

# The Big Activity Book

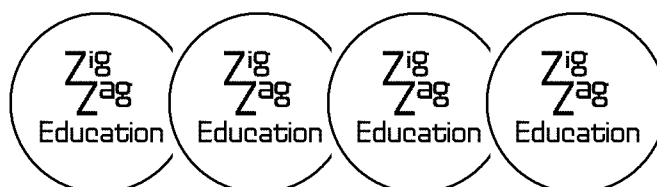
For KS3 Drama

Update v1.1, 21 October 2009



[drama@zigzageducation.co.uk](mailto:drama@zigzageducation.co.uk)  
[www.zigzageducation.co.uk](http://www.zigzageducation.co.uk)

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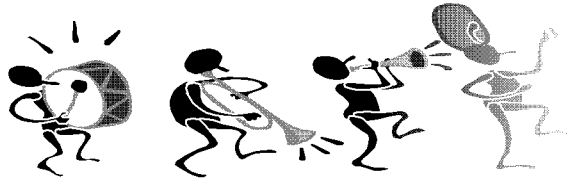
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# Acknowledgement

A book my mum would have enjoyed...

and also...

Everybody who loves drama, whether they work in the field or not, and who inspired their love of the form.

My inspiration was a lady called Jean Mason.

Jean taught me drama when I was 14. She was a fabulous teacher and a person from whom I learnt huge amounts.

It was Jean who taught me most of all that the best drama teachers are interest the children, stimulate them, start them off, help them on their way and let them go.

Sadly we lost touch, and she died a few years ago, so this book is most dedicated to her.

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# Teacher's Introduction

## So why buy this one?

As a drama teacher, or a teacher asked to teach drama, what do you need? Not the value of drama or the theories underpinning good practice and not an over-reliance on worthy lesson plans, but rather a handbook with straightforward examples that have been proven in the drama classroom which the students will enjoy and from which they can develop.

This handbook contains games and projects that I have developed over the years as a teacher in an East Sussex Community College, and more recently as an Adviser working for the School Improvement Service. They are aimed at Key Stage 3 and have been successfully used with Year 6 students and, where indicated, at Key Stage 4. They are designed to be of any ability. Many of them promote literacy and develop social and creative skills, which are usually associated with drama.

The mixed starters are exactly that, motivational games and activities to get the lesson going. They are stand-alone lessons which promote skill development whilst the main course gives you with enough ideas to usefully plan for the whole of Key Stage 3 and beyond.

I still get stopped now by pupils who left long ago who want to talk about the sessions.

It is also the case that the skills and knowledge needed for success at the higher levels are intrinsic to the course. Our results at GCSE and A Level have always been good. We had five current members of the National Youth Theatre to our credit.

And apart from that, it's a whole lot of fun, for teacher and pupils alike.

If you want help or advice about any of these sessions you can contact me at [garethjones-dramaauthor@zigzageducation.co.uk](mailto:garethjones-dramaauthor@zigzageducation.co.uk).

The activities are structured like a cookbook for easy planning:

- Mixed Starters (one session or less)
- Light Bites (1–3 sessions)
- Main Courses (6–8 sessions with plenty of opportunity for extension)
- Dessert (just one – an Oscars ceremony)

## Update v1.1

Minor corrections made to p.13, p.54 and p.59

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# Mixed Starters

## In the Games Zone

The games and activities in this section have been constructed/adapted for an educational purpose and have been enjoyed by great fun as many thousands of Hailsham children over the years will testify.

Many of them are adapted from traditional drama games which have developed over the centuries.

Their general purpose is to generate energy and enthusiasm and to get the children to realise that they are feeling shy. They also develop creative thinking, build the group trust and give the facilitator a chance to get to know the groups mood and character.



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## The Silly Chair Game

*This is a variation of a game often known as 'fruit salad', during which the children who then get mixed up. This version is a lot more fun and has additional learning b*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To warm the group up physically and creatively</li> <li>To give everyone a chance to be in the middle</li> <li>To practice listening skills</li> <li>To test the mood of the group and to see how much initiative they have</li> <li>When appropriate, to mix the group up prior to forming groups</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	One chair each.
<b>Timescale</b>	5 to 10 minutes repeated at the beginning of as many sessions as possible

### Method

Sit the group in a circle with one chair for each of them but not one for you. You then invents rules to get others to change seats. Whilst they are doing so he or she who is left in the middle. Statements should be clear and polite and may not



### Hot tips

- 'Anyone who is in year 6, change seats'
- 'Anyone with a nose, change seats'
- 'Anyone who had toast for breakfast, change seats'

Discourage vague or personal comments and encourage safe and polite

Stop when you are ready to move on.

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## Spontaneous Improvisation

*Or Sponny Ronnie, as it came to be known. This used to be a part of the GCSE but it really is the sharp edge in developing confidence and team work. Very popular with*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To produce confident performers who will deal with any missed queues to collapsing sets without batting an eyelid</li> <li>To promote the ability to think on their feet</li> <li>To encourage a sense of caring towards other performers</li> <li>To develop their understanding of plot and character</li> <li>To give them experience of performance under pressure</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	Various props and costumes as possible stimuli.
<b>Timescale</b>	20-minute sessions as starters or popular as a way to end a day

### Method

Choose one person and allow them to choose three others (keep groups small to make it ten times harder). Put them in the performance space and explain the rules which are:

- No discussion at all of what is going to happen, including off stage during the performance. What is said must be in character.
- They must be in character all the time.
- They can do nothing in front of you that they wouldn't do in front of the authority figure). If you don't say this, somebody will.
- They must not openly reject somebody else's contribution. For example 'much longer do you think we'll be stuck in this dungeon?' Student B should say 'spaceship'. They must work with the contribution however hard that may be.
- They can be creative but the work must be closely related to the stimulus.
- They should be aware of other members of their group and do their best to make everyone has a chance to get involved.
- They should avoid taking it in turns to have their moment in the spotlight.
- They should challenge themselves to produce their best work.
- They should always be on the look out for an effective ending.

It is vital that every performance is followed by a frank debriefing in which the performance is discussed in a supportive way.

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## Possible Stimuli

These fall into the usual groups, i.e. a title, props, costume, a piece of text (a newspaper title, quote, etc.), a piece of music or a sound effect, a beginning of a situation. below but I'm sure that you will think of many more.

Titles and situations, in no particular order:

The house at the top of the hill

You are waiting at a bus stop. Something happens...

The airport departure lounge

The lottery

The waiting room

The accident

A bad day at school/work

The big lie

The locked door

The blind date

The operation

A strange present

The dream that came true

Dad found out

I thought I'd killed him/her/it

The first day in the army/school/on the moon

The bully

The tap that won't turn off

Trapped

Blackmail

Mistaken identity

Day trip to France

The poisoned peach

The reunion

The black bag

Don't look now

The problem with... (name somebody in the group)

Spy story

The great Christmas disaster

Arctic explorers

These four walls

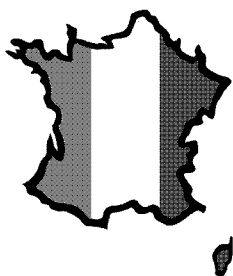
Revenge

The big freeze

Problem child

The stolen...

Game show



On an airplane, so

Shoplifting

A letter arrives con

The unexpected me

The argument

Customs

Ghost story

The terrible holiday

At the doctors/dent

The party

The black box

Leaving home

The journey of no

Five minutes to go

Alien

The gas leak

The haunted tent/h

The lift is stuck

The unexpected vi

Pay up

False alarm

The restaurant fron

The intervention

There's somebody

Dangerous operati

The island of adver

The rescue

The old castle

Psychopath

The inheritance

The reject

The hole at the pole

My best friend is...

Young offenders

Runaway

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Props and music gathered to your taste.

## Ghost

*This one is really good for working out the group dynamics and identifying leaders. focused working practices.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide an opportunity for the teacher to explore the</li> <li>To develop skills of awareness, control and responsibility as part of the group</li> <li>To calm down groups that are having too much fun!</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	A clean floor in a large enough space.
<b>Timescale</b>	5 minutes per game.

## Method

Get all the students to lie on the floor with their eyes closed. Touch one gently. That child can then get up and touch two more who each touch two more who lie down. Everyone gathers around that one child and on the count of three shouts 'bo

The game only works if total silence is maintained and often fails initially either because of too much noise or because, all of a sudden, there is no one left lying down. It is the teachers who are the leaders emerge and plans being made as they try to make it happen.

Always start the next game by choosing the person who was yelled at in the previous game so that no one is yelled at twice.



### Hot tips

Choose obviously nervous children first and allow yourself to choose a

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## Fizz

*This is a hot favourite. Sit the group in a circle and explain whilst demonstrating the game. It can be played to establish records or as an individual or team game. Games of Fizz last for 10-15 hours.*

<b>Aims</b>	<p>This is a competitive game which does any number of things</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It aims to develop reaction speeds and levels of concentration</li> <li>• It engenders team spirit and allows team building when played against another or to establish records</li> <li>• It encourages confidence and participation</li> <li>• It is a fun way to get the class warmed up and concentrated</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	One chair each.
<b>Timescale</b>	At least 5 minutes a game but could be much longer.

## Method

The rules are as follows. You can play with all competing to win or in teams.

- The fizz is an invisible object which sits in your hand and which must be passed.
- To pass it to the left you put your right hand across your body pointing towards the left.
- To pass it to the right you do the opposite.
- If the fizz is approaching from the left and you want to send it back in the same direction you put up your right arm, bent at the elbow with a clenched fist and say 'Boing'.
- To send it back to the right you do the opposite.
- You can also send it across the circle by pointing clearly with both hands.

And that's pretty much it except:

- You can't 'Boing' a 'Bounce'
- You can't 'Bounce' to the person next to you

Any mistakes and you are out. If you are out you remain part of the circle but you can't move around; but note:

If player 1 is in but players 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. are out, then player 7 is next to play. If player 1 is out, then 2 is next to play, then 7 is out, and vice versa.

After the rules are learnt the game should be played as fast as possible.

As a variation, you can also play the game silently. This is courtesy of a Year 7 teacher who suggested it.

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## Trusting Me, Trusting You

*This is a safe and easy way of finding out what sort of group you have in front of you.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage a sense of trust between the members of the group</li> <li>To break down physical barriers</li> <li>To allow teacher assessment of the group</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	A working space.
<b>Timescale</b>	5 minutes, repeated as often as you want.

### Method

First, ask for a volunteer and demonstrate. You should stand behind your volunteer with your arms going to happen. They are going to close their eyes and fall backwards, making themselves. You are going to catch them before they hit the floor.

If they trust you they will not move their feet, they will not bend at the waist, they will keep their arms from their sides and they will keep their eyes closed.

When they are completing the exercise they should take it in turns to fall.



### Hot tips

Make sure the catcher is close to the faller and about the same size. They should understand that the further the faller falls the harder they will be to stop. The catcher stands in a braced position.

Make it very clear that this is not a game and that they must not let the faller hit the floor.

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### Air Traffic Control

There is no real reason why this game is called 'Air Traffic Control', it just is well you can extend this one and be really adventurous.

**Aims**

- To develop trust and a sense of responsibility
- To give some understanding of what it is like to live with

**Resources**

A safe and suitable space.

**Timescale**

10 minutes, repeated as often as you wish.

**Method**

The children work in pairs. One closes their eyes, or is blindfolded. They hold their hands out in front of them. The other places the tip of one finger against the down turned palm. That is all that is allowed. The controller leads the blind airplane around the space, avoiding hazards as long as possible. The exercise is on long enough to disorientate the person who is being led. Then they change roles and the exercise.

**Hot tips**

You can extend this by sending them off around the school or college. Give them verbal instructions when they come to staircases or other hazards.

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## 30-Second Theatre

*A top favourite with the children. I often find them playing this around the school as a warm up activity which leads to swift formation of groups*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote focused discussion and decision making as a free introduction to performing</li> <li>To swiftly develop an understanding of how plots are created and the importance of a planned ending</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	None.
<b>Timescale</b>	20 minutes per go or three goes per session. Return occasionally.

### Method

Introduce the activity as a game. Tell them that they are going to move randomly and that you are going to call out a number. They must then get in to groups of that number, no less, then sit on the floor. You will then allocate stragglers. When this is done, call out your own or one from the many listed below. They will then have 30 seconds to create a fact (in fact it is usually about 2 minutes). Each group in turn will then perform their fact and a brief.

The usual plays last about 25 seconds and consist of one good idea. Always ending. As a development you could use the same starter several times and build on the plot.

Favourite titles:

- If you go down to the woods today you're in for a big surprise!
- Now you're for it!
- I wonder what's in that box (or behind that door)?
- That wasn't there last time I looked
- It's gone!
- What happened to...?
- It's no good, it's stuck!
- I wouldn't do that if I were you.
- Leave it alone!
- He/she's coming!
- It came off in my hand, honest.



### Hot tips

You can find loads more ideas in the Sponny Ronnie section.

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## Light Bites

Now it's time to look at some more substantial pieces. Having said that, **they will be three.**

They all have an individual flavour and are all tried and tested successes with children.



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## The Balloon That Bites Back

*I first saw a man performing this routine in Bath outside the Pump Room in the eighties. It had such obvious potential that I've been using it with children ever since.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore the problems of physical mime</li> <li>To develop the children's understanding of how to be funny</li> <li>To develop the skills involved in teamwork with a physical partner</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	Lots of balloons and the bigger the better, although packs of balloons would be fine.
<b>Timescale</b>	Between 1 and 3 sessions, depending on the group.

### Method

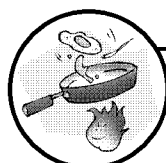
This one has to start with a demonstration:

- Take a balloon firmly in hand using a broad grip. Pretend to walk down the road. Suddenly leave it behind as if it has become fixed in the air.
- Try but fail to pull it.
- Try but fail to push it.
- Strain and go red as you exert yourself.
- Suddenly, the balloon takes off and drags you with it.
- It stops again.
- You ask one of the children to help (choose a helpful one).
- Between you try and move it. Fail.
- Let go in disgust and watch in amazement as it floats to the ground.

Tell the children to work in pairs with one balloon between two. They should then create their own comedy routine based on what they have seen.

Emphasise that the illusion is lost if the balloon is allowed to float. It must be held on to except at the end.

When they are ready, perform and debrief.



### Hot tips

You will need lots of spare balloons, and it helps if you have a balloon pump.

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## Pick and Mix

*...or How to Construct a Story*

*I've used this one with Year 6 groups all the way through to A Level. The results are depending on the age and experience of the students, but it is always rewarding and thinking about how stories work and what they need in them to make them effective.*

### Aims

- By the end of the activity the pupils should have an understanding of the need for interesting characters, events and locations in their stories.

### Resources

Board pen and board or sugar paper.

### Timescale

Between 1 and 3 sessions. 50 minutes to 150 minutes, depending on the age of the group.

### Method

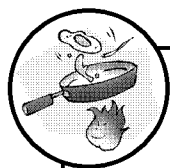
Draw three broad columns on a board or piece of sugar paper. They should be:

- 'Characters'
- 'Events'
- 'Location/Place'

Ask the group as a whole to suggest things that they could write in each column. For example you might get 'Pirate', 'Kidnapping', 'Ship' or 'Ghost', 'Forest'.

When you have enough ideas form groups of a suitable size and ask them to use at least one example from each column. Some will be able to use many.

When they are ready, perform and discuss with the emphasis on whether or not the story was told and did it hold their interest.



### Hot tips

The more advanced the group the more elements you can use and the more complex the story.

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## Cliff Hangers

*In these days of soaps and mini-series this one is a particular favourite. It's useful to use over and over again over the years. I've found that it works best with Years 8 and 9. With older students a satirical take on the idea.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To explore the critical elements of cliff hanger serials</li> <li>To motivate the students by using stimuli with which they are often absorbed</li> <li>To stretch them by setting them the task of developing their own over an extended period</li> <li>To develop their understanding of the essential elements</li> <li>To develop an understanding of how tension is created</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	Whatever props and costumes may be required. This often includes cameras and boom mikes which slip into view.
<b>Timescale</b>	Two initial lessons (Episodes 1 and 2) but returned to over a period of time appropriate.

### Method

Begin by telling them about the sort of cliff hanger endings that used to be featured in an episode of children's Saturday morning film series, the sort of ending where a train on a railway track as the hero comes thundering over the hill as the credits role, only to find the train is suddenly half a mile away again.

They will link this to soaps that they watch.

You can also talk about stock characters, one of which appeals to or interests a particular market, and the need to have more than one plot line running at a time so that the audience is interested.

If you choose to, you can talk about how the pressure of producing these serials can mean that they can't be corrected and the need for cue cards which are obviously being used.

The other essential element is the strong sense of location and this should be used to create a sense of place.

Groups should be of around six and it's ok to have an irate Director! Once they have a location they can begin to develop their characters and stories. Keep them small as most soap episodes doesn't amount to much.

After a brief development time, perform and debrief, making sure that each group has a sense of suspense.

In the second session you can do episode 2 which starts with a rerun of the first episode but involving some subtle change that allows the character to get out of the mess.



### Hot tips

Discourage parodies of current soaps. These tend to be clichéd and unoriginal (and often the parodies).

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## Moving On

*There are very few drama teachers trained to deliver real mime. Even so, we can give art and teach them a useful skill that will contribute to the quality of their performance creating the illusion that something is real which clearly isn't: an imagined cup, a rollercoaster, a magic cabinet. The only limit is the imagination of the children.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To introduce the children to the essential basics of simple mime.</li> <li>To explore the possibilities of non-verbal communication.</li> <li>To enable the children to use simple mime techniques in their own work.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	None.
<b>Timescale</b>	This can be delivered in short bursts over a long period, or in sessions.

### Method

This is a progressive unit with each step adding in more skills. The first is the for individuals.

**Step One** Sit the children on chairs in a circle. Explain that this is a box. You can follow my script or use your own.

Tonight, when you get home, I want you to walk into a room. Your first job as a parent is, say 'Hi' and then react as if you have seen something on the floor. It's a box of the carpet (you should do this yourself as you describe it). Your gaze firmly fixed at the same spot. When you have got it, you can approach the spot really carefully. When you are close enough, you can reach out and wide and bring them together to grip the invisible box. It's locked against your ribs. Keep your eyes on it and walk over it really carefully to them. Most will take it off you. Some may then

One parent actually took the box and put it on the sideboard. The boy then gave it back to the boy to take back to school.

Now you have a go. Pick your spot, really focus on it. Pick

**Step Two** Now imagine that the box is bigger and very heavy. How heavy? You get right down low, bending your knees and touching the floor. Then you push your flat fingers under the box and lift. Put your hands on the floor and make them shake. Make your face go red and keep your legs straight out forwards a few paces before you drop it. Mop your brow and take a breath. Now have a go. When you've practised some of your work.

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**Step Three** Ask a friend to help you. Make sure the box is the same size as you and doesn't change shape as you move around.

**Step Four** Now that we have had some practise at creating the illusion of a box, it is time to introduce a storyline to our mime. My favourite is 'The Story of the Clumsy Burglar'.

**'The Story of the Clumsy Burglar'**

Two burglars break into a house. They creep through the garden and push up the sash window. They crawl through but the clumsy one gets stuck. (Make up the trailing leg over the window sill.) Once inside they search under and behind things. The clumsy one knocks over many things which are caught by the other burglar. Eventually they find the safe and the clumsy one opens it open and loads the contents into a big box. They push the heavy box between them back towards the window. The clumsy one stumbles and falls; there is a huge crash. Both run around panicking. They struggle through the window and suddenly stop. They raise their eyes and were looking at a very tall policeman. Up go their hands and they are arrested.

It will help you in your work if you talk about the layout of the room before you start so you both know where the window is and what is on. Exaggerate your movements to make it obvious what you are doing.

When you are ready you can perform your work.



**Hot tips**

I normally take a break from mime at this point and return to it later with the Magician's Magic Box routine. It's important though to encourage simple mime in their other performance work.

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## Rollercoaster

*This is a really good unit for getting groups buzzing and working together. The children learn a number of useful skills. If you enjoy this one you could turn it into a main course by adding a disaster movies. Creating an earthquake through synchronised acting, or a shaky camera effect.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To enhance motivation and develop the group dynamic</li> <li>To encourage observation</li> <li>To practise skills of synchronicity</li> <li>To develop the control involved in working in slow motion</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	One chair each. Or nothing but a safe space if you want to go for the challenge.
<b>Timescale</b>	1 session for the basic plan. 2 or 3 more if you want to develop it further.

### Method

Tell the story first.

'The world's largest rollercoaster is about to open. There is going to be a gala event with pop stars and soap stars and even some professional footballers. There has been a competition and one of your group has won the lucky golden ticket so that you can go on the ride.

It is the great day and everyone is there. One by one you get on the carriage. When you are all seated you pull down the harness and you are about to go. There is a countdown. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. You are off. Hurtling up the first slope of many. You are flung to the right, down a huge drop. And so on. Finally you are brought to an abrupt stop which throws you forward and then back. You survive with relief. You have survived!'

As a whole group, practise this leading from the front encouraging everyone to have it basically right give them a choice of different endings:

1. Near the end of the ride the carriage approaches a sharp bend. The track doesn't and you all fly off. The last bit must be in slow motion and show the carriage going over.
2. At the top of the highest rise the carriage grinds to a halt. You are all trapped. A passenger, probably a football hero, decides to go and get help. He climbs down the track. Because the carriage is now lighter it slowly begins to move. He gathers speed. He gets further ahead and then he is caught up. Eventually he hides between the rails as the carriage shoots over him. (To achieve this the children push themselves backwards under the chairs, or just upstage of them.)

Now they can divide into groups of 6 to 8 and work out their own rides to be performed.

As a variation you can dispose of the chairs and have the children move in a circle on the track, but only if you have space and feel that they will be safe.

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To bring in more skills you could now incorporate your ride into a disaster: usual stock characters; the ignored warnings; the accident; and the fight for

The whole of the above could also be adapted easily to fit around an earthquake action. Videoing the activity is useful if you decide to do this, because camera effect created by the children shaking, jumping and falling.

Everyone should survive.



### ***Hot tips***

The basic movement work should be led by you but then they can diverge always the ride itself, although older groups enjoy the characterisation

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## The Magician's Magic Box

*This is one of my favourite routines but it is difficult so don't try it too early.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To further develop the children's physical mime skills</li> <li>To encourage a sense of flourish and performance</li> <li>To explore the comedy of mime</li> <li>To provide a safe structure to encourage performance</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	None.
<b>Timescale</b>	2 or 3 sessions depending on the group. With homework.

### Method

First tell them the routine whilst demonstrating yourself. You can use my script and create your own version.

I would say:

There once was a magician who thought he was very good. He had a glamorous assistant who wasn't really very interested and didn't pay enough attention.

Their act always finished with the magician's 'magic box' routine.

In this routine the assistant pushes a wardrobe-sized box (You pretend to do so.) The assistant, with great flourish and confident smile, gets into the box and the door is closed (You pretend to do so.) Once out of the view of the audience the assistant stops and does something comic like picking their nose.

The magician now produces a number of swords, again with flourish, which he now proceeds to push through the box. The assistant twists and turns with no show of interest into an contorted position. The final sword though, goes straight through them and they are killed, silently but with lots of expressive slump against the side of the (invisible) box.

The magician, not aware of the disaster, pulls out the sword one by one. As he does the dead assistant slumps more and more.

As the last sword comes out with blood on it the magician opens the door and the assistant falls forward. He is caught and pushed back in. The magician closes the door and holds it shut, smiling nervously at the audience.

He then pushes the box off whilst smiling nervously. The assistant must shuffle sideways in the way described to create the illusion that he or she is being pushed.

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Neither the swords nor the box actually exist. You might want to use a flow to see the magician's feet.

Now you must practise the skills. First, the push.

In pairs, put your hands flat against those of your partner and pretend to push. Make your arms shake, but don't actually push. If you find this difficult, pretend to really push; then, take one step back and try to recreate the same effect.

When you are ready try the slump. This depends on you keeping your hips going one way, your shoulders the other, and then you don't fall down. Again, use supports and then remove them.

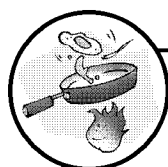
Now the walk. This is hard and will need to be practised for homework.

1. You start with toes together and heels apart.
2. Next you move your right foot till both feet are parallel, keeping the heels together.
3. Then you move the left foot, keeping the toes still, until your feet form a V.
4. Now move the right heel out to the right until your feet are parallel again.
5. Lastly you move the toes of your left foot to touch the toes of your right foot backwards.

Repeat the movements in order and you will appear to glide sideways, especially long kaftan or standing behind a table.

Once the skills have been mastered you can develop the comedy. The first is the over-the-top flourishes. The next laugh comes when the assistant changes the view of the audience. Then the death and the comic slump. Then the real thing, finally the glide off which is impressive when mastered.

Finish with performances and a debrief.



### **Hot tips**

Many children will swing their hips rather than mastering the walk; it is because the sense of achievement when they get it right is immense!

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## Mix and Mismatch

This one has produced some of the funniest moments I've ever witnessed. You can use it with experienced groups but it's most useful when enough rehearsal time is allowed for it to result. Serious examples let the children explore a wide range of theatrical styles.

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To introduce and explore a variety of theatrical styles and conventions in an entertaining and accessible way</li> <li>To develop the general skills involved in group improvisation</li> <li>To stimulate creativity</li> <li>To practise and develop the discipline involved in performance</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	None but the space.
<b>Timescale</b>	1 or 2 sessions, then returned to time and again.

### Method

I always start by exploring minimalism. Organise the children into groups of 4-6 and then ask them to choose a dramatic scenario, but be careful you don't tap into their own experiences. I usually go for things like, 'My mum laid a new carpet, there was a bit of a mess but now we can't find the budgie', rather than dealing with tragedies in a family.

Once they have decided on their scenario, they should explore performing it in a very specific style. No facial expression, no vocal expression, hands on knees, knees together, straight ahead.

When they get this right the contrast between the content and the style is hilarious.

Now you can have a discussion about the different conventions involved in performance forms to create two lists. Then they can get to work performing in a style of their choice. I've listed some examples below to get you started. My favourite is a certain soap in the style of Grand Opera.

### Examples:

British Soap Opera

American sitcom

Crime Drama

Children's TV Magazine

School-based Drama

Saturday Morning Children's TV

Grand Opera

Country and Western

Rural Soap, heavily accented

Minimalism or Neutrality

Melodrama

Gothic Horror



### Hot tips

This works best, and is most useful in moving the children on, if they try it in a variety of styles. Also, when you have returned to this a few times, you will be able to re-use the same scenarios in other settings.

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# Main Courses

There are additional skills involved in working on the same piece over long periods.

The units in this section can take up to **6 or 8 sessions to complete**, with the possibility of result in polished performance pieces which are best done to an audience or to camera.

These are the real entrées of a successful drama menu and should be the main event of any course.

Don't just pick them off the shelf. Use the main ideas and use your own experience.

Most of all, enjoy!



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## The Experiment of Doctor Milo

*The end result of this unit is usually a 15 to 20-minute play involving a cast of between 6 and 10 children, performed to other classes or to parents or built up into a full production. Changing characters is perfectly acceptable. The original version began as class work from a game by Joe Plass.*

*You can treat this as an improvisation using the student notes, or as a class play using the script as a bit of both!*

### Aims

- To give the students an improved understanding of the characters and how they are developed
- To develop an understanding of the creation and use of a script
- To enable them to record their work as a script for the use of other classes
- To provide an opportunity for the children to work on a characterisation
- To guarantee a sense of ownership of the work
- To allow talent to emerge and the children to find their own voice

### Or...

- To explore the problems and skills associated with the creation of a script
- To look for the comic potential in a script and to explore the audience
- To learn about the conventions of staging of melodrama

**In Addition:** You can use this to explore issues of parental responsibility and adults' views of children, to name but a few.

The full script if chosen.

Help notes.

### Resources

Props/costumes provided by the children with your support.  
Whatever production aids or special effects you can manage.

### Timescale

At least 6 sessions but often as many as 10.

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## Method

### 1. If you are going to use improvisation:

Tell them the story of the Experiment of Dr Milo. You can use the one on your own taste.

In a small town in a small county somewhere in \_\_\_\_\_ strange was happening. One by one the children of the town were turning into images of their own grandparents. None of them could remember what this happened and none could remember where they had been.

In the town there lived a boy called Martin. His parents were very well. They often argued and Martin spent a lot of time on his own. One morning his parents were cross with each other and ignoring each other. Eventually he stormed out. They didn't even notice.

Later, in the park, he was alone. Some nasty-looking men suddenly appeared, grabbed him and dragged him away. This was witnessed by a few people who had only just left him.

They rushed back to his house to tell his parents. At first his parents didn't believe them and the children left to try and rescue him themselves. When they were gone the parents reconsidered and called the police. The police decided to search for Martin and the parents decided to go with them.

They headed for the old laboratory from which mysterious sounds had been heard in recent weeks, but the children had beaten them there. They had already sneaked past the guards and ended up lost in the dark corridors.

Meanwhile Martin had been strapped to a bench in the doctor's laboratory ready to be subjected to Milo's experiment: the draining of the essence of his youth so that Milo could be young again!

Milo's daughter finds him, she seems to want to help but can't and Martin is left alone.

All of his friends had become separated and been captured, except for Jill.

They found Martin and were trying to release him, with the help of his daughter who had now changed her mind, but they were failing.

Milo and his henchmen rushed in and there was a dramatic confrontation between him and his daughter.

All seemed lost when the police and the parents burst in and, after a struggle, Milo was captured.

Enough elixir was found to restore all the children who had been taken and all was well.  
And it still is... or is it?

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Divide the class into groups of about 10.

Give them the help notes and go through them briefly.

Let them have a discussion about casting.

Move between the groups and help and encourage them as they develop.

Mix in performances of extracts and talk about the need to:

- Speak up and out
- Open the scene to the audience. Know where your audience is going to be.
- Use the full space available to you
- Develop the action scenes for comic effect, e.g. the policemen could be like the policemen in an American cop movie

Also focus on the need to be supportive within the group of those who are not as confident as others.



## Hot tips

This works best with older groups, years 8 or 9 (13 to 14 year olds). Eventually they will be ready to perform. This is best performed in front of an audience because it gives it an edge.

## 2. If you are going to use the script:

In a circle read through the script, taking volunteers and doing chunks of the script. Use slapstick rolls of the guards and the policemen and experiment with style as above.

As a casting/development exercise, break them up into groups of 4 or 5 to work on a section of the play to work on.

- Individuals can do Martin's monologue in the park
- Pairs can do the park scene with Peter and Jill
- Threes can do the first lab scene or the breakfast scene
- Fours can be the children in the park
- Larger groups can be the guards or do combinations of pieces

Next do some formal casting asking them to audition using the script. This should be carefully handled. When you have cast it you can begin to rehearse.

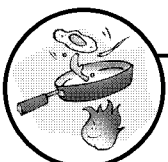
Go through it once, directing heavily. Then divide them up into scenes.

- The guards can rehearse independently, as can the policemen
- The first and second scenes can be rehearsed simultaneously
- Only the last scene requires everyone

Keep everyone busy and use the performance of short extracts as masterpieces.

Learning lines is for homework or idle moments.

Perform to an invited audience when ready with as much production as possible.



## Hot tips

This approach works best with younger or less experienced groups. Yes, it is a bit of a challenge.

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## The Experiment of Doctor Milo

### Notes for the children

#### Scene 1

*[In Dr Milo's laboratory a child is strapped to a table. The Doctor*

Dr Milo: No, No! It's no use. I've failed again! This child just doesn't have old, as will all my clients. I'll never be able to sell my elixir.

Assistant: Oh Father. Can't you give it up? You're stealing the youth of all the children. How many more must you send back without their childhood?

Dr Milo: As many as it takes! I must succeed. I'm losing my hair. I have won more children! Guards!

*[The guards enter marching and salute. This should be comical. Make some more children.]*

#### Scene 2

*[At Martin's house it is breakfast time. His parents are arguing and are upset. In the end Martin shouts at them and runs out. They seem*

#### Scene 3

*[In the Park the guards enter in disguise. Comically creeping about and a trap and hide.]*

#### Scene 4

*[Peter and Jill enter. He wants to ask her out and she wants him to be embarrassed. He is about to finally ask when their friends enter. They are bored. The answer is always, 'We did that yesterday']*

*[Finally they all leave except Martin. He talks to himself (a monologue) about how unhappy he is. He is about to leave when the guards run in and struggle but he is taken away. One of the girls sees this. She calls to him. They decide to follow the guards and attempt a rescue.]*

#### Scene 5

*[Back at the house the children rush in. They tell Martin's parents that Milo is a respected citizen. Frustrated, the children decide to return to themselves.]*

*[After they leave the parents become worried and call the police. The children meet at Milo's to see what is going on.]*

#### Scene 6

*[In the lab, Martin is strapped down. Milo is about to switch on his machine. He says, 'This time it will work and I will be rich and famous and you will be cured']*

*[He leaves to get something and Martin pleads with the assistant but doesn't think she can betray her father.]*

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## Scene 7

*[Outside the guards are on duty. The children trick them in some way (someone's trying to steal your car'). The children get into the building eventually, going after them].*

## Scene 8

*[The children have separated and are looking for Martin. One by one and Jill get through and find Martin.]*

*[As they are trying to help, but failing, the assistant enters and describes how to release him. They are about to escape when Milo bursts in.]*

Dr. Milo: So, you would betray me! Now you also will be part of the experiment.

Assistant: Father, no!

*[As things are about to end badly for all the children the parents rush in.]*

*[They try to capture Milo.]*

Parents and

Policeman: Your evil reign is over.

Dr. Milo: You'll never take me alive.

Parents: Get him!

Dr. Milo: Back, or I'll start the machine.

etc.

*[Eventually the Policeman creeps up behind him and bashes him over the head.]*

Children and

Parents: 'Hurray for the great British Bobby!'

*[The lights fade over cheers.]*

## Cast

Dr Milo

First victim

Mum

Other children

Policeman

His daughter the assistant

Martin

Dad

Peter

Guards



## Hot tips

This is a great one to get the parents involved because the costumes & included a fully developed script in case you are working with groups who

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## Dr Milo's Experiment Script

The full script as we developed it. Change it at will.

### Scene 1

*[In the laboratory of Dr Milo. Milo is there with his daughter who is the victim. The victim is tied to the operating table.]*

Dr Milo: Now, finally, we can see if my experiment works! When I pull the lever, the old and his essence will be stored in this bottle ready for my use by my rich clients. I will be young and rich! Ha Ha!

Assistant: Oh Father, why do you have to be so evil? Why can't you be like me and do something more ordinary?

Dr Milo: Because I am the great Dr Milo and my work must go on. Think of me, I will never get old!

Assistant: But only the rich people. What about the children whose childhood is stolen?

Dr Milo: Pah. They don't matter. All they do with their childhood is play and rush towards being grown up as fast as they can. I'm just being fair.

Victim: Let me go you monster! I'm happy being a child and I don't want to be a monster.

Dr Milo: Oh be quiet. You should have thought about that before you sneaked those apples. Now. Let us begin.

*[Milo and his assistant now start to twiddle with the knobs and levers. There are sound effects. The child becomes old and wizened.]*

Dr Milo: *(Holding up a small bottle)*. There! You see. It worked!

Assistant: There's not very much of it.

Dr Milo: You're right! I'm going to need a lot more than that. Hmmm. Guards!

*[The guards march in, in a comic way. They stand to attention and salute.]*

Dr Milo: Guards.

Guards: Sir, yes Sir.

Dr Milo: Go into the village and get me some more children. I need them.

Guards: Sir, yes Sir.

*[They exit equally comically.]*

Dr Milo: Now, let's see if we can make this machine more efficient. Release!

*[The Assistant does and then helps him off the stage.]*

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Assistant: You come with me and I'll make you a nice cup of tea.

Victim: Oh thank you dear. You're a very kind young girl.

*[Everyone freezes as the lights fade to black.]*

### Scene 2

*[In the kitchen of Martin's house. It is breakfast time and his parents are sitting at the table. Martin is trying to say something but he can't get a word in edgewise.]*

Mum: And if you didn't spend so much on your car we wouldn't be in trouble.

Dad: Oh that's right, blame me and my car, just as usual. It's ok for you to have a new pair of shoes to add to all the other pairs of shoes you have in your wardrobe. You don't want to spend any money on the car, which, by the way, you are driven around in, then it's a problem.

Martin: Mum, Dad.

Mum: Be quiet Martin, we're talking.

Martin: You're not talking you're arguing just like you always do and just like you always ignore me. Well I've had enough. I'm going to the park to see my friends. I don't understand me and they listen to me and I don't know when I'll be back.

*[Martin runs out. His parents stare after him.]*

Mum: Do you think we've upset him?

*[They freeze as the lights fade to black.]*

### Scene 3

*[In the park. The guards enter looking very suspicious. They might be looking for children. They creep around looking for children and/or for somewhere to hide. They talk to each other as they walk backwards not looking where they are going.]*

Guard1: Ssshhh. We've got to be careful. If anyone sees us they'll run away. We don't want any children for Dr Milo.

Guard 2: I really don't like it when Dr Milo gets cross. He's really scary.

Guard 3: And he might decide to put us in his machine instead.

Guard 1: Don't be silly. We're far too old for that.

Guard 2: Far too old, far too old! But I'm only 12. *(Or whatever age you are)*

Guard 1: Oh yes. Silly me.

Guard 3: Let's hide over there, and then when those children appear we'll scare them back to the laboratory. Quick, someone's coming.

*[The Guards all hide at the back of the stage as Peter and Jill enter. Peter and Jill look at each other in amusement at Peter's embarrassment. The children sit side by side.]*

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Peter: Jill...

Jill: Yes Peter...

Peter: You know the other day when we were out with the others and...

Jill: Yes Peter?

Peter: And we got on really really well...

Jill: Did we Peter... what's that noise? *(It is the guards sniggering.)*

Peter: Well I thought if we get on that... well I thought that... well maybe...

Jill: Might what?

Peter: Might want to go... *(The rest of this line is lost in the children's entrance)*

Children: Hello Peter / hello Jill / what are you up to? / have you been waiting? / what are you going to do now? etc.

Martin: Hello. Can we do something fun. I could do with being cheered up...

Peter: Parents?

Jill: Rowing?

Martin: Yeah. Same as ever. Never seems to stop. Just gets me down.

Child 1: *(If you have no extra children you can divide the lines between them)*  
We could, climb that really big tree at the other end of the park.

Martin: Did that yesterday.

Child 2: We could... ride our bikes in the woods and build some jumps.

Martin: Nah. No helmets.

Child 3: We could go and explore the old mansion on the hill and see if we can find something involving the caretaker.

Martin: Nah. Too Scooby Do.

Child 1: Is there anything you're going to say yes to today?

Martin: Don't think so.

Child 2: Ok. Well then. We're going to the beach. If you want to you can join us.

Martin: All right then. I might. Thanks.

*[They all leave. Martin is left alone. He makes his big speech. This depending on the needs of the actor.]*

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## Main Courses

Martin: Why don't they stop it? Why do they have to argue all the time? When did it start? I suppose it was when he got that new job. As if it was nice to have all those things though. We couldn't afford them. It started to go wrong. Now look at them, arguments for breakfast and both look so tired.

I want to tell them. I want to say sell the car, get rid of my Playstation. I don't care about the big new house and nor should you.

But they won't listen. I'm just a kid, so what do I know? I hate all this.

*[At this point the guards run in. There is a struggle, which could be heard. Martin is dragged off. Jill and Peter re-enter.]*

Jill and Peter: Did you see that? Somebody has grabbed Martin. This is terrible. We don't know what to do!

*[They exit.]*

### Scene 4

*[In the kitchen of Martin's house; his parents are still arguing.]*

Both: And another thing!

Peter: Mr and Mrs Phillips! You'll never guess what's happened!

Mum: Martin has been kidnapped.

Jill: Yes! How did you know?

Dad: Oh it's not the first time. Whenever we have a bit of a disagreement, the house on fire, trouble at school, abducted by space aliens. So strange and tame really.

Peter: But he didn't. There were guards. Really big ones.

Jill: And they grabbed him and there was a fight and he struggled but

Peter and Jill: It was horrible.

Mum: Yes, yes. Would you like some milk?

Peter: Oh you're hopeless. We'll go and rescue him ourselves!

*[They exit in a hurry. Mum and Dad look at each other looking confused.]*

Dad: Do you think it might be for real this time?

Mum: I don't know. I suppose we could just check with the police to see if there are any suspicious people in the area.

Dad: OK. You call the Police and I'll get the wellies.

Mum: Right. *(She dials.)* Hallo, is that the police? I'd like to report a missing child. My son, Martin Phillips. He's 12 years old. He's been missing since last night. Daddy... It's true... They said to meet them at the laboratory of the

*[They freeze as the lights fade to black.]*

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## Scene 5

*[Back in the laboratory of Dr Milo, Martin is strapped to the table adjust the machine.]*

Dr Milo: Now I will succeed. This one is full of youthful energy. With him I can satisfy all my customers as well as myself. Ha Hah!

Assistant: It's not fair and you know it. You had your childhood, leave the child

Dr Milo: Silence! You know better than to argue with me in front of the machine. The machine is big enough for two if you have a problem with this ex

Martin: Let me go Milo. You won't get away with this! My friends know where I am and rescue me.

Dr Milo: Pah! A bunch of hapless children against my guards, I really don't need your hand... I'd better go and check the alarms. Keep an eye on him while I get back. I want to see this one myself!

*[Milo leaves.]*

Martin: You don't agree with him... do you?

Assistant: Be quiet. You're not meant to talk to me. The Doctor wouldn't let

Martin: Look. If you don't agree with him why not help me and then we can come back with me. We'll get the Police and stop Milo. It is possible if you want to.

Assistant: You don't understand. Milo took me in when there was no one else. I know what he's doing is wrong but I owe him so much.

Martin: You owe more to yourself. Anyway, he's ill, he has to be if he thinks he can get help for him.

Assistant: Help? Really? Well... Perhaps...

*[The Assistant begins to undo one of the straps when Milo walks in.]*

Dr Milo: So! This is how you reward my kindness. Betrayal at the first chance. You will become part of the Experiment of Dr Milo!

*[Milo pushes the Assistant into the machine and straps her in. He looks at the camera and fade to black.]*

## Scene 6

*[At the Police Station the policemen are having a quiet day. They are sitting at their desks.]*

Policeman 1: (After he has got his breath back) Doesn't anything ever happen here? Nothing exciting thing that's happened in the last three months in this town except getting trapped in her willow tree, and that's only six feet tall.

Policeman 2: Oh I don't know. I gave out lots of parking fines yesterday. I enjoyed

Policeman 1: It's not like this in the movies. I only joined up for the fast cars and the action. What's happened. My patrol car is a mini metro and my main problem is dealing with from weeping willows.

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*[At this point the children burst in. They are breathless and very excited.]*

Children: Officers, officers. You've got to help us. It's Dr Milo, he's kidnapped part of an evil international conspiracy!

Policeman 1: Dr Milo? An evil international conspiracy? Get away! Dr Milo is a man. I mean, we both belong to the same club. I can't believe he's part of a conspiracy, or even a local conspiracy for that matter.

Children: But he is! You've got to believe us. Just because we're children doesn't mean we don't know what we're talking about. Help Us!

Policeman 2: Well Chief. It might be worth investigating. At least it will get us something to talk about.

Policeman 1: I don't know. Dr Milo might get upset if we march in there and accuse him of an international conspiracy. I mean, it's not nice.

Children: Oh for goodness sake. We haven't got time to listen to this. You're just talking, talk. We'll just have to rescue him ourselves. Come on kids.

*[They rush off leaving the policemen open mouthed.]*

Policeman 1: Well, that was a bit of a turn up. You don't think they'll do anything?

Policeman 2: I don't know. They were very excited though. Perhaps we should set up a laboratory, just in case anything goes wrong. We wouldn't want to be caught out, would we?

Policeman 1: Perhaps you're right. And it will be more exciting than watching yet another cup of English tea. Let's get ready.

*[There could now be an action sequence when the police put on a dramatic fashion.]*

### Scene 7

*[Outside the Laboratory of Dr Milo. The Guards are guarding, bored.]*

Guard 1: *(Reading from a magazine)* It says here, that the solar system is more than 600,000 miles an hour and that the Earth goes round 600,000 miles an hour which means that we are 6,000,000 miles away from where we went to bed yesterday.

Guard 2: And people say we don't travel enough, huh.

Guard 3: Stop it. You're making me feel dizzy. I feel like I need to hold on.

Guard 2: Let's do something.

Guard 3: I suppose we could do some marching about, after all we are men.

*[The Guards now get in line and perform a comedy marching routine, bouncing everything and regularly bounce off each other. After a while Dr Milo arrives.]*

Guard 1: Guards! Attention!

*[They sort of manage it and Dr Milo is quite impressed.]*

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## Main Courses

Dr Milo: Very good guards, one of your better efforts. Now listen. I have a lot of pesky children may try and sneak into my laboratory. Your main job, I accept it, is to stop them. Is that clear?

Guards: Yes Dr Sir, yes Sir.

Dr Milo: And try not to look too conspicuous. We don't want to attract too much attention to these disguises.

*[The Guards put on whatever comes to hand.]*

Dr Milo: Good, that's much better. Right, you get back to your guarding and start your experiment.

*[Dr Milo exits and the Guards stand about looking inconspicuous, in the corner.]*

Child 1: Ssshhh. Look, this must be the place. There are guards.

Child 2: How do you know they are guards? They don't look like guards.

Child 3: Look at their boots silly. Guards are a bit like policemen, they all have boots.

Child 2: Oh, I see, I think.

Child 1: We'll have to think of a way to get past them.

Child 2: We could pretend we had an appointment with the Doctor because he always lets us in.

Child 3: Nah, too easy.

Child 1: We could get them to join in a game of hide and seek and when they find us we just walk in.

Child 2: Brilliant! Let's do it.

*[The children come out looking deliberately sweet and innocent.]*

Child 3: Oh dear. It's such a long time till dinner and we've nothing to do.

Child 1: I suppose we could play a game... like hide and seek.

Child 2: Nah, you can't play hide and seek with three people. You need lots of people.

Child 3: I wonder if there is anybody who might be able to help us?

Child 1: I really don't know.

Guard 1: We could play, if you like. *(Aside)* The Dr said to look inconspicuous. Playing with a bunch of kids is just the thing.

Child 2: Oh thank you. Now hide and seek will be loads of fun. Tell you what, I'll come seeking for you.

Guard 2: OK. Come on then.

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*[The other children pretend to hide as the Guards actually do. Chi beckons the others to follow. They creep into the entrance to the lab. Guards look up.]*

Guard 3: Where have they gone?

Guard 2: You don't think they went into the laboratory do you?

Guard 1: Rats! They must have been the children the Doctor warned us of. They must have been there before the Doctor finds out.

*[The Guards also rush into the laboratory. As they disappear, Mum and Dad look at each other. Mum and Dad are still jumping about like action movie heroes.]*

Mum and Dad: It must be this way. Hurry, there's no time to waste.

Policeman 1: Come on lads. We've got to get to those kids before they get to the lab. We've got to look at it.

*[They also rush into the laboratory ready for the final scene.]*

### Scene 8

*[This starts with the end of Scene 5.]*

Dr Milo: So! This is how you reward my kindness. Betrayal at the first chance. You will become part of the Experiment of Dr Milo!

*[Milo pushes the Assistant into the machine and straps her in. He then turns to the machine and prepares to start up the machine.]*

Martin: Don't do it Dr! It's wrong and you know it. I need my childhood!

Dr Milo: Never! I've gone too far to stop now. Think of all the old people you will restore the youth of ten of them.

Assistant: You're ill Father, let me help you. It's not too late.

Dr Milo: Pah! Enough of this. Prepare to become part of the experiment!

*[As the machine starts to warm up the guards enter with most of the children. They are all captured them.]*

Guard 1: Look Dr. We have found some more.

Children: Let us go!

Guard 2: Only if you say pretty please.

Children: No!

Dr Milo: Into the machine with them! At this rate we'll have enough elixir in no time!

*[The guards tie the struggling children into the machine.]*

Dr Milo: Now, where was I? Oh yes, the final countdown.

*[At this point Peter and Jill rush in.]*

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Peter and Jill: Stop! They are our friends.

Dr Milo: Pesky kids! You can't find any for months and then they turn up with a machine with them!

*[As the guards reach for them the scene goes into slow motion as Dr Milo turns off the machine. He fails and they are both grabbed and instantly...*

Dr Milo: Now, finally...

*[The Policemen and Mum and Dad enter at the same time from different directions.]*

Policemen: Hold it right there Milo. We see you now for what you are. Let them go!

Dr Milo: Oh for goodness sake. Guards, get them.

*[The guards and the policemen now have a brief fight and the guards win. Meanwhile Dr Milo has tried to creep out but Mum has got him in the end.]*

Dad: Well done Mum. I knew you could do it.

Dr Milo: Unhand me woman. You don't know who you're dealing with!

Mum: Yes we do and we don't care!

Children: Hooray for Martin's Mum!

All: *(Except the Policemen)* And hooray for the Great British Bobby!

Dr Milo: Darn it. I'd have got away with it if it wasn't for them pesky kids!

*[Blackout.]*

*The End... or is it?*

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## Time Capsule

*This idea is adapted from the biscuit tin full of newspapers so favoured by a certain programme.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage the children to take a good look at the world we live in</li> <li>The unit operates at different levels depending on the children. It can tailor it to the needs of your groups</li> <li>The children will also be encouraged to explore the possibilities of performing different sorts of drama. Many of them will use some will use parody, others documentary styles</li> <li>Come to terms with the needs of the camera</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	A video camera.
<b>Timescale</b>	Flexible. Between 4 and 8 sessions.

### Method

Explain to the children the concept of a time capsule. Bring in the following

- Things which are ordinary to them might be unusual to people in the future. Children might only go to school for lessons which need other people, it might be taught by a computer that they can speak to and which will answer.
- Family life could be very different. Mum, Dad and siblings in one house, all organising bringing up children. Why not have sixteen parents and all children?
- Work will have changed, it's changing now. Car factories that used to be run by half a dozen.
- To us space travel is an adventure or an impossible dream. Will it be to go to Mars?
- What will they find attractive? What will they think of fashion today, or what they like to buy, and especially our sense of humour?
- Will they think well of us and the care we have, or haven't, taken of the world?

When the discussion naturally ends, explain that you are going to make a time capsule. They will work and seal it in foil and put in a box and bury it for future generations to find. Who appear in the tape will be world famous.

They will need to make up performance pieces to be filmed. They might do short plays, songs, dances, etc.

Once in a while all work will be stopped whilst the most recent batch of pieces are filmed.

When the tape is full bury it.

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Give them advice about how to proceed using the following guidance:

- Smaller groups are easier to work in than larger groups
- Fashion shows or short pieces about modern music are really straightforward
- The next simplest response is to make up plays which show different aspects of lessons, teachers, problems, highlights
- Next, work. For example the monotony of working on a production line
- Next, home life. It could be funny or serious, just show them some experience of good and bad.
- Next, entertainment. How do we amuse ourselves? Samples of TV programmes, film 2004/5/6/7. Their own versions of comedy shows or sketches.
- Performances about how they see the future are always fun, probably in the future who sees the tape. Automated houses, robots that look like people, a future in which the world has been invaded by aliens, who might be immortal and endless.
- For children who want more of a challenge. A programme about issues, such as: homelessness in one of the world's richest countries; the developed world divide; pollution; the ozone layer; the destruction of the rainforests; the environment; anything else over which they have real concerns and about which they have done research. These programmes could include 'interviews', live action extracts and allsorts.

As they work, move from group to group and problem solve. Be ready to fill in the gaps of the 2<sup>nd</sup> session.



### **Hot tips**

This one has worked best for me with Year 9 groups, but you could start by keeping tape on and off, until the last member of the group leaves.

This would then become not just an archive of our times, but also of the future.

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## The Seven Stories

There are meant to be seven plots which cover the whole of human creativity. I believe this but I've been trying for years, and so have endless classes that doesn't fall into one of the seven categories. In the context of plays it does group of characters you focus on. The 'Cinderella' plot is only that from the Ugly Sisters' story is very different.

Whatever your view of all this, this idea provides a great way to explore the and the students find it very stimulating.

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The primary aim is to encourage the students to think about stories and how they work.</li> <li>Explore how to create tension and conventions about stories.</li> <li>Practise their skills of characterisation and also those skills of writing work over prolonged periods.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	Display of 7 storylines.
<b>Timescale</b>	Up to 6 to 12 sessions, possibly interspersed with other units.

### Method

Explain to the children that there are, in theory, only seven storylines and that have read or films that they have seen fit into one of them, although some as a storyline applies depends on which character's point of view you are telling. There is a large visual display of the seven stories as described below. Only one storyline is initiated. Numbers 4, 6 and 7 are the most difficult. I usually focus on the rest.

When each story has been explained give them a session to work out their plot for them in the second. Some groups will take longer.

You may decide to shorten the unit by allocating a storyline to each group separately at once, and then debrief. You could keep this secret and ask the other groups what each play was based on.

You may choose to ignore the Hollywood contribution on the grounds that it is a resolution.

These are the seven stories.

1. **Cinderella.** A story of a person whose life is based on good and bad luck and their destiny after suffering.
2. **Achilles.** The story of someone successful who is brought down by a single wound.
3. **Circe.** The story of the spider and the fly on which most horror stories are based.
4. **Orpheus.** Or the gift that is taken away. Often a story of illness or injury, sometimes in war.
5. **Romeo and Juliet.** Love or friendship across the divides of a community, race or class prejudice.

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6. **Tristan.** The eternal triangle. A three-way relationship often involving cars or just a lover or third close friend.
7. **Faust.** The story of the promise that must be kept. Usually when the person has the power to change the consequences or thought that they could avoid them. Hollywood claim an eighth story:
8. **The Story of the Indomitable Hero.** That is somebody who can never be beaten, no matter the odds, like Indiana Jones or James Bond.

Group sizes should be the usual 4 to 6 and your approach should be age-related. Younger groups with 'Cinderella'; most would struggle with 'Faust'.

As they are creating, your role is that of the facilitator, moving from group to group.



### ***Hot tips***

Young groups like number 1. Years 7 through to 9 thrive on number 3.

Year 9 deal well with the rest and this unit can provide a good stimulus.

It would be interesting to produce some plot digests of plays that they have studied further up the school in English and to see if they can correctly identify the stories.

This activity also lends itself to Hot Seating (where an actor is interviewed about their characterisation) can be quite intense in the more serious stories.

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## Radio Station

*This one is a firm favourite with children who want to perform but find it very hard to calm down an 'over-excited' group because it's static and relatively quiet.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop their awareness of the importance of timing</li> <li>To give shy children the opportunity to gain confidence</li> <li>To develop the use of voice to communicate meaning and emotion</li> <li>To allow for a sharing of music and culture</li> <li>To encourage children to listen to more varied radio!</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<p>A tape recorder with a microphone.</p> <p>Possible various sound effects creators (dried peas, etc.) A script for the group from view.</p> <p>Sound effect CDs and a player, if you have them.</p>
<b>Timescale</b>	Introducing, planning and rehearsal should take 4 sessions, plus a further 2.

### Method

Play the group some recorded samples of different radio stations. Try to include a range of programmes and styles as possible.

Set them the task of producing five minutes of air time with samples only of the following: a soap, an interview, news and weather, maybe a quiz competition, a play with sound effects, some music but intros only, and their own contribution.

In groups they should carefully plan their work, ideally scripting everything to avoid any barrier to learning.

They should bring in their own homemade sound effects equipment, or at least a tape recorder. When they are able to run the show without faltering they can take it in turn to perform on screen. This is the performance. The tape is for your records and the debrief, so well they have done.



### Hot tips

It's often funny to plan errors; the microphone that is left on, or open, for too long. With big groups you will need to shorten the air time or have them work in shifts.

With the right class they could all work on their own contribution to one programme: one in charge of melodrama, another in charge of music and a third in charge of news.

Some groups will want to develop the idea and produce some programme, which case you could take a year!

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## Exploring the World of Dreams

*The possibilities of dreams are endless. This work often ends in mime or movement. Some of the best work we have ever done has resulted from this unit.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To tap into one of the most stimulating and personal areas of existence as a stimulus for a drama presentation which is ultimately blending drama with dance and abstract expression.</li> <li>To introduce the student to less obvious dramatic conventions, avant-garde and unusual form.</li> <li>To encourage sharing in a supportive atmosphere.</li> <li>To explore how technical support can enhance the performance.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	You can achieve great results with a spacious room and nothing more; percussion; rain sticks; recorders; CD soundtracks; coloured paper; reflection; video; live sound recording with echo and/or distortion or they can think of and provide.
<b>Timescale</b>	Anything from 6 sessions upwards.

### Method

In a conducive atmosphere with the children close and quiet, introduce the concept that if their dreams are too personal or private they should not share. Tell some may be your own, those of friends or just famous examples.

Have a sharing session in which the children tell the group of some of their dreams which are common to the dreams of many people. These might include:

- Flying
- Weightlessness
- Repetition
- Trying to scream or speak but no sound coming out
- Trying to move forward and feeling too heavy to get anywhere
- Familiar people behaving out of character
- Things that have happened to you that day emerging jumbled up
- Being high up and feeling precarious
- Impossible creatures
- Suddenly being somewhere else for no apparent reason
- Other things which emerge from the contributions of the children

Divide them into groups of six or so, more or less if you recognise a need, and let the groups, to share and begin to decide on the content of their group's dream presentation.

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When you judge the time to be right stop them and talk about how they might work. You could include:

- Repetition and echo
- Mime
- Slow motion
- Dance or rhythmic movement
- The use of sound effects
- The use of light changes
- Thought tracking (where an offstage actor speaks the thoughts of an on-stage actor and actions reflect the internal dialogue)
- Any others that you feel will be useful

Let them work on and intervene as necessary, moving towards a final performance and debrief, or just debrief.



### ***Hot tips***

It's best to use this piece before the students reach that awkward age groups who are confident in themselves and their colleagues.

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## Silent Movie

*Silent Movies are becoming a lost art form. For that reason alone this is a valuable project.*

<b>Aims</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To encourage the students to explore physical acting by from the performance.</li> <li>To give them an understanding of how acting to camera</li> <li>To acquaint them with a classic form of entertainment.</li> <li>To practise all the usual skills involved in developing good of time.</li> <li>To further develop their understanding of how stories are communicated through choice of scenes.</li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	<p>This depends on how complex you can or want to be. You will need sufficient tapes. A4 plain paper and large pens are also essential. In any way you might want costumes, sugar glass bottles, cut outs of people. You only need the camera and the paper.</p>
<b>Timescale</b>	Anything from 6 sessions to 12 or more.

### Method

You could begin by showing the group some extracts from classic silent movies, making sure you are not infringing copyright. There are many websites that are really informative, just search for silent movies. Otherwise you can tell them all about it. The following is something like the

'When films were first made they could record the pictures but not the sound. Well, they could record the sound but they couldn't match it up with the pictures so they couldn't use it. Instead they used caption cards with the words written on them and a man stood in front of the cinema who would play the music live to match the sound on the screen. So for a chase you would get... [they will tell you]...'

movies fit into one of the following groups:

- Horror films like 'Frankenstein'
- Westerns where the good guys wore white hats and the bad guys didn't
- Comedies like the ones with Charlie Chaplin
- Melodramas where the soppy girl has to be rescued by the hero from the evil landlord who has tied her to the railway track

If you want to you can join some of these up or try and invent your own story, but, it must be silent. And remember, you are going to film this as a play so you can stop and move the camera to make it look better, change the scene. You must, though, do the scenes in the order you want and you only get one go.

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In between scenes you will need caption cards that say things like 'Meanwhile, on the far side of town' or 'Gasp'. Do not have more than six of these because each one involves stopping the camera to change the card in close up. You can have extra title and credits pages.

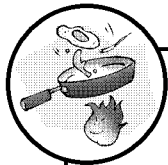
When I have answered any questions you are to get into groups of about 5 or 6, without leaving anyone out, and sit down to discuss and decide which sort of film you want to make. Call me or your teacher when you are ready. Then you can cast yourselves and begin to rehearse your scenes.

When you have done that you can get up and begin to rehearse your scenes.

Now go.'

When they are working you will be free to move around, problem-solving and making films will evolve over a number of sessions and usually end up at about 5 minutes. Melodramas are the most popular choices.

The final session can be a premier and then review.



### ***Hot tips***

Resist the requests from the children to be allowed to operate the camera.

When you are filming make sure the actors fill the frame and don't let them intend to edit and have the facilities to do so.

In the later stages of rehearsal let each group perform in the actual space marked point which is the camera so that they can get used to focusing.

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## Jason and the Argonauts

Great tales provide great opportunities, and this one has it all: heroes and villains, adventure, betrayal and, if you want it to, lots of gore.

I've included some work attached to this project that you could use to extend the history at least, which I hope you find useful. You could easily extend it into a project if that was your need. Music and dance often naturally arise and PHE can be raised.

<b>Aims</b>	So far as drama is concerned:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To further explore and develop the skills involved in creating drama. These involve:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The selection of material and plot points</li> <li>The development of character</li> <li>An awareness of pace and structure</li> <li>An awareness of the needs of the audience</li> <li>Applying practical limitations to their work whilst creating drama</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Resources</b>	From nothing but a space to everything you need for a fully equipped stage with a few plastic swords, some simple costume and some props, although I must confess to a smoke machine.
<b>Timescale</b>	At least 6 sessions, and often a whole term's work.

### Method

In discussion let them tell you some legends. You might heighten their interest by showing archaeological finds that support the truth of some elements of these tales. For example:

- During the excavation of the palace of Knossos on Crete they found a large room with a central courtyard.
- We know that the Island of Santorini was all but destroyed by a cataclysm between 1600BC and 1400BC. Many believe that the devastation this caused was the origin of the legend of Atlantis.
- The discovery of the site of Troy in western Turkey by Schliemann.
- And, most interestingly, villagers in the mountains of northern Turkey were found weighting fleeces down at the bottom of streams so that the gold is caught.

When the time is right you can tell them the story of Jason and the Argonauts, using my notes, or research your own version. Extension notes, activities and worksheets to support literacy, follow on from my notes.

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## My Notes

## The Story of the Golden Fleece

Jason was the rightful King of Iolcus in ancient Greece. His father died when he was young so his uncle ruled for him. His name was Pelias.

Pelias sent Jason away to be educated by a wise centaur called Chiron. A centaur was a wise creature with the body of a horse and the torso, head and arms of a man.

When Jason had grown up he went back to claim his throne.

Pelias didn't like this idea but he was afraid of Jason because he arrived wearing only one shoe (he'd lost the other one crossing a stream on the way). He had been warned by an Oracle, or fortune teller, that a man with one shoe would cause trouble.

He got Jason to agree that he had to go on a quest to prove that he was worthy of being handed over power. The quest was to be the search for the Golden Fleece. Jason got a band of heroes to help him. This band included: **Amphion, The Dioscuri, Peleus, Meleager and Hercules**. All of whom had special skills.



Orpheus

They sailed on the Argo, a ship of fifty oars, and had many adventures. These included dealing with **The Harpies, The Sirens, A Race of Giants, The Clashing Rocks**. There could be others, e.g. **Medusa**, the snake-haired Gorgon whose gaze could turn men to stone.

Eventually they reached the kingdom where the fleece was kept, which was ruled by King Aeetes.

Aeetes set Jason some tasks to complete before he could have the fleece. These included taming two wild bulls with hooves of bronze and breath of fire and then ploughing a field with some dragon teeth. Jason succeeded but when he sowed the seeds skeleton warriors came and fought him. They lost. Jason was able to do this because Medea, daughter of Aeetes, was in love with him. She was a beautiful sorceress and she used her magic to help him.

Next Aeetes tried to get Jason killed by sending him off to get the fleece without taming the seven-headed Hydra that guarded it. Again Medea saved him by drugging the Hydra.

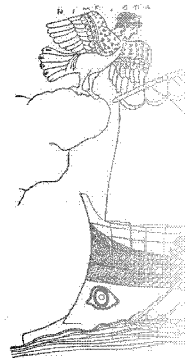
They now fled with Aeetes in hot pursuit. To slow him down Medea killed her own brother in the road.

When they got back to Iolcus, Pelias was not happy and refused to give up power. Medea saved his death by tricking his own daughters into killing him. Pelias was very ill and they needed her help. She showed them her skills by sacrificing a sheep and then bringing it back to life. They could do the same for Pelias so they killed him, but then she refused! But the people were grateful and Jason had to flee.

At first they lived happily but then Jason fell in love with somebody else.

Medea was furious and cast a spell that killed Creusa, Jason's bride, on their wedding night. She then accepted her and gave her a fabulous dress for her wedding present, but when she put it on it caught fire and she was killed by flames.

Medea went back to her father who had now forgiven her. Jason grew old and people said he was resting under the bow of the Argo, which was out of the water, when the gods came to kill him.



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Discuss the key points of the story, i.e. which scenes *must* you show and which

Now the characters. There must be a Jason, but if you have lots of budding actors, you can have a costume which they take it in turns to wear. Characters you cannot cast can

Finally, before groups are formed (normally 6 to 8), explain to them that legends have new ideas, or want to import characters or stories from other legends, but already involves Hercules, Theseus and Orpheus so why not a few more. The right period and style, no heroic turtles or human bats.

Now let them go and provide help where needed. You might want to film the



### ***Hot tips***

The best results I've had with this project have been with Year 6, although they have produced excellent work.

As it develops and you discuss with them the problems they tend to come up with are often involving simple music and rhythm or fabulous costumes.

You could also look for appropriate comedy, the hydra arguing with its

As to the gore, I tend to avoid the slaughter of the children but allow the death of Creusa and that seems to work.

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## Extension Notes, Activities and Worksheets for Jason and the Golden Fleece

### Research

#### The Time

The dates of these Greek Legends are always a bit vague. We know that Greece was there long before Great Britain and long before the Romans. If we stick to our story we know that on the island of Crete was also the hero of the Legend of the Minotaur. We know from archaeology that Thebes was destroyed between 1600 and 1400 BC by a massive tidal wave following the eruption of Mount Santorini, as it is now known). So we can place the Legend of the Golden Fleece to around 1400 BC.

On the other hand, most people picture this story with the heroes dressed in Classical Greek armour from the 5th Century BC. Some even dress their heroes in medieval armour. Even though nobody at those times would actually expect to bump into Medusa or have a lesson with a centaur, it's still fun to imagine them.

Why do they do this?

Why don't they think that being accurate with the historical details actually matters?

What does matter about the story? Which parts do you have to have?

In any case you should make sure that you know enough about the period to have a good idea of how your character would have looked and how the world in which the story is meant to take place.

#### **Research Activity**

Look up:

- Greek buildings between 1400 and 300 BC
- Greek costume for the same times
- Weapons and armour
- Ships and chariots
- Images of the Greek gods
- Images of their imagined monsters

You will find information that will help you for the earlier part of the period if you look up Mycenaean and Knossos. Pictures of The Elgin Marbles will show you heroic Greek figures. Apart from that there are many books that will help you in your resource library. You can then work these into your version of this legend, and then into your own legend.

#### The Place

We know that the city of Iolcus was on mainland Greece near the mouth of the Aegaeus. For the start of Jason's voyage we think he sailed around the Mediterranean Sea reaching Sardis and eventually passing up the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus into the Black Sea. We know the Golden Fleece is on the northern coast of what is now Turkey in the south-eastern part of the Black Sea.

With that information you can plot on a map of the modern Mediterranean the possible route of Jason's voyage.

Now you should be able to write your own legend. Be prepared to do more than one. Drawings of your characters will help you to bring your legend to life, and who knows, maybe you'll find a new story.

Read the Amphion's legend 'The Dark Tower' and then complete the worksheet.

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### My Legend by Amphion: The Tale of the Dark Tower

#### Hero of Greece!

I cannot tell you all of the Epic Deeds that I have done, but I will try to give you an adventure, an adventure which I survived but from which I never recovered.

This then is 'The Tale of the Dark Tower'.

When I was a young man I yearned for adventure. My Father, who was Zeus, while Hercules, did not encourage me to be a hero which is why he got Hermes to give me. I was interested in the arts of war and preferred to rely on my natural wits and so, as soon as I was of age, I left my mother's and set out to search the world for fame.

I passed through many lands and fought with many foes – the Winged Centaurs of the Twisted Trees of Fangegorn – but none were so damaging as 'the Denizens of the Dark Tower'. Even Jason's invitation to join the Argonauts could not bring me peace, only

This tower stands on the edge of a great swamp overrun with monstrous lizards who would murk to drown you before they stow you in their larder. To attempt a crossing was so unfortunate that my old friend Chiron, The Winged Centaur, answered my call on the spot and came to lift me high above the snapping jaws to land me on the furthest shore of the Dark Tower.

Within its dank and windowless walls lived all those poor souls who had been banished to the underworld when they denied the Ancient Gods! Now they must guard the underworld. A marvellous glass within which was held the image of the face of Helen, the most beautiful woman ever graced the earth. The face that had launched a thousand ships to war with Troy. If you know, bring it with me back into the light. Then my fame would equal that of my Father.

I approached with care, for heroes need not be stupid, and worked my way around the tower. Eventually, high above me, I spied a crevice and slowly, straining the very limits of my body, I inched my way towards it. It was an entrance but so low that I had to enter on my hands and knees. Wriggling in, I left all light behind me.

Around me I could sense the presence of the denizens, their whispers slithered around me and their words took shape.

'Only those who know what is to be known shall pass beyond the denizens of the Dark Tower. What is to be known, Amphion?'

'I do,' I said.

'Then tell.'

'All things. All things will be known to the patient minds of men.'

The denizens scurried around in dark discourse.

Eventually they said, 'We cannot find you wrong, what is your business here?'

'I have come to see the glass.'

'Only to see?'

'Only to see.'

'You have crossed the swamp and answered our riddle and so earned the right. Pass on.'

I moved forward, but unbeknownst to them I laid a trail of small stones in the dark. I climbed and climbed and finally came to a door. I pushed with all my strength and the door opened. There, floating in the half light, was her face. I drank in the image and turned and went. I did not know where I was done and why they let me pass. For no mortal could ever look upon the face of Helen. Each moment when they closed their eyes her beauty would return to haunt them. I did not know that for my trail of stones I would be there still, the fate of many others, as it was I. I spent my later years roaming in the world.

Alone and not able to love any except the face that I had seen that day. And even now, the denizens of the dark tower echoes in pursuit.

I know it always will  
Amphion.

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### Creating a Legend of Your Own

If you are going to create a legend of your own that has any chance of being of being retold down the ages, you must follow the rules for legend writing.

You probably know a number of legends so think about those as well as the to base this work.

Most legends have certain things in common. Let's see if we can work out w

1. A legend has something in it which is based in truth.

In the Golden Fleece it is \_\_\_\_\_

In the Dark Tower it is \_\_\_\_\_

In another Legend of your choice it is \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Many characters are common to a number of legends. Which two chara stories mentioned above?

Can you name any others which are common to more than one legend?

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3. Most Legends have fantastic creature or monsters. Describe two from the quick sketch of at least one of them.

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4. The heroes of most legends have a very human fault or failing which gets them into trouble. What was Jason's and what was Amphiion's.

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5. There is often a romantic part to the story, sometimes involving a God or Goddess. Give one example from the two legends?

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6. Can you think of anything else you really should have, or could have, in your legend and why?

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Now you should be able to identify the most important parts of a legend and plan your own. Use the table to begin to plan your legend:

Important Element	Example	My Legend

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### My Part in the Legend of the Golden Fleece

#### Amphion's Story

I am Amphion, most famous of the Greek Heroes of my time for my excellence with a sword and for my good looks.

I was pleased when the young and inexperienced Prince Jason asked me to help him on this important mission and I knew that I could offer. He asked a few other heroes along too but I didn't think that we should need them.

[Amphion goes on to describe how he single-handedly defeated Medusa and how he captured the Hydra, with a little help from Hercules.

At the end of his story he is an old man.]

Ah, but things didn't work out as they should have. I blame Medea woman. Should never have brought her back. I knew it would come of it and now look what's happened. Jason died by the very boat that brought him glory and the rest of us forgotten, except that Hercules – huh, if you ask me, it helped Zeus for a Father if you're the favourite son – has no real feelings well, that's the end of the story, except for what happened with the Golden Fleece, and only I know that...

#### ***Writing Activity***

- Now that you have read Amphion's story, write a part of the legend from the point of view of your main character, if you are playing more than one, making them all quite nice really.
- If you are playing a monster or a bad character you could make them quite nice really.
- Writing in this way shows **bias** and can be called **propaganda** when used to promote power or influence.

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## Newspaper Activities

Resources needed: examples of different types of newspapers (broadsheets and tabloids)

### BREAKING NEWS: BREAKING NEWS: BREAKING NEWS

News just in...

The way we find out about things that are happening has changed in your lifetime and is still changing for many lifetimes.

Let's start at the very beginning with:

#### Word of Mouth

News would spread slowly around a village and then be passed to the next village and so on. Traders. This was very inefficient (try a game of Chinese whispers and see why). There is no permanent record of what has been said and the news changes as it is passed on. What are they?

Next came parchment and paper with announcements read by town criers or messengers. Usually about royalty or wars or tax rises.

Eventually people began to print newspapers and now there are thousands of them. How many can you name?

Newspapers can be broadly divided into two groups:

#### Broadsheets & Tabloids

Can you name some examples of each type?

Broadsheets tend to report news in a more serious way and include more detail.

Tabloids tend to report news in a more sensational way and with less detail.

#### Activity

- Using the examples provided, make a list of the stories included in each type of newspaper.
- Count the total number of individual photographs.
- Write down two or three examples of the headings or headlines from each type.
- For one typical article of each count the number of words.
- Now, in the same article, count the number of words with three or more syllables.
- Now note the number of pages in total and record how many are used for each type of article, e.g. politics, sport, business, show business, royalty, and so on.

You may choose to present your findings as a graph.

Now you will understand the difference between the two types and how they are used.

You are going to write an article for a newspaper about one of the adventures of the Golden Fleece.

You should decide whether it is going to be a tabloid or a broadsheet.

You might decide to report the same story twice. Once in each style.

Use the organising sheet on the next page to help you:

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### Writing for a Newspaper

Decisions and Notes

Tabloid or Broadsheet?

Name of my newspaper

Name of my character

Headline of my story

Some key words that I am going to use  
(e.g. 'disaster', 'triumphant', 'terrifying')

My opening paragraph (this should catch the attention and include the main

Paragraph two will be about...

Paragraph three will be about...

My closing sentence will be...  
(remember: the first and last sentences are the most important)

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Write the story as if your character was the hero, or in the right. This is called

Here are some examples:

**‘Hercules Grabs Golden Fleece From Jaws Of Hydra’**

**‘Jason Grateful To Greek Superman.’**

**‘Medea Made Good As Jason Makes Gold.’**

**‘Jason Saved From Sirens By Plucky Orpheus’**

**‘Argonauts return from successful expedition. Fleece saved’**

**‘Pelias exposed as tyrant by return of young Perseus’**

Now that you have completed the draught sheet produce a neat copy that looks like a newspaper. This may be homework.

### Moving forward

In recent times other ways of spreading the news have developed. First radio, then television, satellite television, then news sites on the Internet and, most recently, news on mobile phones.

As extension work you might look at some examples of these and ask the same questions that you asked about newspapers.

You could then decide whether they are more like Broadsheet services or Tabloids.

Here are some examples you could focus on:

- AOL’s front page
- Yahoo news service
- Orange mobile bulletins
- Sky news
- Richard and Judy, or another morning magazine news show
- Newsround

But there are many others.

When you have done that you could write a report on what you have found out.

A report is a formal piece of writing and should be written in the following format:

- Title
- Introduction stating aims of the research
- Your methodology, i.e. how you are going to conduct your research. Are you going to ask questions and questions you are going to ask
- Supporting information. In the case of a TV programme this might include who is presenting the broadcast and who might be at home and up to watch it
- Your conclusions

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## Main Courses

Use the table on the next page to organise your thoughts. You may need to write reports.

The title of my report is:

The aims of my report are:

My research involved:  
(material looked at and questions asked)

My results were:

Supporting evidence for my thoughts:  
(e.g. what time of day is a TV news service shown)

My conclusions are:

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## Broadsheet example

### Jason and the Argonauts return from their arduous

It was announced this morning that Prince Jason and his crew of experienced explorers had returned in the early hours having been successful in their quest for the, so called, 'Golden Fleece'.

Early reports would indicate that this is in fact a Golden Fleece, although some doubts have already been raised about its authenticity.

One expert, from the BBC, as saying, 'these fleeces are a bit of a while'.

The news caused a major reaction which had leapt to new heights at the supposed discovery.

King Pelias was said to comment shortly.

## Tabloid example



Jason on his return

### JASON GETS GOLD The Fleece is ours

Late last night news broke of a triumph for Jason and his crew of Argonauts who have found the legendary Golden Fleece. The big prize, previously mythical treasure will guarantee a year and a reduction in the cost of shopping. Jason's stylish habit of wearing only one

#### IN TODAY'S SUPPLEMENT

- Did Media do for poorly Pelias? The inside story.
- Was Amphion really a chart stardom, page 162.
- Medusa? Snake-headed monster or funky rock chick? Check out the chart stardom, page 162.



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# Desserts

Just one dessert, but one so popular that you never get ti

## Oscars

*This is a celebration of the children's success. It needs no other aim or justifi*

*Every once in a while announce an Oscars Awards Ceremony to be immin*

*The children can work in groups of their own choosing to create work of the  
time of your choice to the academy (yourself and a colleague, or sometimes p*

*Oscars will be awarded in categories chosen by you. There will be enough of  
something.*

Here are some sample categories that you might want to base your o

Best Actor (Boy or Girl)  
Best Comedy Performance  
Best Comedy Moment  
Most Dramatic Moment  
Best Opening  
Best Ending  
Best Use of Props  
Best Use of Space  
Most Co-operative group  
Best Group Leader  
Best Story  
Best Costume  
Most Amusing Costume  
Best Use of Sound (usually original music played live)  
Loudest Group  
Most Sensible Group  
Best Newcomer in a Leading Role  
Best Newcomer  
Most Annoying Student!

In my sessions, Oscars consist of certain small person-like sweets, bu  
other prized prizes of their choice or your own.

*Bon appétit!*

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