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Introduction

About the series

Literacy Challenges is a series of six books specifically targeted at developing cross-curricular work from levels 1–6 across the 5–14 age range. Each book contains ‘Challenges’ with differentiated ability ‘Choices’.

The teacher can introduce these to the children who can then work independently, in pairs, or small groups to complete a series of set tasks. Each Challenge encourages the development of time management skills, thinking skills and independent research, which culminates in a specific end product such as a written report, a prepared presentation, a radio programme, or a short film, that helps show and assess the literacy and cross-curricular learning that has taken place.

The Challenges in each book are literacy projects where the pupils are encouraged to explore different curriculum areas in a variety of ways. These cross-curricular Challenges are designed to develop the pupils’ reasoning, cognitive skills and understanding of how subjects can link together and how the skills we learn in one area can be applied in another.

Each Challenge is designed to take three to six weeks, if timetabled on a twice-weekly basis, or as part of extra-curricular work if the children decide to carry out Challenges that result in different types of productions shared with others. The Challenges do not need to be carried out in any particular order and can therefore be chosen in accordance with the required curriculum planned for each term.

The books have links with the National Curriculum levels and Literacy Framework years 1–6, as a guide for teachers as to where they fit in the curriculum range. The challenges work well with children across the 5–14 age range as they can be used with the children who are working at the particular levels regardless of the year that they are currently in.

Book 1: NC levels 1/2
Book 2: NC levels 1/2
Book 3: NC levels 3 plus
Book 4: NC levels 4 plus
Book 5: NC levels 5 plus
Book 6: NC levels 6 plus

About each book

Each unit contains two Challenges that are presented in a specific format: a section of **Teachers’ notes**, the **Challenges** (each with three **Choices**) and **Activity sheets**. The teacher can choose which Choice the pupils do. Challenge 1 introduces the subject and Challenge 2 develops understanding of it further and encourages the children to develop their ideas about the area covered.

The Challenge

Each Challenge is divided into two parts: **Challenge 1** and **Challenge 2**. Challenge 1 will contain three Choices/activities that prepare the pupil for moving on to Challenge 2. These Choices often involve reading, discussion and research. Challenge 2 generally requires the pupils to use the information gathered in Challenge 1 to write, make or prepare something such as an advertising poster, a talk for younger children or a story.

The teacher will need to discuss each stage of the Challenge and Choice with the children making sure they understand what they need to do and how they are going to do it.

Teachers’ notes

These aim to support the teacher with the skills information they need for assessing and assigning levels. They are intended as a guide to the way the Challenges can be presented to children in the classroom or as cross-curricular extra activities.

The Teachers’ notes include the following information:

Purpose: this outlines the expected learning outcomes for each challenge and the skills opportunities in the Challenge that cover literacy and the different subject areas.

Preparation: this links to helpful hints in the Challenges and identifies some of the resources the teacher may need to provide for the children.

Main activities: these aim to show how the work can be organised and carried out. The guide also suggests which groups of ability could be directed to which Choice in each of the Challenges that form the unit. Teachers can plan the time they wish to take with each Challenge, when to introduce it to the children and how the Challenges can link with their curriculum planning and ‘Assessing Pupils’ Progress’.

Activity sheets

The Activity sheets are intended to be used by the children. They could be given out with the **Challenge cover sheet** to make a booklet for the pupil (with the **Challenge cover sheet** used as a cover page), thereby keeping all the materials together.

Action plan sheet

For Books 3–6, action planning can be included as part of each Challenge if desired. The completion of the Challenge

may take about three to six weeks if the pupils are given only set times each week for working on their tasks.

The sheet provides an opportunity for pupils to plan their work with definite starts, tasks and deadlines. The teacher needs to ensure that the pupils have planned out the tasks they are carrying out in a manner that is logical and will lead to successful completion of the unit.

Completing the sheet immediately after the Choices have been read and discussed allows the pupil and teacher to plan a suitable sequence of work to agreed deadlines. The teacher is also able to plan visits and visitors using this sheet with the pupils.

The teacher's role is to help the children to understand that action plans often need modification as the work progresses and that this is good practice, not a sign of failure. Children who are able to assess their own progress and adapt their planning tend to be those who have more success with completing the set tasks within each Choice. Once they have planned their work, the real work (as they will see it) can begin!

IMPORTANT: The teacher will need to ensure the pupils understand that they should not write to, contact or visit a potential source of information without the teacher's consent and guidance.

The skills sheets

These enable the children and teacher to identify the skills developed and practised while completing the Challenges. They are generic documents that cover all the Challenges and include subject areas that apply to the various tasks set.

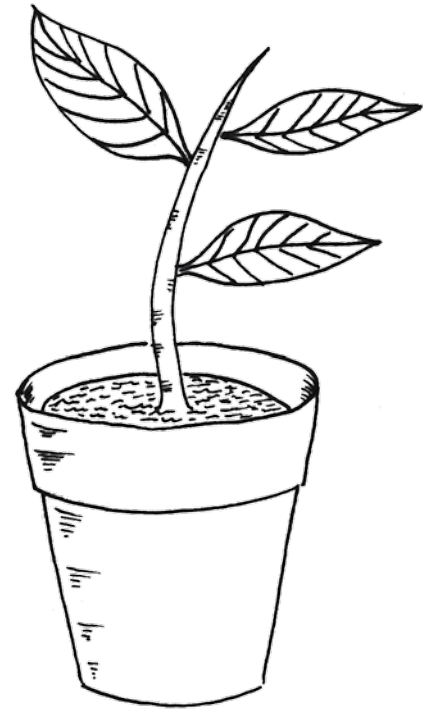
The children can read the sheets and identify the skills they feel have been demonstrated. The children may feel that they have successfully demonstrated the skill or that they need more help with this type of skill. They can use the skills sheets to discuss their progress with their teacher. The teacher can record the level achieved as part of their ongoing assessment of the children's progress.

Organisation

Although the Challenges are designed to provide children with self-contained units of work that they can manage independently, it is essential that the teacher guides them through the whole process and tells them how much time will be allocated to the tasks each week.

Each Challenge could form part of a whole class topic with separate work being set where necessary to cover subject knowledge and skills. Alternatively it could form part of a regular weekly time slot allocated to the children in order for them to carry out more independent work.

They will, however, need the teacher to guide them through the research work and help them make contact with those



who can give them the help they need. The children should be encouraged to do their research and make any outside contacts under supervision in school.

Special consideration needs to be given to Internet research to ensure that only child-suitable sites are used. Internet sites recommended need to be looked at by the teacher in case they have been altered or changed. Sites can be put into the teacher's favourites and accessed with his/her supervision.

About the CD

This contains the **Challenges** and **Activity sheets** in colour so that so that they can be used on the Interactive Whiteboard, displayed to the children and used online if desired by teachers. The **Challenge cover sheet** and **skills sheets** could be used as an online record if teachers wish to save printing out paper although the cover sheet is a good idea if the children's work is being saved for evaluation or progress comparison at a later time in the year.

General comments

Children working on the Challenges may well find that they want to develop a particular aspect of the work that interests them. This should be negotiated with the teacher and put into their planning so that they can ensure they complete the tasks set in the Challenge Choice as well.

The Challenges can be used to develop aspects of the curriculum that the pupils are studying in more depth and from a different perspective. The cross-curricular approach enables the pupils to see that their literacy skills can be applied effectively in other areas of the curriculum and that there are connections between different subjects that help them to understand them better.

Looking at illustrations

Teachers' notes

The purpose of this unit is to help children develop their voice using the art form of illustration to present ideas, develop their thinking and reasoning skills, and their use of language – both spoken and written. The unit provides opportunities for differentiated work and assessment for learning in English and the Arts.

Skills opportunities in this Challenge

Literacy:

The children learn how to speak and listen and draw conclusions from information given to them. They learn to understand who the audience is and how to use inference and deduction to form conclusions. The children can express their ideas in note form and can plan their ideas for writing and developing their work. They can review and comment on what they have seen in an organised and coherent manner.

English:

- Speaking and listening – The children can choose material that is relevant to the topic and to the listeners. They can explain, report and evaluate showing they have listened carefully.
- Reading – The children can scan texts for information and draw on the features of a text (images) to obtain meaning.
- Writing – The children can inform and explain, focusing on the subject matter. They can use punctuation marks correctly in their writing and can note and develop their ideas.

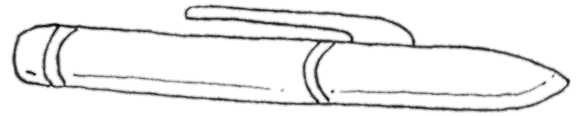
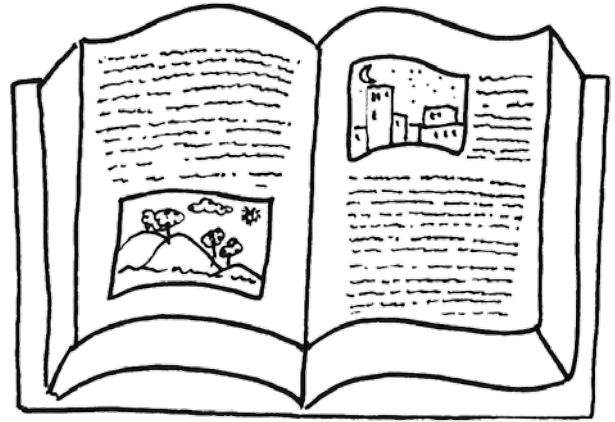
Art:

The children can question and make thoughtful observations about starting points and select ideas to use in their work. They match materials and processes used in design to their ideas and intentions. They work on their own on projects in two dimensions. They use a range of materials and processes to produce their design. They compare ideas, methods and approaches in each other's work. They can express an opinion about the work of others.

Guide to teaching Challenge 1

Preparation:

For this session you will need a variety of illustrations. A good way to introduce story illustrations to the children is to invite a local librarian/artist to show the children different examples of illustrations and how they are made.



Introduction:

Everyone activity: Class discussion/mind map.

Ask the children the question 'What are illustrations?'

- Find out what their ideas are and note them on the wall or on a flip-chart.
- Discuss where illustrations can be found and how they are made. The librarian or artist who has been invited to speak to the children can introduce examples of illustrations constructed in different ways.

Main activities:

For the Choice activities you can either let the children choose the task they wish to complete or:

- Put the children into ability groups.
- Hand each group a set of at least four different illustrations – a painting, cartoon, poster, instruction guide, diagram, map, story illustration.
- Hand out copies of **Challenge 1** and read it with the class. Tell the children that they are going to work in their groups on a discussion sheet and present their answers to the class.
- Hand out the differentiated Discussion sheets.

Discussion sheet 1 is for the less able children and they can be supported by an adult when they carry out this task.

Discussion sheet 2 is the sheet that most of the class will be able to do.

Discussion sheet 3 is for the more able readers and they should be able to work more independently. They will need a choice of illustrated texts that have a variety of different types of illustrations in them.

Discussion

Display the different Discussion sheets so the children can see them. Ask the children to present their ideas to the class. As a peer assessment activity, after each presentation ask the class if they think the ideas were well presented.

Conclusion

Ask each group to contribute to a wall display that identifies the job of the illustrations they looked at.

Guide to teaching Challenge 2

Preparation

For this session you will need to gather together a variety of materials that the children can use to make their illustration. They may like to bring in some themselves.

Introduction

Remind the class that they are going to design and make their own illustration. They will be able to select a Choice or be directed to it. It will be suitable for a particular job and audience. Put the class into pairs.

The more able children can work independently. Refer them to the different examples of illustrations they have put into their wall display and give them time to look at them in their pairs.

Main activity:

Choice 1 – Give the pairs time to talk about the illustrations they like and to think about the sort of illustration they would like to make.

Choice 2 – Hand out **Discussion sheet 4** and put the ‘think about’ points from the task sheet on the board. Discuss them, then ask the children to complete **Discussion sheet 4**. This will allow you to assess the speaking and listening skills of the children and their thinking skills as they decide what they are going to do.

Choice 3 – Give the children time to develop their designs and make their illustrations. Remind them of the things they have to think about as they make their illustration. Some children may prefer to work by themselves, with adult help or in their pairs. The Choices allow the teacher to direct the children to tasks that they can accomplish at their learning levels.

Discussion

Give the children time to decide what they are going to say when they present their choices to the class. You may give them some ideas that can help towards peer assessment of their illustration and speaking. Do they say what the illustration is? Who it is for? How they made it?

Conclusion

Ask the children to present their illustration to the rest of the class and carry out the peer assessment. Give the presenters feedback about their presentation that tells them what they did well. Display the illustrations on the wall for others to see and enjoy.



Challenge 1

Looking at illustrations

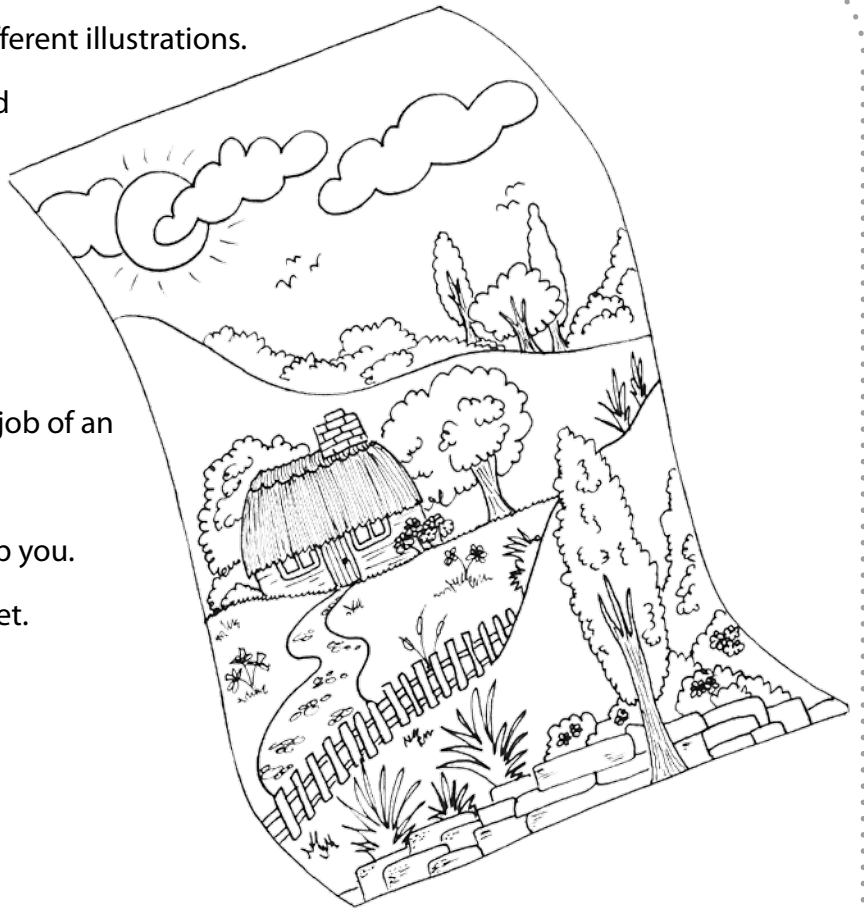
Aim: To decide what are the uses of different illustrations.

Helpful hint: Collect picture books and illustrations from as many different sources as you can, such as posters, comics, websites, or adverts for a resource box.

Everyone: Discuss what you think the job of an illustration is.

You can use **Discussion sheet 1** to help you.

Write your ideas on the Discussion sheet.



Choice 1

In pairs select two or three different types of illustrations that are used for different jobs. Use the **Discussion sheet 2** to help you.

Choice 2

There are different types of illustrations in books.

- Choose three books with different types of illustrations and compare them.
- Look at the different materials used to make the illustrations.
- Use **Discussion sheet 3** sheet to help you.

Choice 3

Make a wall display that shows the different types of illustrations you have looked at. Remember to explain what the job of the illustration is.