with a wistful tone. Hesitate after the ellipsis.

Lower order questions

What is the girl's name? (Emily.)

What is the boy's name? (Jack.)

Where were the children? (In a maze.)

Do they get out of the maze? (Yes.)

Higher order questions

What is a maze?

Why do people get lost?

What is a sentence?

What happens if we read a story without any full stops?

Points to note

- Sentences are stopped with ? ! or .
- A sentence left deliberately unfinished (for example, for suspense) has an ellipsis at the end.

- A sentence is a written thought that begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop, question mark or exclamation mark.

Group oral work

Remind the children of the symbols on the board. Say the following sentences out loud and ask the children to identify the correct punctuation for the end of each one – ! ? or .

I have a new coat

Did you watch the match

Get out now

Can I see that

Here is my picture

Ouch, that hurt

It's nearly time to stop

They went to Spain

Who likes spiders

Ask different children to choose and read out one complete sentence from their reading book.

The activity sheets

Sheets 1A, 1B and 1C

1A This is aimed at children who are emergent readers and need support. They should start at the central arrows and rotate the page to find complete sentences. They should colour each complete sentence in a different colour. The extension activity asks them to rewrite the complete maze sentences.

1B This is aimed at children who are more confident readers. They should find the complete sentences in the maze and colour them in. The extension activity asks them to make endings to complete the unfinished maze sentences.

1C This is aimed at the able and more able readers. They should read the phrases/sentences, identify the complete sentences and add full stops. The extension activity asks them to put the full stops in the correct places. This exercise shows that full stops do NOT always come at the end of a line.

Sheets 2A, 2B and 2C

2A This is aimed at children who are emergent readers and need support. They should read the sentences/phrases surrounding the puddle. Only the complete sentences are safe and dry; the other phrases sink into the water (children draw a ring around the words and colour over them). The

Sentence formation

extension activity asks them to finish off five sentences, remembering to put a full stop at the end, and then complete a row of full stops, taking care with the size and position.

2B This is aimed at children who are more confident readers. They should read the phrases around the puddle and the words inside the puddle. They then choose a word or a full stop from the puddle to complete each sentence. The extension activity asks them to make up three sentences about water with particular attention to the beginning capital letter and end full stop.

2C This is aimed at the able and more able readers. They should read the phrases/sentences on the umbrella. The unfinished sentences are to be rewritten in the pond. The extension activity asks them to use the given full stops and capital letters to correct the sentences.

Plenary

- How do sentences begin? How do they end?
- Ask children to read out a sentence they have made up.
- Ask children to show a maze coloured to show the way out.
- Ask children to show a puddle picture with safe, dry sentences.
- Ask children to explain their umbrella picture.
- Ask children to show full stops are not always at the end of a line (using extensions 1C and 2C).

Cross-curricular activities

Science

- Ask the children to each fold an A4 sheet into four equal quarters and in each quarter draw and colour a creature or object. They then colour the backgrounds of each quarter in the same colour. For example, in one quarter they might draw a ladybird, in another a banana, in another a butterfly and in the last a tree. They then colour the entire background red.
- Ask them to hold their papers at a distance. What can be seen? What is it difficult to see?

- Discuss when/why/what needs to be seen. For example: When? – at night; Why? – to be seen; What? – a white scarf or hat or a reflective strip. And: When? – at a football game; Why? – so players can recognise their teammates; What? – the team strip.
- Discuss when or why it is unsafe to be seen, such as animals using camouflage to be safe from predators.

Literacy

- You will need sets of coloured (sugar) paper and strips of white paper.
- Ask the children to write on the appropriate coloured sheet the word for an object that matches the colour. For example, a green sheet may have the words 'leaves', 'grass', 'tie', 'label'.
- Once the word is written on the coloured sheet, the children suggest rhyming words and write those words on the strip of white paper. 'Believes' rhymes with 'leaves', 'pass' rhymes with 'grass', 'pie' rhymes with 'tie' and 'table' rhymes with 'label'.

Numeracy

Finding things – give each child a class list of first names only. Give them the following challenges:

- Find the third name, the last name, the fifth name, the tenth name and so on.
- Find out which number in the list their name is. (Third, seventh and so on.)
- Find the longest name.
- Find a name that begins with a vowel.
- Find a name with two vowels in it.
- How many letters in the first two names?
- How many letters in the last two names?
- How many names have a 'k' in them?

Lost in the maze

Emily and Jack were in the loft, peering into the old wooden chest.

“What’s that?” asked Emily, pointing at a small wooden box.

“A toy maze,” replied Jack. “You have to roll that tiny silver ball out.”



As they picked it up and started tilting it, rolling the silver ball about, they were silently surrounded by a blue mist and pulled upwards at an incredible speed.

Suddenly they found themselves standing in a white circle. The high wall around the circle had gaps where brightly coloured paths led off. Each path had high walls either side.



“We’re in a maze,” whispered Emily. “There’s a notice. It says FOLLOW ANY COLOURED PATH. Come on.”

Jack started walking down the blue path. It was bright for about three metres but then became pale blue, then white and then looped back on itself.

The path was unfinished and went nowhere.

“Huh!” said Jack as he came back to the centre. “D’you think...?”

Lost in the maze

But he didn't finish his sentence because Emily was walking away, down the red path. It was bright for about three metres, then went pink, then white, then looped back on itself. The red path was unfinished and went nowhere.



She was back in the centre again.

“I don't know if...”



But she didn't finish her sentence.

They stood very still in the middle of the white circle. Emily looked at the coloured paths. Jack looked at the high walls.

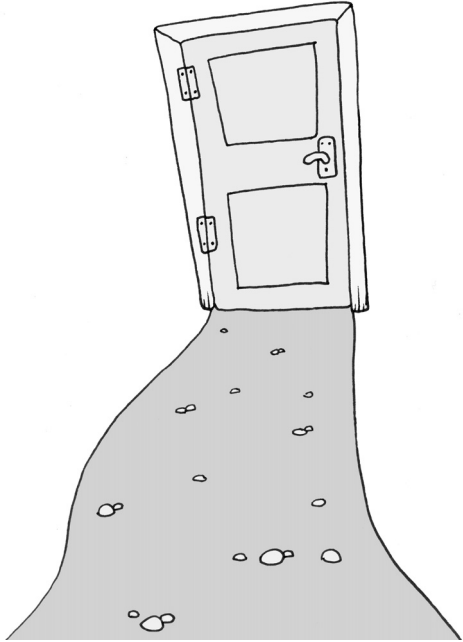
“Let's...” began Emily as she skipped down the purple path. But in three metres the purple path faded to white and looped back on itself, unfinished, going nowhere.

“Maybe we should...” called Jack, running along the green path, but that too quickly became pale, then white, was unfinished and went nowhere.

Emily scratched her head. Jack frowned. Suddenly Emily's eyes lit up.

“I think we should try the orange path!” she shouted.

Lost in the maze



In a flash the far end of the orange path suddenly appeared. There was an orange door at the end of it.

“What the...?” gasped Jack.

“Don’t you see?” laughed Emily. “There’ll be an end to the path if there’s an end to our sentences!”

Jack looked confused.

“Think!” Emily said. “Before, when we said things like ‘What the...?’ and ‘Shall we...?’, our sentences were unfinished, just like the paths.”

“I get it,” grinned Jack. “The paths only get a proper end if we use a beginning and a proper end for our sentences.”

“Yes! That’s right!” laughed Emily, running down the orange path. “Sentences always begin with a capital letter and end with a stop – an ordinary full stop, a stop at the bottom of a question mark or a stop at the bottom of an exclamation mark.”



Jack raced after Emily. They pushed open the orange door.

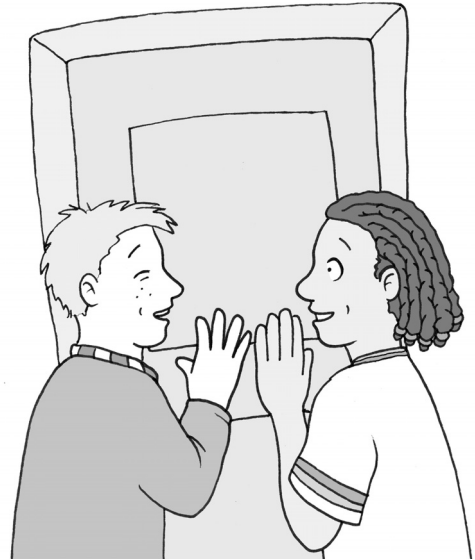
Behind it was another white circle. That too had seven coloured paths leading from it. Emily and Jack walked to the beginning of the yellow path.

Lost in the maze

Jack grinned and said, “Let’s go to the end of the yellow path.” As he said it, they saw the yellow path stretch out before them for about ten metres; at the end was a yellow door.

“Nice one Jack!” Emily laughed. “That sentence had a proper beginning and a proper ending!”

They charged down the path, racing to reach the door. As they pushed the door open, a blue mist surrounded them. They were being pulled downwards at an incredible speed.



Seconds later they found themselves back in the loft.



Emily’s mum was calling to them.

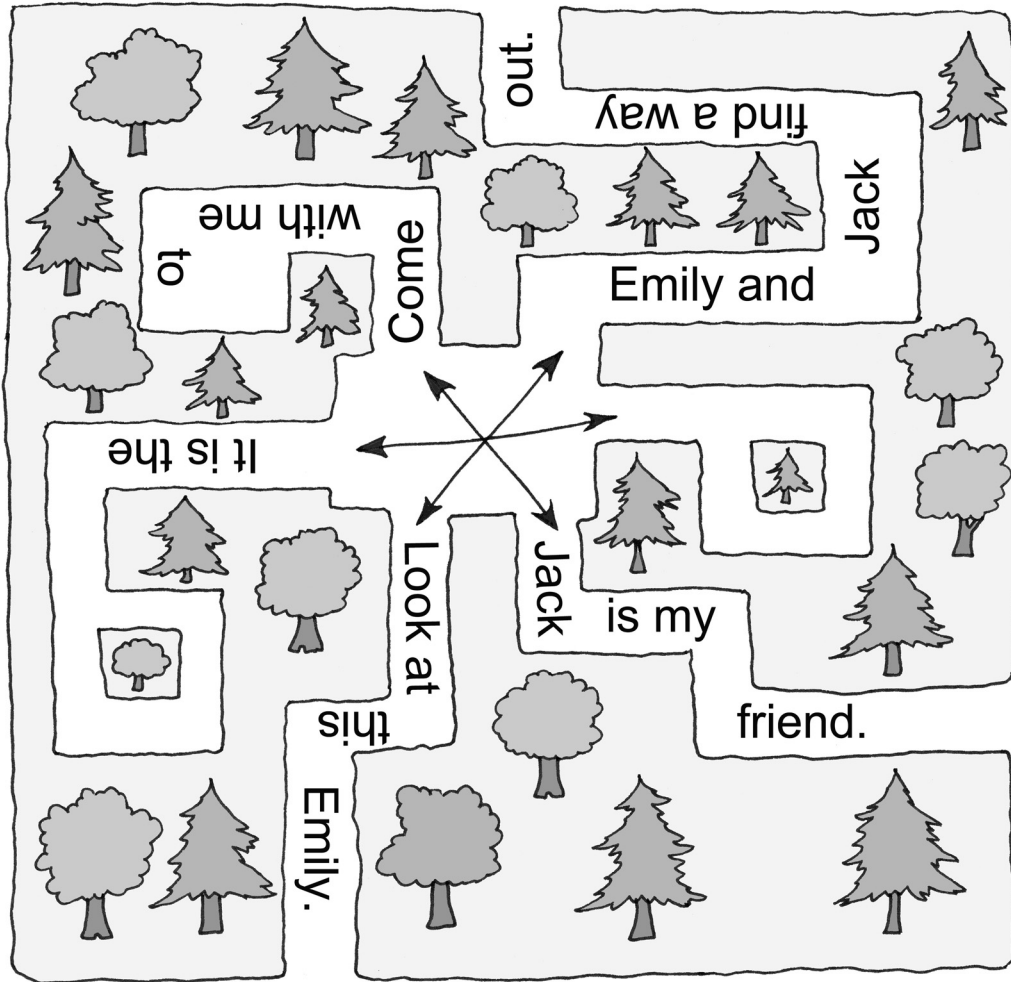
“Come down here you two! It’s no good just beginning your homework. You have to finish it as well!”

Activity sheet 1A

Name _____

 Find the sentences in the maze. Colour them in.

Use a different colour for each sentence.



 Write the three complete sentences here.


1. Look _____

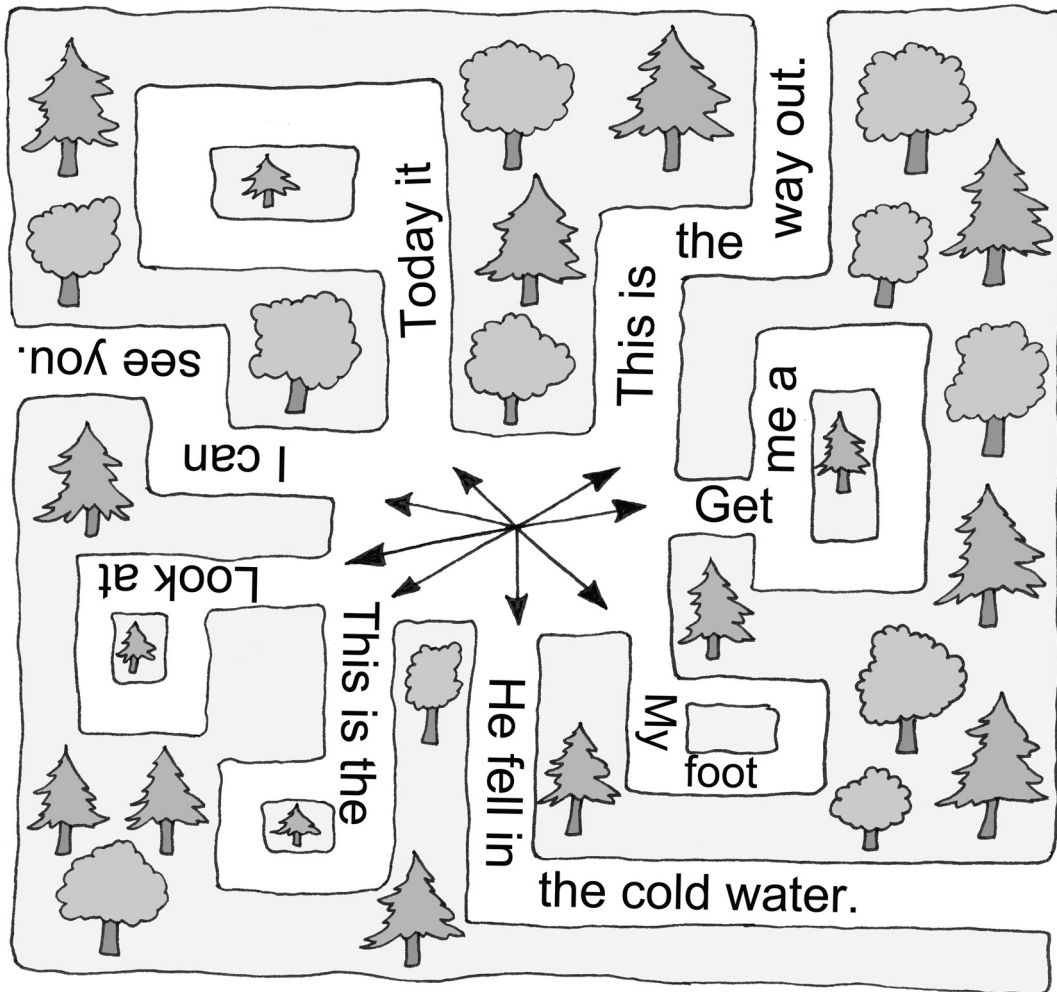
2. Jack is _____

3. Emily and _____

Name _____

Activity sheet 1B

-  Find the sentences in the maze. Colour them in.
Use a different colour for each sentence.



-  Write endings for the unfinished sentences.

1. Today it _____
2. Get me a _____
3. This is the _____
4. My foot _____
5. Look at _____