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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.

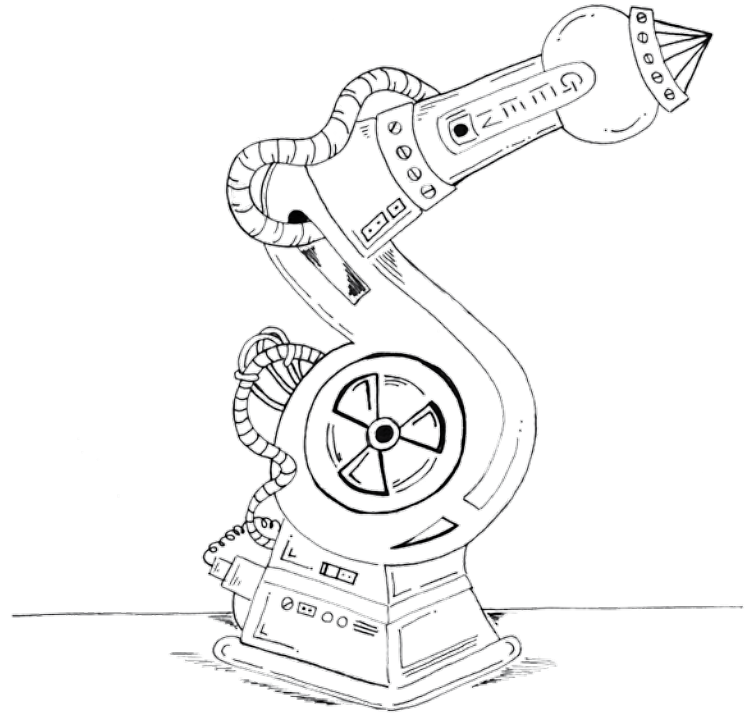
The children can read the sheets and identify the skills they feel have been demonstrated. The children may feel that they have successfully demonstrated the skill or that they need more help with this type of skill. They can use the skills sheets to discuss their progress with their teacher. The teacher 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.

Science and science fiction

Teachers' notes

The purpose of this unit is to encourage children to make the links between real scientific facts and knowledge and the ideas that writers use to make science fiction stories seem realistic and believable. They will explore where ideas come from and how they can be taken up by others and become something real. The Isaac Asimov extract is an example they can explore and discuss.

Skills opportunities in this Challenge

Literacy:

Children offer reasons and evidence for their views; they take different roles in groups and use the language appropriate to them. They know and apply common spelling rules and can use knowledge of word structures and origins to develop their understanding of words. They explore how and why writers write and how they use language to express ideas.

English:

- Speaking and Listening – The children talk and listen confidently, they explore ideas, communicate ideas and ask relevant questions. They listen carefully, make contributions and ask questions that are responsive to other's views and ideas.
- Reading – The children generally read fluently and accurately. They show understanding of significant ideas and characters. They obtain information from the text through close reading.
- Writing – The children's writing is organised, imaginative and clear. They use sequences of sentences to extend ideas logically and words are chosen for variety and interest. Their writing is lively and thoughtful, vocabulary choices are often adventurous. Words are used for good effect. Grammatically complex sentences are beginning to be used. Handwriting is joined and legible.

Science:

The children use their knowledge and understanding of materials, life processes and living things to help them identify the 'real' science in their reading. They use their knowledge to investigate and find answers. They use a range of sources and data including ICT based sources to investigate and develop their ideas for the choice they are working on.

Guide to teaching Challenge 1

Preparation

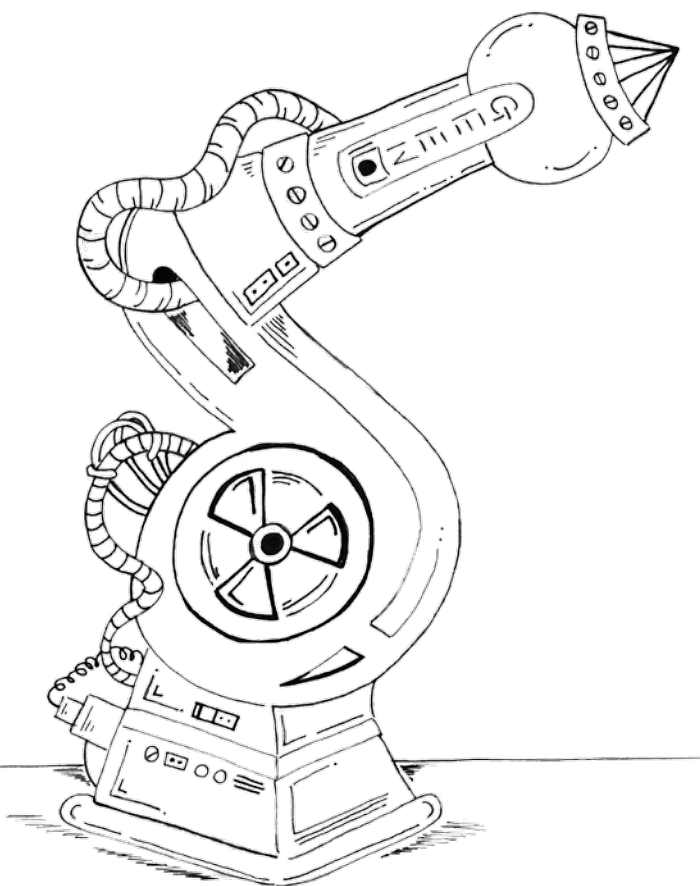
To prepare for this Challenge give the children science fiction books at their reading levels to read and show some science fiction films or extracts from them so they begin to understand the genre. Collect resources that they can use for the challenges and invite a speaker into the class who can talk about science and show how it has links with science fiction. Space research, changes in insects and animals, what has been developed and what we see in films or read in stories could be topics for discussion.

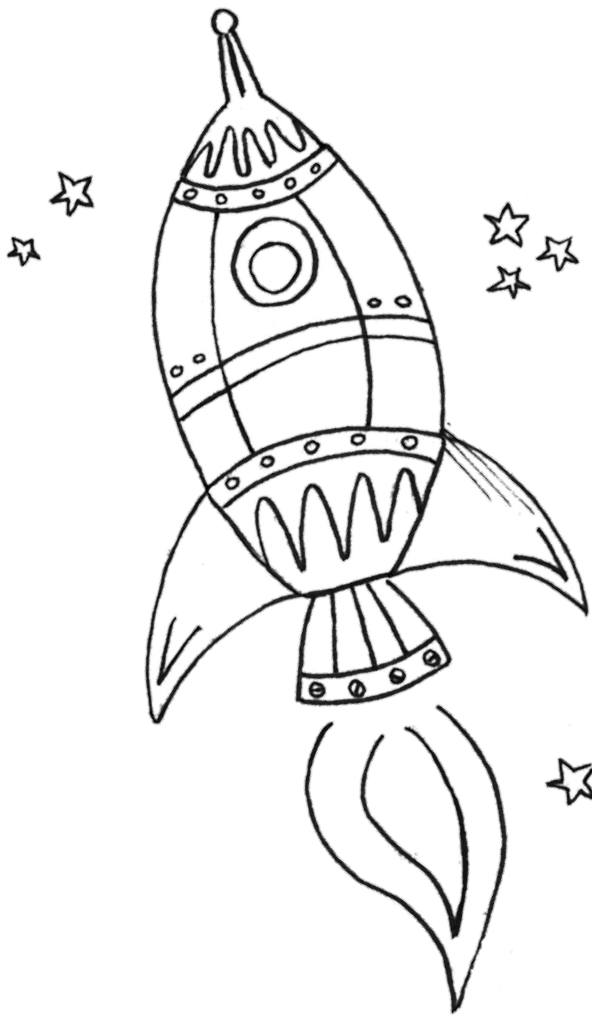
Introduction

Discuss what the children understand by 'science fiction'. Read and discuss the Isaac Asimov extract. Complete the **Everyone** task.

Main activities

Choice 1: This can be achieved by most of the class and books can be set for groups working at different reading levels if desired. The work is built on the books they have been reading. They are to choose an extract that has





Guide to teaching Challenge 2

Preparation

Collect information about possible science projects for the future, ask the children to bring in information that they think will be useful resource material.

Introduction

Revisit the work done in **Challenge 1** and look at the work displayed. Discuss the ways in which characters can help the writer to tell a story. Develop two characters with the class that can be put into a science fiction story. The class should make up a fact file about each character:

- Name
- Age
- Origin
- Physical characteristics
- Intellectual characteristics
- Any special skills
- Likes
- Dislikes
- Personality.

Main activities

Choice 1 – This is for the less able children and they can use simple drawings and sentences to tell the story they have developed to an audience. They need to have the fact files of the characters so that they can use the characters to show the science they are writing about.

Choice 2 – This choice is achievable by most of the children and allows them to use different media to develop their role play/interview in different ways. Remind them to make sure that they use the characters they have developed and put them into a situation that will also show the real science in their story.

Choice 3 – This is for more able children and allows them to develop an extended piece of writing. They can use the story guide and fact file of the characters to develop a story and show real science in it. Encourage them to think about how they can make the science seem real in the story and believable.

Discussion

Ask the children to present their choices and stories. Discuss the science that is in them and list it.

Conclusion

Carry out the **Everyone** task and make a display that shows a story with characters in it and the science that is in the story.

scientific ideas in it so that they can begin to discuss and understand how writers use facts—real or not—to develop their writing.

Choice 2: This can be achieved by less able children with support. They can be shown extracts from films or television programmes that show science in action. For example; in 'Star Trek' the doctor examining a patient with a hand help tool or scanning them. This is beginning to happen in hospitals where doctors examine patients using technology.

Choice 3: This is for the more able children who are able to investigate, draw conclusions and write about them in a presentation. They should use at least one book they have read and one film they have watched as examples in their presentation. They are to show in their presentation the fiction science and the 'real' science.

Discussion

Look at the ideas the children develop from their choices and discuss the effect of science fiction and real science upon our lives. Ask them:

Do they think that the ideas in science fiction books that show new technologies give scientists ideas about what they can invent or make?

Or

Do science fiction writers use scientific discoveries to help develop their ideas?

Conclusion

Make up the display as in the **Everyone** task.

Challenge 1

Science and science fiction

Choice 1 – in small groups

Choose two books you have enjoyed reading and find out how much real science has been mentioned in it. Use an extract from each book that has a lot of scientific information or ideas in it to help you complete the **Information sheet**. Explain why you think the extract you have used is interesting in the way it uses science to help tell a story.

Choice 2 – in small groups

Choose two science fiction films and compare how they use real science in them. Use the **Comparison sheet** to help you. Identify the science that you think is likely to happen in real life that the film shows its audience.

Choice 3 – Individually or in pairs

Prepare a presentation about how science fiction shows science and technology that could be used in real-life from a book you have read and a film you have watched.

1. Make a list of the things that we use in our lives today such as computers, mobile phones, microwaves and other devices.
2. Find out if any of them were mentioned in a science fiction book you have read or film you have watched. (Examples here: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/science/7911939/The-science-fiction-that-turned-into-science-fact.html>.) Programmes like 'Star Trek' and 'The Sarah Jane Adventures' have communication devices in them – do you use any similar ones in real life?
3. Plan a presentation that shows the science fiction idea and the real-life science idea.
4. Show your presentation to others and ask for their response – edit and make your final draft presentation for your class.

Everyone: Look at the information that the different Choices have found and make a class display that shows real science ideas and devices and those in science fiction. Do you think the writers' and filmmakers' ideas might influence scientists or is it the scientists who influence the science fiction writers?