



INTRODUCTION 4

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About the series

Pick up a Play – Quick and Easy Plays for Primary Schools is a brilliant set of differentiated plays for each year of primary school. Each resource is housed in a handy ring binder so the teacher can add her own notes and ideas.

There is one ring binder each for:

Ages 5-6

Ages 6-7

Ages 7-8

Ages 8-9

Ages 9-10

Ages 10-11

Each ring binder contains 27 plays plus comprehensive teacher's notes. Each play is photocopiable so the teacher can make as many copies as required. The plays are differentiated at three ability levels so all children in the class can take part and are linked by a common theme such as home, school and friends.

Each resource aims to:

- support teachers by providing a wealth of ideas and suggestions for performing the plays;
- reduce teachers' preparation time through the provision of differentiated and photocopiable resources;
- stimulate children's enjoyment and interest in plays and performing;
- develop children's speaking, listening and drama skills through stimulating and purposeful activities that are fun to do.

About each resource

- Each resource contains three chapters. Each chapter addresses a different literacy genre, such as Historical stories, Imaginary worlds and Stories that raise issues.
- Each chapter is divided into three sections with topics, such as Famous people in history, Historical pastimes and Period costume, and each topic has a common linking theme, such as Food, Entertainment and Making clothes.
- Each section contains three different photocopiable plays on its theme (giving a total of nine plays in each chapter). Each of the plays is written at a different ability level, providing text for below average readers for that age range, average readers and above average readers.
- There are detailed teacher's notes that contain curriculum links, background information where necessary and suggestions for costumes, props and performance for each play.

How to use the resource

The resource is very versatile – it can be used in conjunction with any related topic the teacher may already be doing in class or it can be 'dipped into' as and when required.

The plays can be used for shared or guided reading, they can be read purely for enjoyment or they can be performed in the classroom or on stage. There is enough information in the teacher's notes for a full production of each play with suggestions for props, costumes and performance ideas for each character.

Playscript conventions used:

- Some of the plays are divided into acts and scenes;



- The characters' names are written in capital letters in the stage directions and on the left-hand side of the page to indicate when a character is speaking and/or acting. The words to be spoken are set out in lines that are underneath each other;
- The scene setting is in italics without brackets. These are messages that tell us where the characters are and what the set should look like;
- The stage directions are in italics within brackets. These tell the actors how to perform their lines. The children will need to be made aware that they do not read out the words in brackets;
- Some words in the dialogue are written using typography (such as capital letters) or punctuation to indicate how they are to be spoken.

Differentiated plays – the first play in each set of three is the easiest and is suitable for younger or less able children within this age range. It may be necessary for a teacher, other adult or more able reader to take the role of the narrator. The language level and stage directions are simpler in the first plays than in the next two. The font size is also larger in the first plays.

The third play in each set of three is the most challenging play with more complex language and more detailed stage directions. The font size is smaller in these plays.

About this resource

This resource is for teachers of children aged 8–9. The chapter topics are:

- 1 Historical stories – Famous people in history, Historical pastimes, Period costume;
- 2 Imaginary worlds – Space stories, Fantasy worlds, Inventions;
- 3 Stories that raise issues – Danger!, Change, Acts of kindness

Each chapter contains:

Curriculum links – with references to the original Literacy Framework and the Renewed Framework plus any other cross-curricular links;

Notes on each play – character list, props required, background information where appropriate, suggestions and illustrations for making the props and performance ideas for each character;

FAMOUS PEOPLE IN HISTORY

TEACHER'S NOTES

Linking theme

Food

Curriculum links

Renewed Framework – Year 4

Drama

- To comment constructively on plays and performance, discussing effects and how they are achieved

Original Framework – NLS Year 4, Term 1

T5 To prepare, read and perform playscripts; compare organisation of scripts with stories – how are settings indicated, story lines made clear?

Links with other subjects

History – Unit 6A: Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past? A Roman case study.

History – Unit 6B: Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past? An Anglo-Saxon case study

History – Unit 6C: Why have people invaded and settled in Britain in the past? A Viking case study

History – Unit 9: What was it like for children in the Second World War?

(Note: both Viking and Anglo-Saxon units look at King Alfred and the Viking invasion.)

Plays 1, 2 and 3

The first three plays in this chapter focus on three famous people from the past.

Play 1 – **The Burnt Scones** – King Alfred the Great (Anglo-Saxon) (page 10)

Play 2 – **Woolton Pie** – Lord Woolton (Second World War) (page 14)

Play 3 – **The Honey Cake Wall** – Emperor Hadrian (Roman Britain) (page 18)

The plays could be used as a starting point for the children to discuss and research the historical characters and their roles in each specific period of history. Emphasise that, apart from these three people and the Roman governor in The Honey Cake Wall, all the characters are fictional.

After a play has been read, discuss the main characteristics of each famous person. How did their actions affect everyone else around them?

Play 1 – The Burnt Scones

Characters: Narrator, Oswin, Elga, Saxon mother, King Alfred, Followers 1 and 2, Saxons 1 and 2

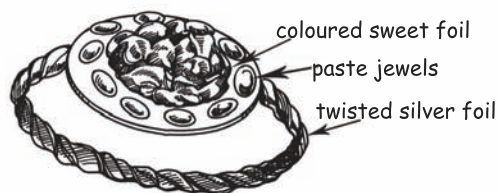
Historical background

This play is based on the well-known legend of how King Alfred the Great burnt a Saxon peasant woman's scones, while on the run from the Vikings. The story is set around AD878 when King Alfred was hiding in the marshes of Athelney in Somerset. His army had been defeated in battle and many Saxon people were killed or thrown out of the kingdom of Wessex. There are several versions of this story but it is on these marshes that King Alfred built a fort, gathered another Saxon army and finally defeated the Vikings.

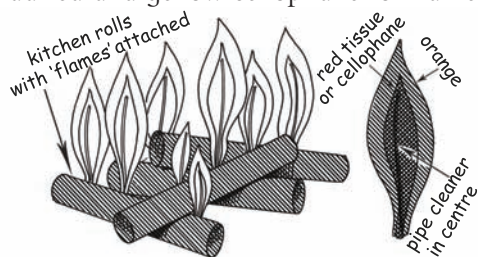
The scones in the legend were probably small simple loaves of bread or griddle cakes which were very popular and cheap to make at that time.

Props: a toy frog, King Alfred's ring, an open fire, clay or Plasticine scones, a simple baking tray for the scones, three swords, two sticks, a bucket, a bowl, a wooden spoon, a small bag with 'Flour' written on the side, marsh reeds (optional), musical instruments to make sound effects for the frog and rustling of leaves

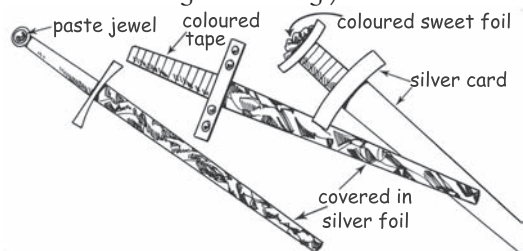
ring – twist gold or silver tinfoil into a ring shape. For the jewel, decorate a small cardboard circle with brightly coloured paper or sequins and stick it onto the foil ring band.



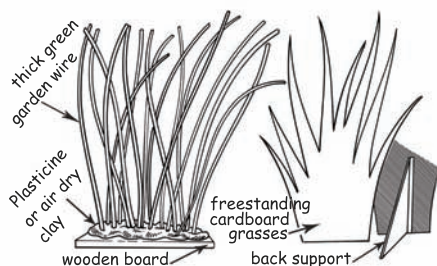
fire – paint three or four long cardboard tubes as logs. Add red and yellow cellophane for flames.



swords – cut out sword shapes from cardboard and cover them in silver foil. (Tell the children who use them in the play fighting scene that they must use the swords carefully and safely.)

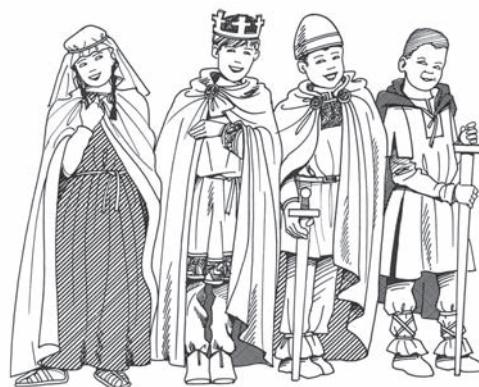


marsh reeds – either paint them on stand-alone boards and position where needed or make long green stalks from cardboard rolls or green wire and attach them to pieces of wood or board.



Costumes

King Alfred and his male followers could wear brown trousers and three quarter length tunics with belts. Women followers could wear long plain dresses. All could wear long cloaks. King Alfred's cloak could be a slightly richer material. He and his two followers should have swords.



Oswin could wear brown trousers with holes in them and a three quarter length tunic made from sacking/hessian. Elga and her mother could wear dresses made from the same material. The mother could also wear a head covering made from a very simple cloth.

Performance ideas

This play has two scenes with simple stage directions. An adult or more able reader could take the part of the narrator.

Discuss with the children who play adults how they would convey to the audience that they are older than the two Saxon children. Encourage them to practise their body language and verbal expressions.

Oswin and Elga – at first they are normal children playing but then become a little scared of the strangers. When they realise Alfred is the king they are slightly nervous but then excited.

Saxon mother – she speaks in a bossy and impatient manner and often has her hands on her hips. She is busy getting the scones cooked and walks in a rushed manner. She shouts angrily at King Alfred as if he is a naughty boy.

King Alfred – he has an air of authority, standing with a straight back and shoulders down. He speaks with a kind and clear voice. When he is told off by the Saxon woman he acts shyly by hanging his head in shame.

Play 2 – Woolton Pie

Characters: Narrators 1 and 2, Miss Gaskin, Cook, Lord Woolton, Car driver, Pam, Alec, Nora, Alf

Historical background

During the Second World War, Lord Woolton was made Minister of Food. As a lot of food was rationed the ministry asked people to grow or produce their own food. Gardens, parks, school playing fields and even window boxes were turned into allotments to grow fruit and vegetables. Fun poster characters such as Potato Pete and Dr Carrot were created to encourage people to eat more vegetables and recipes were written to help people cook healthy meals using their home-grown produce. One of these healthy recipes was named after Lord Woolton. It was called Woolton Pie and became a very popular war time meal.

Props: benches, cardboard boxes, a paper bag for the nettles, brown cloth or card for the allotment, a china or tin bowl, a spoon, gardening spades, modelling clay, plastic or real vegetables, Woolton Pie, pen and notebook, 1940s' costumes

Woolton Pie – use a real or cardboard bowl and cotton wool as the fluffy potato topping.

Costumes

The boys could wear shorts, shoes and long socks, long sleeved shirts and a jacket or jumper. The girls could wear simple dresses, knitted cardigans, shoes and short socks.



Lord Woolton could wear a dark suit with a shirt and tie. In his pocket he should be carrying a notebook and pen. Cook could wear a work coat and Miss Gaskin a dress with a necklace, tights and shoes. Her hair could be put up. The driver could wear a beige or khaki army style coat if

possible; otherwise a suit jacket would be fine.

Scenery

Two simple benches can be used in all the scenes to indicate a change of setting. For the first scene they are set to one side so that the central area is free. At the end of that scene they should be moved to centre stage for the air raid scene. For Scene Three they go to one side again and for the last scene are placed centre stage as seating in the school canteen. Stress that the benches need to be lifted carefully and quietly between each scene.

Performance ideas

For a simple production encourage the children to mime actions such as digging for vegetables. For a more staged production, you could use the props suggested above.

Type 'air raid siren' into an internet search engine to find an audio example. Discuss how the sound could be created on stage. Experiment with musical instruments or using the children's voices.

Alf – he is quite a cheeky boy. He makes funny faces about the nettles and is probably always fidgeting. He speaks in an enthusiastic voice and wants to have a say in everything.

Other children – in Scenes One and Three the children are very enthusiastic and proud of their school allotment and Woolton Pie. They are scared in Scene Two and may hold onto each other or look worriedly above them.

Miss Gaskin – she is the class teacher. She is kind, strict but fair. She speaks in a slow authoritative voice. When the air raid siren sounds she doesn't panic and is calm and reassuring.

Lord Woolton – he is an important government minister so he should talk with a serious knowledgeable voice. He doesn't smile until Scene Four when he sees the Woolton Pie.

Play 3 – The Honey Cake Wall

Characters: Narrator, Emperor Hadrian, a Roman general, Aulus Nepos (governor of Britain), his wife, Cook, Falco, Slaves 1 and 2, two Roman guests, acrobats, musicians

Historical background

Emperor Hadrian visited the Roman-Britain province in AD122. At that time the province

was relatively peaceful, apart from two tribes in the north, the Brigantes and the Picts, who ruled the area we now call Scotland. They regularly attacked the Roman outposts and posed a constant threat to the Roman rulers. The governor of Roman-Britain was Aulus Platorius Nepos. He was a good friend of Hadrian and would have entertained him at his London palace. Some historians believe that it is very likely that Aulus and Hadrian discussed the building of the wall during Hadrian's stay.

Props: a table, three benches, rugs, cushions or fabric to cover the benches, food including honey cake, small plates, bowls, serving trays, cups, wine bottle, tissue paper rose petals in two baskets, music instruments, Roman costumes

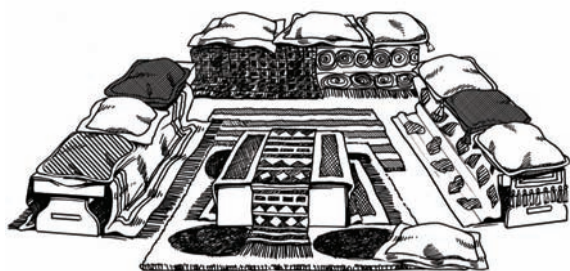
food – make models of the food using clay or papier mâché.

honey cake slabs – make from card to look like oblong shaped building bricks and decorate.

wine bottle – cover an empty plastic squash bottle with paper to make it look like a wine bottle and stick on a label that says 'Wine'.

Scenery

the dining area – set out the three benches as in the illustration below. The open side should face the audience and the small table/box should be placed in the middle of the square. Cover the



benches and table with rugs and cushions.

Have three children to a bench. Explain to the children that they have to kneel or sit on the floor and use the bench to lean on. Have Hadrian and Aulus Nepos at the bench facing the audience.

Position the dining area slightly to one side of the performing area so there is room for the acrobats to perform their act. The musicians can be to one side at the back of the performing area.

Costumes

Falco, Cook, the slaves and the musicians should all wear simple tunics, long for the girls and short for the boys. They should also wear sandals or have bare feet.

The male dinner guests should wear togas and sandals. The togas can be made from white sheets. Add purple edging or decoration to Hadrian's toga to distinguish him from the others. The female dinner guests should have their hair up and wear long dresses which can be made from sheeting and belts. They could also wear pieces of jewellery such as brooches, which can be made from card, sequins and pasted tissue paper.

Performance ideas

Highlight the need for good comic timing if the honey cake accident is to work well. Rehearse each section carefully so the actors know what they are doing and when to come in on cue: the acrobats, the rose petals, toppling over, knocking over the wine and Falco making a honey cake wall.

Let the children playing the acrobats come up with their own short routine. After they have fallen they should sit and listen to the actors.

Aulus – he is concerned that the visit from Hadrian should go well so looks nervous throughout the dinner party. He talks to Hadrian in a subservient way but harshly to his servants.

Aulus's wife – she is concerned like Aulus that Hadrian should be happy and relaxed. She acts the gracious hostess but looks in horror when the honey cake is spoiled. She talks harshly to the servants as if they are silly children.

Falco – he is the head slave and in charge of the household. He speaks in a calm voice and acts in the style of a snooty Victorian butler.

The two servants – they bring comedy and chaos to the play. They are like cheeky clowns using funny facial expressions and twitchy body language. They are in direct contrast to Falco's calm, still character.

Hadrian – he is moody as soon as he enters the room in Scene Two. He sighs, tuts, looks around the room in exasperation or boredom, plays with his food and talks in an expressionless voice. When he comes up with the honey cake wall idea he jumps up in excitement and is very animated, in direct contrast to his previous mood.

The Burnt Scones

Characters: NARRATOR, OSWIN, ELGA, KING ALFRED, TWO FOLLOWERS, SAXON MOTHER,
SAXONS 1 AND 2

SCENE ONE

In the Somerset marshes.

(OSWIN and ELGA are looking into the marsh reeds)

NARRATOR: It was AD878 and the Vikings had captured the Saxon kingdom of Wessex. The Saxon king, Alfred, had escaped into the marshes with some followers. Playing in the marshes was Oswin and Elga.

ELGA: Oswin, listen! *(a frog's croak is heard offstage)* There! Can you hear it? It's a frog!

OSWIN: *(excitedly)* I can see it. It's huge! Come here, froggie.

(OSWIN bends down to catch the frog but misses. A loud rustling sound is heard off stage)

ELGA: *(looking round)* What's that noise? It's too loud to be a frog.

OSWIN: Perhaps it's a Viking! They're slimy, like frogs!

ELGA: *(looking scared)* Don't be silly, Oswin! Why would they come here?

OSWIN: To catch King Alfred, of course.

ELGA: But King Alfred isn't here!

OSWIN: Well I heard he's hiding in these marshes.

(More rustling noises can be heard)

ELGA: *(looking round)* There's that noise again. I'm scared, Oswin. Let's go!

(Enter KING ALFRED and TWO FOLLOWERS. KING ALFRED is holding a large frog in one hand. The other hand is hidden under a large cloak)

KING ALFRED: Stop! Don't be scared.

OSWIN: *(holding up his fists)* We're not scared! We'll fight you if we have to.

KING ALFRED: *(laughing)* You don't have to do that! We're Saxons, like you.

FOLLOWER 1: Do you know where we can rest for a while? We've been walking for hours.

ELGA: You can stay with us. Our hut is small but our mother bakes great scones.

KING ALFRED: Mmm! My mouth is watering just thinking about them.

OSWIN: Follow us! By the way, can I have my frog back?

(KING ALFRED gives the frog to OSWIN and they ALL leave)

SCENE TWO

Outside the Saxon peasants' hut.

(The SAXON MOTHER is sitting by the fire watching a tray of scones cook on top of it)

NARRATOR: A poor Saxon peasant woman sat by a fire making scones.

SAXON MOTHER: Oswin! Elga! Where are you? The scones are nearly ready!

(Enter OSWIN and ELGA, followed by KING ALFRED and TWO FOLLOWERS)

ELGA: Mother! Look! We have visitors!

FOLLOWER 1: *(whispering)* Shhh! Be careful. There might be Vikings nearby.

SAXON MOTHER: *(crossly, with hands on hips)* How do we know you're not Vikings?

FOLLOWER 2: *(pointing to KING ALFRED)* Because this is King Alfred.

SAXON MOTHER: Get along with you. I don't like liars!

KING ALFRED: *(throwing back his cloak and showing a ring on his finger)* I really am King Alfred. This ring can only be worn by Wessex kings.