

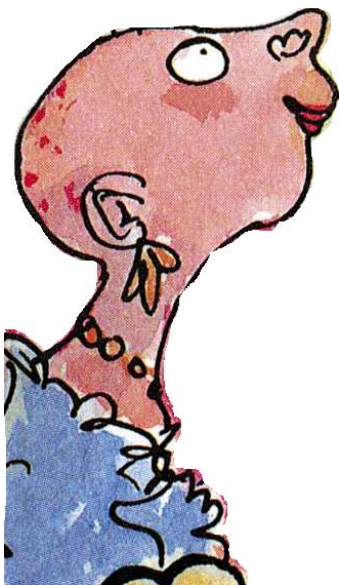
THE REP

Birmingham Repertory Theatre

REP Insight

The Witches

Resource Pack





THE WITCHES

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to 'The Witches' resource pack. The activities included in this pack are intended for use within Key Stage 2, although they can be adapted for use with any age.

The pack has been divided into curriculum areas; Literacy, Drama and Art and Design. Each section has suggested teaching activities and is followed by any relevant worksheets and support material.

Teaching notes are denoted with - 

Worksheets are denoted with - 

THE PLAY

This Christmas, **The Witches** will be bringing their magic to The REP. Fiendishly plotting to get rid of all the children in England, they plan to take over all the sweet shops, poison all the children with chocolate and transform them all into mice. And then ... make way for the mousetraps!

Join our hero, his friend and his grandmother as they take on his gruesome gang of witches and face the most repulsive, terrifying and powerful villain of them all – the Grand High Witch herself.

Will the witches triumph? Are the children of England doomed? Can two small boys and an elderly lady save the day? Roald Dahl's award-winning tale has all the answers. If you adored the book and loved the film, then you will scream with delight when you see David Wood's adaptation of Roald Dahl's classic live on stage.

Director	Jonathan Church
Designer	Simon Higlett
Lighting Designer	Mark Jonathan
Sound Designer	Paul Groothuis
Choreographer	Jenny Arnold
Composer	Matthew Scott
Illusions Director	Paul Kieve



LITERACY IDEAS

ANECDOTES

When Grandmother tells Boy about the five incidents of children disappearing because of witches, she re-tells the stories using anecdotes; short, amusing accounts of incidents.

“The third one was little Birgit Svenson ... She lived just across the road from us. One day she started growing feathers all over her body. Within a month, she had turned into a large white chicken. Her parents kept her for years in a pen in the garden. She even laid eggs ... Brown ones. Biggest ones I’ve ever seen in my life. Her mother made omelettes out of them. Delicious they were.”

Writing in first-person, recount three more tales of children that have been rumoured to have been taken by witches. See if you can think of amusing incidents to recount and try to keep your descriptions brief and matter-of-fact.

Teaching Points

- Pupils should be encouraged to be as imaginative as possible with their anecdotes using stories from around the world. Try to use appropriate names, places and events to make the stories sound authentic.
- Anecdotes are brief and concise in their detail choosing one or two points to describe in more depth.
- Pupils can illustrate each anecdote and then compile a class anthology as a record of all the children taken by witches. Ask some pupils to include those mentioned in the book and the story of Bruno and the boy.

HOW TO RECOGNISE A WITCH

Read the chapter ‘How to Recognise a Witch’ to pupils. Ask pupils to make notes on all the symptoms/clues that help you to spot a witch. Go over the main points together to make a comprehensive list of clues. Pupils then draw a picture of a witch using all the information they have gleaned and label appropriately. Pupils could then make an informative poster on ‘How to Spot a Witch’.

Teaching Points

- Encourage pupils to use factual, formal language.
- Keep the notes clear and concise for use on a poster. Discuss why it is important not to clutter posters with too much language.
- Think about the layout and presentation to ensure the important information is highlighted and that it is clear to read.

RECIPE FOR FORMULA 86 DELAYED ACTION MOUSE-MAKER

Explain to the pupils how recipes are instructional texts that give directions point by point on how to do something. Show the class some examples of recipes and look at how they are set out and presented. Read through the chapter 'The Recipe' and with the children, discuss the ingredients and directions needed for the recipe. Write out the recipe on the board as a model for the pupils using formal language and presenting it appropriately. Pupils can then invent their own formula for another spell and illustrate it accordingly. The class can create a recipe book of spells to be displayed in the classroom.

Teaching Points

- Instructional texts need to be clear and informative giving explicit directions. Encourage pupils to break down the process and then explain it point by point.
- Discuss the effectiveness of the imaginary words used in the spell and encourage pupils to invent their own.
- Break up the recipe into 'List of Ingredients' and 'Method' and then get pupils to number their directions. Pupils can illustrate some of the points and then label them.

MISSING PERSON REPORT AND POSTER



Ask pupils to think back to the point where Bruno Jenkins disappears. Mr and Mrs Jenkins were getting concerned about where he was. Imagine they were to put up a 'Missing Person' poster in order to try and find him. What information would need to be included? Discuss the points mentioned on the template poster. Pupils could create a poster for either Bruno, Boy or one of the children mentioned at the beginning of the story.

Teaching Points

- Pupils can either use the template poster or design their own on blank paper.
- Think about the purpose of the writing and its intended audience. The poster must include accurate information about the missing person in order to help the reader try and identify them.
- As an extension activity pupils could do Missing Person posters for each other and describe each other's physical appearance and personality traits. These could then be read out for other class members to guess who was being described.



Missing Person example poster

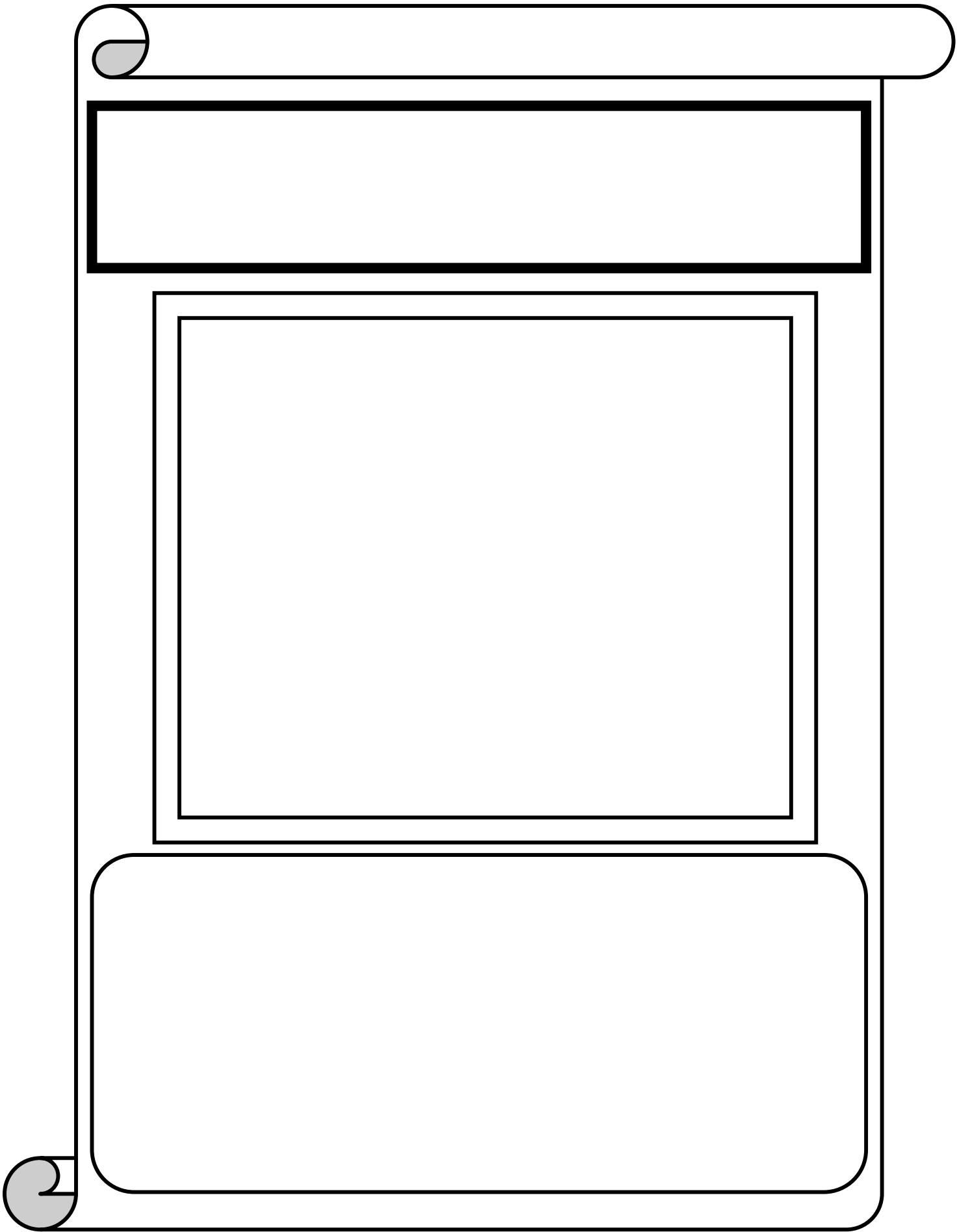


Missing Person blank template sheet

MISSING PERSON

Draw a picture of the person who is missing in here. Try to show a typical pose of them.

This is where all the important information about the missing person should go. Name, age and physical description first. Then, describe where they were last seen and what they were wearing or doing. Put in information about what the person was like and what they liked to do. Is there a reward? Who should an onlooker contact if they have seen them? Remember to make it clear and concise!



NEWSPAPER REPORTS

- Write a newspaper report about the strange incident in the dining room when the witches turned into mice.
- Write a review for the newspaper on the production you saw of *The Witches*

Teaching Points

- Discuss the language features of the text
- Look at paragraph construction – discuss that often each paragraph is one sentence. (This is an approximate rule, most tabloid newspapers have agreed house styles including long sentences which often form one paragraph.)
- House style often includes writing guidelines such as to always include a quote from an observer or someone involved.
- Go over the following text organisation features:
 - Headline – collect examples of headlines and discuss how to grab attention and/or create impact.
 - Opening paragraph should include a summary of the main story.
 - Following paragraphs to include opinions and quotes.
- Go over the following sentence level objectives:
 - Use of complex sentences
 - Model joining of sentences using connectives
 - Use of description and detail
 - Each sentence is a new paragraph

Links to ICT

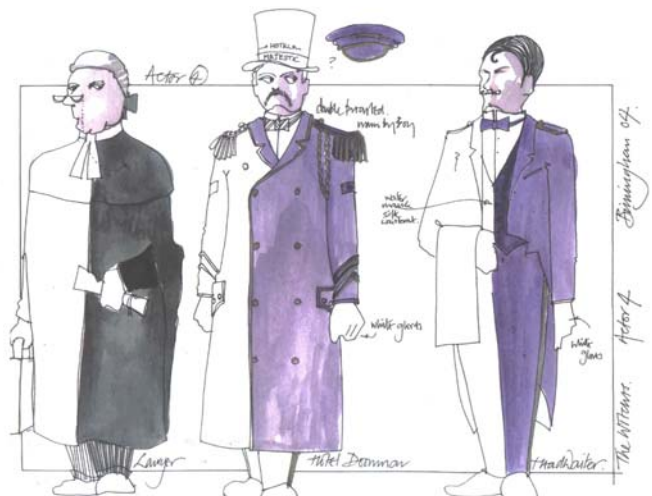
- Use Publisher ... consider
 - Layout – use of text boxes organised as columns
 - Use word art boxes for headlines
 - Import picture/photograph
 - Use scanner to scan in a picture
 - Use the spell-check to identify spelling errors – record in individual log



'The Daily Blah'



Blank Template for newspaper report



TITLE OF NEWSPAPER

PRICE

The Daily Blah

Thursday, 12th December 2004

DAY AND DATE

50p

Mystery, Mayhem and Mice at the Hotel Magnificent!

CHAOS reigned at the grand Hotel Magnificent yesterday evening when unexplained and abnormal circumstances meant that a group of women were turned into mice and stormed the dining room!

Many eye-witnesses have been so traumatised by the events that they checked out of the hotel immediately ...

Newspaper articles are written in columns. The language used is quite formal and made to sound dramatic and exciting. Sometimes there is a short heading before each paragraph to indicate what it is about.

The headline has to be catchy and to the point so that people will want to read on.

PHOTO GOES HERE

Mice swarm the dining room at the Hotel Magnificent

Caption describing the picture.

Blank rectangular box with a decorative starburst shape on the right side.

Blank rectangular box.

Large rectangular box containing 15 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

Large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing a smaller rectangular box at the bottom.

Rectangular box containing 10 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

STORY PLANNING AND WRITING

Choose one of the following titles/themes to work on;

- (a) Who and what were the frogs before they were transformed? Write about what happened on that day when they became frogs and about what has happened since.
- (b) A Day in the Life of ... a Witch! Write about a typical day for a witch based on Roald Dahl's descriptions. Pupils could also write about a day in the life of a mouse or frog if preferable.
- (c) What happened to Grandmother when she was a little girl? Write about her encounter with a witch and why she now has a missing thumb.

Teaching points

- Re-cap the characteristics needed to make a good story – characters, setting, plot – problems, actions, events, openings and endings
- Go over the following teaching points about planning a story:

Brainstorm - Give pupils five minutes to brainstorm all the ideas they have based on one of the story themes. They should be encouraged to write down anything that comes into their heads!

Opening – How will the story begin? With description, dialogue or action? What characters will be introduced? What are they like? Where and when is it set? What is the weather like? What time of day? Discuss the use of adjectives and description – using the senses – to set mood and atmosphere.

Development – How will the story develop? What other characters will be introduced? (not too many as it can become confusing) How will tension be created? Start building to a climax in this part of the story.

Climax – This is the most exciting/dramatic part of the story. What words can be used to intensify this? Long/short sentences? How much description/action?

Resolution – This is the ending of the story where all the events are sorted out and resolved one way or another.

- Explain to pupils that planning a story is like a spider weaving a web, with ideas and events linked along the way. Hand out copies of 'A Story Planning Web' and some scrap paper for brainstorm work.
- Give pupils 15 minutes quiet planning time.
- When finished, check and modify, then pupils can write a first draft of their story.



A Story Planning Web

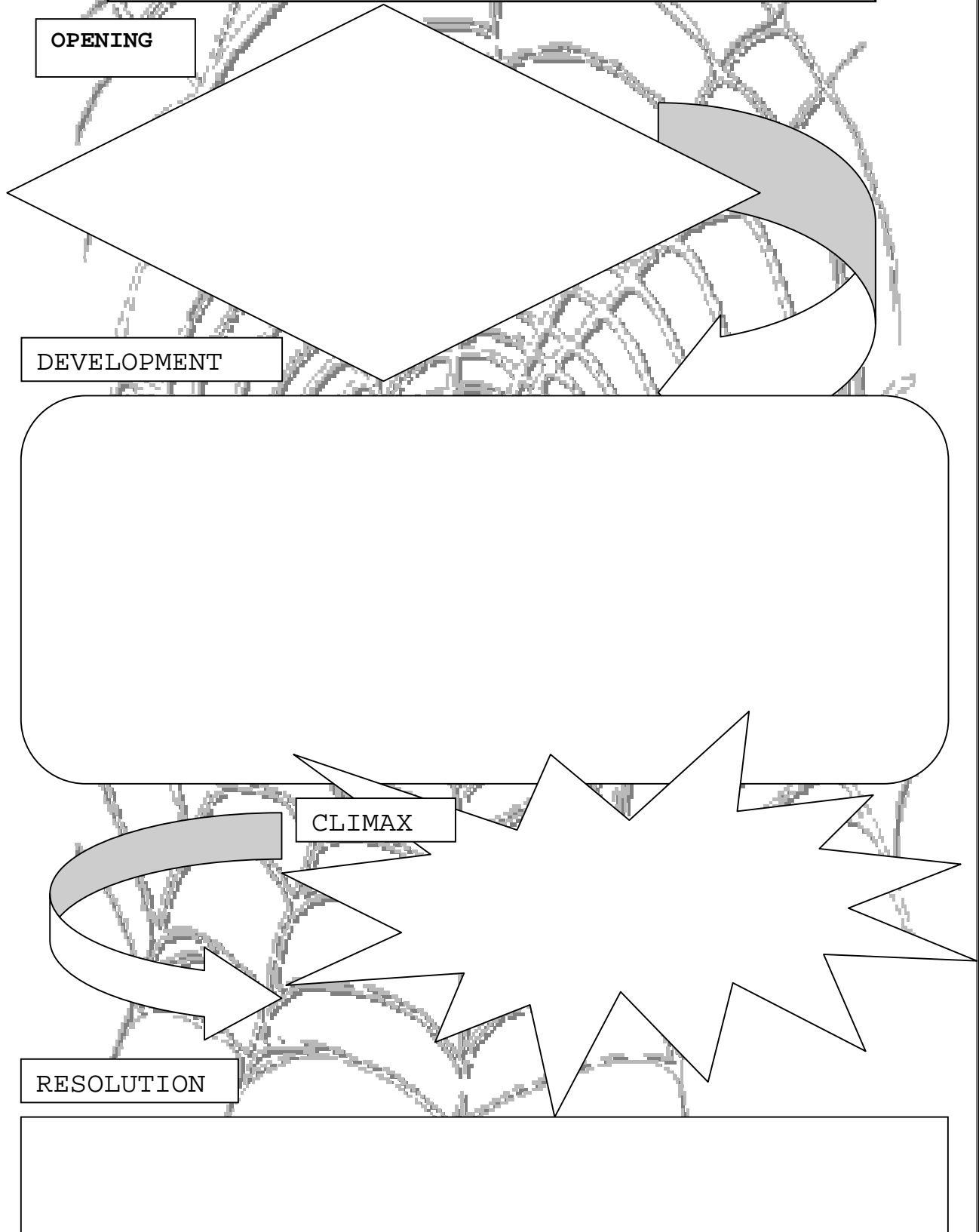
A STORY PLANNING WEB

OPENING

DEVELOPMENT

CLIMAX

RESOLUTION



AUTHOR'S BLURB

Explain to the class that in every book published, there is always some information written about the author and we sometimes call this the 'Author's Blurb'. Try to collect as many different editions of Roald Dahl books and look at an 'Author's Blurb'. (There is an interesting one at the back of the Puffin 2001 edition)

Teaching points

- Compare with other blurbs for Roald Dahl books and look at those of other authors. Compare the information found in each Roald Dahl book and make a list of facts on the board.
- Clarify what information is needed and/or interesting to read about and discuss the use of language and style.
- Ask pupils to write their own blurb for Roald Dahl based on the facts they have found out.
- Pupils can then write their own blurbs and include a self-portrait.

FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT ROALD DAHL

Using ICT pupils can research into the life of Roald Dahl and then make notes in order to write their own biographies about him.

Teaching points

- Brainstorm on the board what the pupils think they know already about Roald Dahl.
- Then, use search engines on the internet to find out as much information as they can about Roald Dahl's life.
- Encourage pupils to cut and paste information that they find onto a separate document. Allow each pupil to print out one page of information that you will look at later in more detail.
- Discuss how to take notes and work out what information is necessary and important. Model retrieval of fact using some information as an example. Show the children the full sentence, discuss how you extract the fact and make a note.
- Discuss which categories you could make to collect facts about – eg, childhood, school, travel, stories. Make a chart on the board as the one in the example below and collectively begin to fill in based on the information found.

Childhood	Family	Travel	Stories

- Pupils make notes firstly on each section of information. Sort out notes into categories. Copy and complete the chart filling in the information in note-form.
- Using the information pupils can then write a paragraph about each section in order to compile their own mini biography on Roald Dahl.

DRAMA IDEAS

WARM UP GAMES

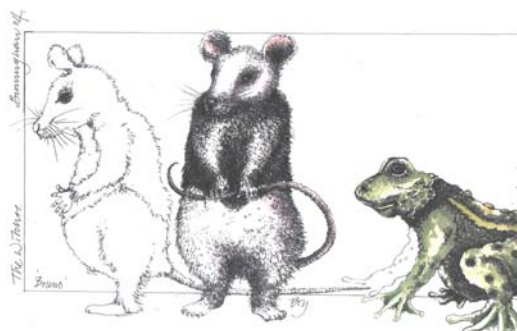
Warm up games can be used to introduce concepts and themes of the story in a fun and active way before working in more depth on them.

Mouse in the Kitchen

Get all pupils to stand in a grid facing the same direction with their arms outstretched to form lines. On your command, 'Change', pupils should change direction so that they all turn to face the left which will now create lines in the opposite direction. Practice this a couple of times. Now select two volunteers and call one the mouse and the other the chef. Give the mouse a few seconds head start to enter the grid and then send the chef in to chase them. Randomly call out change forcing the mouse and chef to come across blocked walls and alter their course. Can the chef catch the mouse within a certain time limit or is the mouse clever and quick enough to avoid being caught? Try seeing what happens if you put in two chefs. Keep changing in with other volunteers.

Discuss how it feels to be the mouse when you are being chased and ask pupils to think about the Boy's predicament in the kitchen.

The Mouse-Burglar



Pupils all sit in a circle on the floor. Place a chair in the centre of the circle and ask a volunteer to sit on it wearing a blindfold. Explain that they are representing the Grand High Witch. Place a small bottle underneath the chair to represent the bottle of Formula 86 Delayed Action Mouse-Maker. The object of the game is for a pupil in the circle to sneak up and try and retrieve the potion and get back to their place

without being heard by the person sitting on the chair. If the Grand High Witch hears something they should point to the direction they heard the noise from. If they successfully point at the pupil then it's the end of their go and they have to return to their place. Try to let as many pupils as possible have a go at either role by swapping around.

Discuss how it would have felt for the Boy when he began his journey to fetch the potion. Brainstorm the emotions that the pupils felt as they tried to retrieve the potion in the game.

ROLE-ON-THE-WALL

On a large sheet of paper, draw an outline of a person. At the top of the outline write the name of one of the characters from the play, i.e, Boy, Grandmother, Bruno, The Grand High Witch. In the inside of the outline, ask pupils to write down all the things that they know about this character. Around the outside, ask pupils to write down any questions they have about things that they would like to know about the character. Discuss these

questions as a whole group and think about possible answers. Put the outlines up around the classroom as a reference for future work.

TEACHER-IN-ROLE / HOT SEATING

This is an effective vehicle for learning from within the dramatic context and allows pupils to explore characters and relationships with integrity and clear focus.

Essentially, the teacher takes on a role from the story and pupils interact with the character enabling them to ask questions to deepen their understanding and knowledge. Pupils sit in a semi-circle around an empty chair known as the hot seat. Explain that you are going to be taking on the role of the Grandmother and that they will have the opportunity to ask you questions and that you will answer as if you really were the grandmother. Establish that when you place a headscarf on your head and sit on the chair, you will be in role and that when you take it off, you will be teacher again. Read the chapter 'My Grandmother' and base your responses on this section.



Pupils can then volunteer to take on another role from the story and the rest of the class can hot-seat them. Use the role-on-the-wall sheets as an aid for questions. Explain that sometimes you may have to make up answers based on the information that you do know but that you should always try to keep it as accurate as possible.

SMALL GROUP PLAY-MAKING

Remind the pupils of the section when Bruno's parents finally realise that their son has been turned into a mouse. What happens after they meet their son as a mouse? In 2/3's plan, prepare and present an improvisation about what happens next. Discuss as a class the effectiveness of each and ask pupils to offer constructive criticisms about what worked well and what was less clear.

STILL IMAGES

Divide the children into groups of four or five. Explain to the groups that they will be creating a photograph of a moment from the story and that they will need to take on the roles of the characters from the story. They need to stand frozen still, using only body language, facial expression and positioning to show what is happening in the moment they are re-creating.

The pupils are going to create two images to represent the scene in the Hotel kitchen when the mouse is discovered. First, ask the pupils to show what is happening seconds BEFORE the mouse is discovered. Then, create the moment WHEN the mouse is spotted.

When the image is complete it can be shared with the rest of the group. Whilst still retaining the image, the teacher can then ask suitable questions to the characters represented in the image about what is going through their mind at this moment in time.

As an extension, pupils could then create images to show another point in the story capturing the BEFORE and AFTER moments.

WHOLE GROUP ROLE-PLAY

The whole group (including teacher) behave as if they were actually facing a situation as it unfolds around them. Ask the class to imagine what might have happened during the meeting of the 'RSPCC' at the Hotel Magnificent and explain that as a whole group you are going to explore in role that scene. The teacher is to take on the role of the Grand High Witch and children will be in role as the other witches present at the meeting of the 'RSPCC' at the Hotel Magnificent.

Set up chairs in the space to represent the layout of the Ballroom. Agree on a space for the door and explain that when the pupils cross this point, they have entered the drama and are therefore in role and must act and respond as if they were the witches. Use a wig or hat as a prop to signify when you are in or out of role. Establish any ground rules concerning conduct when in role.

Begin the drama by asking pupils to cross through the 'door' and enter the dramatic space. In role, welcome the witches to the meeting, instruct them to remove their gloves, shoes and wigs and then go on to explain that you aim to wipe out all the children in England and need their help. Begin with a progress report and ask the witches to report to the person next to them about what they have done recently to get rid of children. Ask for volunteers to stand and report back to the whole group any stories they have shared.



The drama can then either continue as it does in the story with the Grand High Witch explaining her Formula 86 concoction with the pupils in role asking her questions about the process. Alternatively, the teacher can ask the pupils in role as witches to work in small groups to come up with their own ideas about how to best eliminate the children of England and see if they can come up with other imaginative suggestions of what the witches could do. When the whole group comes together again, they can present their suggestions and the teacher in role as the Grand High Witch can question them on their ideas.

ART AND DESIGN IDEAS

MOUSE TRAP

Pupils can design and make their own mouse trap using cardboard, string, plastic bottles etc. It will need to have some sort of trapping device that is triggered by something the mouse does. Pupils will also need to consider what will entice the mouse to the trap. Discuss humane ways of trapping the mouse before the pupils begin their designs on paper. Pupils can then make their trap and test it out as a class.

A WITCH'S DEVICE

The witches in Roald Dahl's story look and seem like normal ladies. Imagine that some of the items they carry around with them have a more sinister use for making children disappear or transform into something else. Design a contraption that looks like a normal, everyday personal belonging or something you would have in the home, eg, a kitchen utensil, that actually has powers to transform children. Draw diagrams to show how it is used and label the device with all its properties, explaining what each component is used for.

DESIGN A COSTUME

Pick a character from the play and design a costume for them. Try to think about what the character is like and reflect that in your choice of colours and style. What decisions do you think a designer has to consider? How practical might your costume be?

PICTURES AND PAINTINGS

Make a picture to illustrate your favourite part of the story. Try to capture the mood of the moment by choosing appropriate colours and shading. Make sure that the characters present are represented and think about what they would be doing at that time and what their facial expressions would be like.

USEFUL WEBSITES

- www.roalddahl.com
- www.roalddahlclub.com
- www.roalddahlfans.com
- www.thinkquest.org (follow the links to Roald Dahl)
- www.fantasticfiction.co.uk

With thanks to Simon Higlett, for permission to use his original costume designs for *The Witches*.