

The Iron Man by Ted Hughes

First published in 1968, this modern fairy tale has become a children's classic. The dramatic opening and memorable language instantly engage the reader. The book tells the story of a mysterious iron giant whose destructive quest for food alarms the local farming community. The story is told through the eyes of a young boy, Hogarth, who forms a friendship with the Iron Man. In time the Iron Man turns from villain to hero as the world faces a bigger threat.

Overall aims of this teaching sequence

- To enjoy a story and discuss its meanings
- To explore narrative plot, settings, characters and draw inferences to aid understanding
- To broaden understanding of writers' use of language and build a varied vocabulary
- To write non-fiction texts based on fictional experiences
- To write newspaper reports based on the narrative

This teaching sequence is designed for a Year 3 or Year 4 class.

Overview of this teaching sequence.

This teaching sequence is approximately 4 weeks long if spread out over 20 sessions.

The book supports teachers to teach about plot, character development and emotional response to themes and events in narrative fiction. The narrative is carefully crafted and the characters and settings are well drawn, offering young readers a good model for their own narrative and non-fiction writing.

National Curriculum 2014 Links

Reading: (Word reading / Comprehension)

Develop positive attitudes to reading by listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction
 Increase familiarity with a range of books
 Identify themes and conventions
 Discuss words and phrases that capture readers' interest and imagination
 Ask questions to improve understanding of the text
 Draw inferences and justify inferences with evidence
 Identify how language and structure contribute to meaning

Writing: (Transcription / Composition)

Plan writing by discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write, learning from its structure, vocabulary and grammar
 Plan writing by discussing and recording ideas
 Draft and write by composing and rehearsing sentences orally
 Draft and write by organising paragraphs around a theme
 In non-narrative use simple organisational devices
 Write for different purposes including about fictional personal experiences
 Assess the effectiveness of their own and others' writing and suggest improvements
 Proof-read for spelling and punctuation errors

Speaking and Listening:

- Maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, responding to comments
- Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and build vocabulary and knowledge
- Listen and respond appropriately to adults and peers
- Articulate and justify answers and opinions
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, imagining and exploring ideas
- Speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- Consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to the contributions of others
- Use spoken language to develop understanding through imagining and exploring ideas in discussion, role-play and drama

Cross Curricular Links

This text could be linked to several aspects of the curriculum and several themes. For example Space, Machines, Saving the World. Contexts of the book could be linked to aspects of the Mathematics and Science programmes of study to provide meaningful contexts for investigation for example: area and perimeter; shape and space.

Science

KS2 programmes of study links: Year 3: Forces and magnets; Light and Year 4: States of matter, Electricity

Geography

KS2 subject content: locate the world's countries, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries, and major cities; use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries and describe features studied.

Music

KS2 subject content: improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the inter-related dimensions of music.

Teaching Approaches

Reading aloud and rereading
 Visualisation
 Drawing and annotating
 Readers' theatre
 Drawing comparisons
 Drama and role-play
 Debate
 Writing in role
 Shared writing

Writing Outcomes

Annotated drawings
 Recounts (diary entries)
 Persuasive letter
 List poetry
 Questions
 Newspaper report

Links to other texts and resources

The Iron Giant, Warner Bros 1999

Links to other resources on the Power of Reading Website

Session 1: Reading aloud, visualisation, drawing

Learning Objectives:

Children are able to participate in discussion about a text that is read to them.

Children are able to make inferences and predictions based on the text.

- You may wish to prepare reading journals for the children to capture individual responses, reflections and opinions of the text throughout the teaching sequence.
- Read the opening of the story aloud until:
*'A few rocks tumbled with him.
Then
Silence.'*
- Invite the children to respond to the opening of the story by posing questions such as *what do you know? What kind of story do you think this might be? Who is the Iron Man? Or What might happen next?* You may wish for the children to record initial responses in their reading journals.
- Reread the opening, asking children to visualise the scene as you read. Ask children to sketch a picture to illustrate the opening of the story with the Iron Man on the cliff.
- Read the end of the first chapter.

Session 2: Readers' theatre

Learning Objective:

Children speak audibly and fluently when performing a text.

Children are able to make simple evaluations of their own and others' performances.

- Display the opening of the book on an interactive whiteboard (IWB) or a flipchart. Consider and discuss structure, characterisation and description.
- Through shared approaches, work with the children to create a readers' theatre script. For example the *'Nobody knows'* section could be read as a 'call and response' with the class in two parts. Some lines could be read by individual children and some by the whole class. *'Crash'* could be read very loudly and *'silence'* whispered.
- Discuss intonation, tone, volume and possible actions.
- Encourage the children to evaluate and comment on what they liked about each others' performances. Use prompts to support articulation of evaluations: *I liked it when... because... Next time I will try to...* Model this for the class.
- Sound effects could be added using voices or musical instruments for the sea and the wind.

Session 3: Drawing and annotating, book talk

Learning Objectives:

Children use the text to support their ideas about a character.

Children are able to ask relevant questions of a text.

- Ask the children what we know about the Iron Man. Each child makes a note of one thing they now about the character. Invite children to share these with a partner and give reasons for their opinions, referring back to the text. Use sentence prompts to support oral responses. For example: *I know the Iron Man... I know this because...* Model this for the children.
- Present the class with a large drawing of the Iron Man and annotate it with the information they have found out so far.
- Gather the class together and record the information collected onto an IWB or flipchart under the heading 'What we know about the Iron Man'. Ask children to go back to their annotated drawings and think about what they would like to know, the puzzles in the text. Hughes has included several in the story opening such as, *'Where has he come from?'* The children could use these and then add more of their own.
- Start a wall display with the children's annotated drawings and their questions.

Session 4: Rereading, drawing comparisons

Learning Objectives:

Children are able to participate in discussion about a text.

Children are able to retrieve relevant information from a text.

- Take children into the hall or playground and discuss the size of the children's bedrooms. Agree an average size and mark it out on the ground. Use these dimensions to draw the Iron Man's head *'shaped like a dustbin but as*

big as a bedroom' using chalk or masking tape. Ask the class to sit inside the shape to visualise and experience and how small they are in comparison with the Iron Man.

- Back in the classroom, ask the children to work with a partner and write about the shape and size of other parts of the Iron Man's body, drawing comparisons in the same way as the text. For example, *his body was shaped like a drum but as big as a swimming pool*. Share the descriptions as a class. Children could then choose one or two to copy carefully. These could then be displayed around a large collage or model of the Iron Man.

Session 5: Reading, visualisation

Learning Objective:

Children are able to use descriptive vocabulary to describe a scene.

- Read the first two pages of the second chapter aloud. Ask the children to close their eyes and visualise the scene by the stream when Hogarth saw the Iron Man for the first time. Set the scene for them and ask them to imagine they are Hogarth and think about what they can see, hear and how they feel. Collect initial ideas. Praise good use of vocabulary and extend language use. Encourage children to make jottings and link to aspects of grammar study for example, expanded noun phrases.
- Discuss children's ideas as a class. Make a collection of the words and phrases the children use scribing them on a flipchart. This language will be used to support them in writing in role.

Sessions 6-7: Drama and role-play, writing in role, shared writing

Learning Objectives:

Children are able to infer a character's feelings, actions and motives.

Children use appropriate vocabulary to describe a character and his behaviour.

Children are able to plan and rehearse sentences orally before writing.

Children can write a recount based on a fictional first person experience.

Children reread writing and make changes to grammar and vocabulary.

- Organise the class into groups of four and ask them to freeze frame the moment when Hogarth arrives home. How do Hogarth's family react to his news? Ask children to voice their character's thoughts at that point in the story. Spend some time focusing on Hogarth and discussing his reactions to what he has seen. You may wish to use large thought bubbles (thoughts), speech bubbles (what the character would say), arrows (what the character will do next) and hearts (the character's feelings) passing one to individual children and encouraging them to respond in role. Model this as necessary and make notes of interesting and thoughtful ideas.
- Through modelled and shared writing, write diary entries in first person as Hogarth describing the night he saw the Iron Man. Focus on inclusion of interesting details, personal thoughts and reactions and emotions. Model how to use language gathered in the previous session and the freeze framing activity to write using an increasing range of sentence structures. Orally rehearse sentences before writing.
- Support children to proof-read diary entries and make changes where appropriate. Support them to check their work and work with response partners to edit and improve work against success criteria.

Sessions 8-9: Debate, shared writing

Learning Objectives:

Children are able to work in role to support their understanding of the text.

Children plan and rehearse sentences orally before writing.

Children can write a persuasive letter based on a fictional first person experience.

Children reread writing and make changes to grammar and vocabulary.

- Continue reading chapter two until the point when the farmers decide they will have to do something for themselves: *'They couldn't call the police or the Army, because nobody would believe them about this Iron Monster. They would have to do something for themselves.'*
- Hold a discussion about the problem of the Iron Man, asking the class to imagine they are the farmers meeting to discuss the situation. In pairs, give children time to consider the farmers' concerns about the strange creature.
- Take the role of Chair of the meeting and scribe the farmers' concerns about the Iron Man (the problem). Encourage children to clarify concerns and give their reasons. Then ask the children to work in small groups and discuss what they might do in role as the farmers (possible solutions).
- Still in role, draw the class back together and end the 'farmers' meeting by listing the ideas and asking the children to vote on the favoured course of action.
- Introduce the writing task: in role as a farmer the children will write a letter to Hogarth's father with their advice about what to do with the Iron Man. You may wish share a persuasive letter written by yourself before the

session from a context understood by the children for example, a current event, linked to another known text. Use this model text to explore the language and structural features of persuasive letters for example: persuasive language, logical connectives, powerful adjectives, long sentences to add description or information, short sentences for emphasis and making key points.

- Through modelled and shared writing, write letters in first person as concerned farmers, describing the problem and offering solutions. Model how to use ideas gathered while working in role and language and structural features of the text type. Model oral rehearsal of sentences before writing and organise paragraphs around themes.
- Support children to proof-read letters and make changes where appropriate. Support them to check their work and work with response partners to edit and improve work against success criteria.
- Read to the end of the chapter and allow time for the children to respond to this.

Session 10: Rereading, writing in role

Learning Objectives:

Children are able to infer a character's feelings, actions and motives.

Children use appropriate vocabulary to describe a character's feelings.

Children can write a recount based on a fictional first person experience.

Children reread writing and make changes to grammar and vocabulary.

- Reread the last two pages of chapter two: *The Return of the Iron Man* which describes Hogarth's plan. The children could join in with the clinking sounds using suitable instruments.
- Ask children to talk with a partner about why they think Hogarth feels guilty about trapping the Iron Man. Collect ideas and jot them down for the class to see. Highlight and praise understanding of the character. Ask children to complete heart Post Its identifying Hogarth's feelings at this point in the story. You may wish to give children a range of adjectives and ask them to select the most appropriate for example: emotional, upset, guilty, tired, devious, confused, proud.
- Gather the children's Post Its and display. Identify words which are similar in meaning and place them on a continuum, asking the children to select which are the most appropriate for the context and discussing nuances in meaning.
- Return to Hogarth's diary. Through shared writing ask children to write in role as Hogarth, describing the night he trapped the Iron Man, showing not only what happened but also how he felt about this. Focus on inclusion of interesting details and use of precise vocabulary to describe how Hogarth feels. Model how to use language gathered in the session.
- Support children to proof-read diary entries and make changes where appropriate. Support them to check their work and work with response partners to edit and improve work against success criteria.

Session 11: Shared writing

Learning Objectives:

Children choose vocabulary appropriately for clarity.

Children are able to use well-chosen vocabulary to create noun phrases.

Children reread writing, assess and make changes to vocabulary.

- Before this session read chapter three: *What's to be done with the Iron Man*. Talk about the scrap yard and all the things that were there. Display this section of the text for the children to see. What does the Iron Man think of the scrap yard? Pick out some of the phrases describing the objects in the scrap yard for example, *greasy black stove*. Introduce the children to their 'scrap yard challenge'. Revisit relevant grammatical terms: adjective, noun, noun phrase, determiners. Talk to the children about other metal objects that might be in the scrap yard and ways to describe them. You may wish to use images of scrap yards to support. Gather ideas and ask the children to work with a partner to create a noun phrase describing an object.
- Select children to share their noun phrase and demonstrate how to edit and redraft ideas focusing on using carefully chosen vocabulary to create a clear image in the reader's mind. Invite pairs to return to their phrase and improve it.
- Again, collect children's ideas together on a flipchart or the IWB to create a class scrap yard poem. Ask the class to help you improve the rhythm and structure of the poem. For example, develop a repeated refrain such as *clink, clink*. Demonstrate how to reorder phrases to create a structure. Read the poem out as a class.
- You may want children to create their own short list poems as part of this 'scrap yard challenge'. These could be displayed and possibly performed to another class or during an assembly.

- Poems might be published electronically for the school website using an appropriate program such as PhotoStory 3.

Session 12: Shared writing, book talk**Learning Objectives:****Children choose vocabulary for clarity.****Children can use well-chosen vocabulary to create poems.****Children reread writing, assess and make changes to vocabulary.**

- Collect and display repeated phrases from the text for example, *clink clink* or *nobody knows*.
- Return to earlier activities in the teaching sequence where children have described the Iron Man. Introduce the writing task: to create a poem describing the Iron Man.
- Start by talking to the children about ways to describe the character. Use these ideas to build noun phrases which describe the Iron Man. Working in pairs, children jot ideas, draft noun phrases and share them.
- Select children to share their noun phrase and demonstrate how to edit and redraft ideas, using carefully chosen vocabulary to create a clear image in the reader's mind. Invite pairs to return to their phrase and improve it.
- Again, collect children's ideas together on a flipchart or the IWB to create a class poem. Ask the class to help you improve the rhythm and structure of the poem. For example, a repeated phrase such as the *clink clink* in the class poem or *nobody knows*.
- Read the poem out as a class.
- Through independent and guided approaches, children compose their own poems.

Session 13: Drawing, shared writing**Learning Objectives:****Children can express views, giving reasons for their answers.****Children discuss how phrases capture readers' interest and contribute to meaning.****Children can use well-chosen vocabulary to compose a headline.**

- Read chapter four: *The Space Being and the Iron Man*. Look at a globe or large map find Australia and ask children to work in pairs or small groups to think about the arrival of this creature and imagine the world's reaction to it, presenting them with questions such as 'How might the leaders of the world be feeling?' 'What could be done?'
- Present groups with a range of headlines (the children's newspaper, First News is a useful source: www.firstnews.co.uk). [Accessed August 2013] Identify the language features of newspaper headlines for example, catchy, alliteration, play on words and ask the children to rank the headlines in front of them in order of effectiveness. Expect the children to give reasons for their choice using the prompt, *this headline is the most effective because...*
- As a class explore 'What might the newspaper headlines say for this point in the text?'
- Compose headlines with the class as a shared writing activity.
- Ask children to work independently to illustrate the dramatic event and provide a clear caption for their image.
- Before the next session read chapter five: *the Iron Man's Challenge*. Find time to discuss the children's responses to the end of the story, what they liked or disliked and anything they would have liked to ask the author.

Session 14: Drama and role-play**Learning Objective:****Children are able to draw inferences about characters.****Children ask relevant questions to extend their understanding.****Children can compose open questions, punctuating them correctly.**

- Ask children to imagine the spectacle of the Iron Man and the space monster engaged in the challenge and think about what eye-witnesses might have said.
- In role as interviewer, perhaps with a microphone as a prop, ask individual children to provide eye-witness accounts. Provide children a sticky note to write comments in role as an eye-witness. What would they have seen and thought? Collect the notes on IWB or flipchart to use in the next session.
- What would the class like to ask the Iron Man about the challenge or about where he came from? Use question words to support children in composing questions to find out more about the character's actions and motives. Invite children to compose a question for the Iron Man. Invite them to orally rehearse their question with a partner before writing on mini-whiteboards or Post Its. Talk about open and probing questions and ask children to edit questions to ensure they are open.

- Collect and display probing questions.

Session 15: Drama and role-play, shared writing

Learning Objective:

Children make inferences about characters.

Children are able to plan and rehearse a sentence orally before writing.

Children compose sentences punctuation accurately to punctuate direct speech.

- Ask children to look at the questions they have written for the Iron Man and think about what his answers might be.
- Introduce the idea of a television interview with the Iron Man following the challenge with the space monster. Initially, you may wish to work in role as one of the characters. Invite children to ask questions and answer in role. As children's confidence grows, develop the activity with a child working in role. The children ask questions while you facilitate. Make a note of interesting and thoughtful responses for use in writing.
- Model transferring drama ideas into sentences using direct speech. Discuss how the speech might be said and jot down suitable speech verbs. Through shared writing, create sentences which include direct speech. Model verbalising sentences before writing and engage the children in punctuating the speech correctly.
- Ask the children to compose short sentences from the interview with the Iron Man which include direct speech. Expect them to orally rehearse their sentences before writing and support as appropriate.

Sessions 16-18: Text marking, mapping, shared writing

Learning Objectives:

Children are able to plan and rehearse a sentence orally before writing.

Children use the structure and language of a newspaper report.

Children reread writing and make changes to grammar and vocabulary.

- Introduce the writing task: to write a newspaper report about the Iron Man's challenge. The children will be rookie reporters and you are the editor. Through group and paired work, engage the children in activities to explore examples of children's news reports: identifying structural and language features by text marking and investigation. Map the structure of simple news reports and identify component parts: the introduction to set the scene with five Ws: Where? Why? Who? What? When? chronological order, eye-witness accounts, analysis and opinions.
- Through modelled and shared writing, write newspaper reports describing the Iron Man's challenge. Model how to use eye-witness accounts and interviews, and language and structural features of the text type. Model how to orally rehearse sentences before writing and organise paragraphs. You may choose to do this over a series of sessions, giving children time to work independently on sections of their news report following shared writing and returning to writing regularly to proof-read and make changes.
- Support children to check their work and work with response partners to edit and improve work against success criteria.
- News reports will be published with the children's headline, image and caption.
- You may choose to publish news reports electronically.
- The children could continue with the other activities in the journals for homework or during class reading sessions.

Sessions 19-20: Text comparison, book talk

Learning Objectives:

Children express views of text and give reasons for their answer.

Children identify similarities and differences between texts.

- After finishing the book watch *The Iron Giant* (Warner Bros 1999).
- Take an extract of both texts and in groups ask children to focus on a given aspect: characterisation, setting or events. Ask them to explore how this element is portrayed in the visual and written text. Identify similarities and differences and record on Venn diagrams or tables. Encourage the children to recognise the different ways characters, settings and events are represented and support them in articulating their ideas.
- Ask children to form personal responses to the texts, commenting on important aspects and making references to different elements of the text. For example, use of repetition or onomatopoeia in writing, use of colour or music in film. Provide the children with prompts to support their oral responses and model how you respond to the texts. For example: *the most memorable moment was... because... I enjoyed the part where...because... The most surprising moment was...*

