



CLASSROOM GUIDE FOR *StoryBox* MAGAZINE

Dear Teacher,

StoryBox is an exciting educational magazine for 3-6 year olds. It offers a good balance of stories, scientific information, games, riddles and poetry, which can complement your regular classroom program. It's a useful resource for schools committed to helping young children to discover the joys of reading and learning, not only at school but for life.

Inside each issue of **StoryBox** you will find a story followed by a magazine section with something that will appeal to every child – including a sense of fun which will engage them all!

This guide provides a wealth of ideas that you can use to get the most out of each issue of **StoryBox** throughout the school year.

To help you prepare your classroom sessions, you will also find useful information about the author and illustrator of the main story on our website, www.bayard-magazines.co.uk, together with a reflection about the underlying themes.

Enjoy working with your magazines!

Bayard's editorial guarantee: *StoryBox* is developed by a team of education specialists and children's book authors and illustrators from all over the world.

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Classroom guide prepared by Judith Nicholls and Tracey Blance

Judith Nicholls has taught children of all ages as well as writing many articles for the educational press in the UK. She has given poetry readings and run writing workshops in hundreds of schools and has appeared on educational videos and poetry programs for schools.

Following the completion of her psychology degree Tracey Blance trained as an infant teacher. She has had many years' experience of teaching early years in Bristol and Wiltshire schools and has also had some of her poetry published. She is married with two sons.

Discovering each new issue in class

1. The Front Cover

Ask the children to look at the main picture on the cover and ask them to 'be detectives'!

- What and who do you see on the front cover?
- What are the characters doing/where are they/have they just arrived?
- Is the mood happy, humorous or something else?
- Do you know anything about any of the characters illustrated in this picture?
- Look at the smaller pictures: what else do they tell you might be included inside the magazine?
- Is there anything you know already before you look inside?
- What do you like to look at first: information or stories?
- What do the title and other headings tell us? Can you recognise any of the words?

2. Contents

Have a look at the contents page.

- Which items do you think are story and which information – what clues did you find?
- Why is it helpful to have a contents page – how does it help us if we want to find a particular feature?

Story Box: In Each Issue

1. StoryTime

Sharing the stories should be enjoyable! It can be helpful for young children to think about some aspects before hearing the actual story.

- Who wrote this story? What do we call someone who writes a story? Who is the illustrator? (more information to be uploaded every month on www.bayard-magazines.co.uk)
- Ask the youngest children to show you where the title and text are.
- First look through the pictures: *what do these pictures tell us the story is about? Do you like the pictures here? What do you think some of the characters might be saying? Does it look as if this will be a happy story, a funny one, a serious one?*
- Use the pictures to *predict* or make up a story together before actually hearing it, then see how different the story is.
- Ask the 'what, where, why, who, how' questions, as appropriate to each story. *Where is this happening? (Have they been anywhere similar to this?) Who is in the story? Why do you think they did that? ...*
- If you subscribe with a CD, *Listen* to the story together from the CD and share comments about it.
- Later, *read* the story to the children, stopping in places to give them a chance to 'predict' what they think will happen next. Occasionally change the names in the story 'accidentally' as you read, substituting some of the children's names... they will never fail to enjoy 'correcting' you!
- Ask the children to join in with 'acting out' some of the characters using different voices and facial expressions.
- The slightly older children can be asked about the meaning of the exclamation mark or capital letters as clues to how we read. The use of different verbs can also be pointed out as clues for reading (grunt, whisper, shout ...)
- Children can help you fill in a large speech-bubble collecting some of these expressive alternatives to 'said'.



- Which characters do they like the most and can they explain why?
- Did they like the ending of the story? Could they invent a different ending or another chapter to this story?
- Draw a favourite character and add a speech bubble with something the character might say.
- Drama: ask two or three children to act out a charade of part of the story, or a freeze-frame from it. The other children guess what they are doing.
- Hot-seating: one child has to pretend to be one of the characters in the story for a short time; the other children ask questions of the character.
- Can you tell us about any other stories or books that remind you of this one?

2. Wonder with Whizkid

- Ask the children to look at the picture and ask what question or topic they think this feature is going to be about; is it a story or will it be giving information?
- What do we know already about this? Give plenty of time to share ideas, even if they are not correct: they need a chance to begin to formulate their own scientific hypotheses!
- Read the information with them, allowing time for further discussion and questions.
- If appropriate, set up a simple science experiment relating to the topic, or ask the children to *make* something relevant. (e.g. for a topic on wind they could design and make kites)
- Help them to look up further information in the school library or on the web.
- Encourage them to bring in pictures or other informative snippets or poems that relate to the topic and display them.
- Ask them to make a Whizkid information books to show what they *now* know about the topic.
- Try a 'one-minute-soapbox' with a timer: each child has just one minute to tell the group all he/she can about the topic!
- Make a simple poem using the two-line framework *I used to think... But now I know...* The poem can use as many 'sets' of these as the children are able!
- Ask the children to think of a question *they* would like to ask Whizkid. Write to **StoryBox** or e-mail them with the questions.

3. Animal World

Look carefully first at the main picture then find out what the children already know or can deduce from this.

- What is this animal?
- Is it a *wild* animal or a *domestic* one?
- Where does it live? Is it a land or sea animal? Are there any in the country where you are living? Have you seen one anywhere – in the wild or in a zoo?
- Is this animal seen during the day or is it usually nocturnal?
- Do you know if it's an *endangered* animal?
- What can we tell just by *looking* at this picture?
(*skin/feathers/mouth/feet/noise it makes/what it eats... ?*)
- How do you think this creature would *use* particular bits of its body?
(*e.g. pelican's beak or wings, elephant's trunk*)
- Would you like one of these animals as a pet? *Write or draw a short guide to looking after it! (Think about the space it would need, the habitat, how you would feed it.)*
- What do the smaller pictures tell us about the animal?
- What would be the first thing you would notice about it? Is there any particular distinguishing feature which catches your eye?

More questions to think about:

- How does this animal *move*?
- Is it a vegetarian or a meat or fish-eater? How does it hunt its food?
- Do you think it lives alone or in a group?
- Do you know if it lays eggs or has live babies?
- The children will love the 'Amazing but True' section; ask them first to *estimate*, for example, how many bottles of water the pelican could hold in its beak or how many muscles the elephant has in its trunk! What is the most shocking or surprising fact for them?

Things to do:

- Create a classroom zoo: make paintings, collages, models of some of the animals featured; make sure they include the appropriate *habitat* in their pictures! 3D models can be made from clay, papier-mache, modrock, wire, cardboard cartons. Take a walk outside together if possible to gather natural materials to help reconstruct the animals' habitats for your display: grass, leaves, twigs and branches.
- Make a big collaborative information book to include favourite facts, or suggest the children make individual Whizkid information books.
- If possible go and see the **StoryBox** animal-of-the-month at the zoo! Ask questions about it, take photographs or make drawings to add to your information display.
- Write a poem or a riddle about your animal.
- Discuss or write a diary for one day for your animal: what problems might it face, what food would it have eaten.
- *Who am I?* Give the children a few facts about a particular animal (*I eat ..., I live ..., I am as big as ..., My skin is..., I swim/slither/crawl/climb...*) and ask them to guess the creature. Ask different children to set similar riddles about other animals.
- Ask a child to imitate one of the animals whilst the others try to guess which one they have chosen; encourage them to include behaviours or habits they have learnt about in the magazine.
- Practise a 'dance of the elephants', or whichever animal is featured! Think about the kind of movements that might be incorporated, the speed of the dance, the music that could be used.
- Use musical instruments in a separate session to think through what noises would suit the animal best to describe its movements, sounds, eating habits ...
- *Noah's Ark*: one child or the teacher acts as Noah, welcoming the animals on to the ark. Each child has to tell Noah what their chosen animal might request for his stay on the ark! Which other animals might he want to be near – or want *not* to be near? What would he want to eat? What kind of nest or home would he want?

- Turn the classroom role play area into a vet's surgery: include appointment cards, toy medical equipment, animal carriers and soft toy animals.
- If appropriate, talk with the children about wildlife conservation – especially if this animal is already endangered.
- Discuss the *fiction* and *non-fiction* sections in the library and help the children find more information about their animal.
- Help them find more images on the net to add to their work.

4. StoryBox characters: SamSam and The Lovetts

A number of the ideas shown above in the **StoryTime** section are also appropriate here.

- Have a *look* at one of these stories and ask the children to explain how these are different from the *first* story in the book. Which of these do they prefer to *read themselves*, which is most fun to *listen* to?
- Look through the pictures first and ask the children to tell you the story as they imagine it.
- Ask them to add their own speech bubbles to some of the characters.
- Make follow-on adventure tales: help the group tell the story together first, encouraging them to expand their ideas with some *who, what, when, where, why* questions.
- Assign one particular frame of their new story to each child. These are drawn in larger scale with text and speech bubbles added, then the whole story is displayed along the wall.

SamSam: the Smallest of the big heroes

- Make up a simple **SamSam** board game with dice, using the characters from the story.
- Make SamSam masks and act out a simple play or mime telling a short SamSam story.
- Make a large painting or collage of the background for one of SamSam's adventures then ask the children to draw some of the characters for the story. These can be cut out and stuck on to the collage and speech bubbles added to tell part of the story.

The Adventures of the Lovett Family

- After reading about the Lovett family, ask the children to talk about an adventure they have had with *their* families. Some of them may like to draw a picture or write a short story about this adventure, or bring in photographs to share with the group.
- The Lovetts have a tortoise. *What do they know about tortoises?* Find out what they can and make a poster giving some information about them. If anyone has a tortoise this could be brought in to show the group!
- What other pets do the children have? Ask them to tell the class about their own pets: *what are they called, how old are they, how are they looked after, what are their needs?* Small scrapbooks with information, drawings and photographs could be made about these pets.
- Draw one frame that might have been used if the *first* story in the magazine had been presented as a comic strip.

5. Time for a Rhyme

It's fine to sometimes simply share and enjoy a poem for its own sake! However, there are a number of ways in which poems can be approached and followed up which can help children's appreciation or understanding. It's a good idea usually to focus on just one or two of these at a time!

- Before hearing the poem, ask the children just to *look* at it on the page. The illustration should give some clues: *do you think this poem will be happy, sad, funny, frightening, dreamy, mysterious... or anything else?* If the poem has a special *shape* you could ask about that too. This is also a good opportunity to point out the *title*, the *author*, and to ensure that all the children are familiar with the concept of a *verse* in a poem.
- Listen to the audio-recording; ask the children what they remember and which bits of the poem they think go especially well with the picture? Read it aloud for them again to clarify more detail.
- If the poem is short, write it in larger print on a large sheet of paper or a white-board and ask the children to try and read it *with* you.
- Some poems especially lend themselves to small group *performances*: different children learn or read different lines of a poem and practise for a small 'choral performance' of it. If possible they could later perform it for a small audience!
- Discuss what is special about a poem:
 - > *How is a poem different from a story?*
 - > *Think about the length of the poem and*
 - > *Look at the length of the lines in it.*
 - > *Listen to the tune or rhythm of the poem.*
 - > *Are there any rhymes or words that nearly rhyme?*
 - > *Is there a chorus or are there any groups of words which are repeated?*
- Ask the children to get out their "*poets' ears*" and think especially about the *sound* of the poem. Is the "*tune*" or rhythm fast or slow? Does this fit the "*mood*" of the poem or what it is about?
- Write out the poem again (or part of it) on a large sheet of paper but omit a word or two on each line, just leaving a gap. Ask the children to suggest words that could be used to fill the gaps, then compare their version with the original and see which they prefer! Try this first by omitting adjectives; after that you could try it with verbs or adverbs.

- Play 'Copycat!' On a large sheet of paper or a white-board use part of the framework of the poem as a starting-point for a poem written by the group and scribed by the teacher:

I love to
(where/when?)
I love to
and

- When the children are working on their own poems, encourage them to *cross out* any little words which are not needed (e.g. *and*, *then*)... you can tell them the Author does this all the time!
- The children can try writing their *own* poems to go with one of the StoryBox *illustrations*. These could be *riddle poems*, *question poems*, *counting poems*, *letter or diary poems*, *dialogue poems*, *'recipe' poems*, *poems which play with words or use repetition or a chorus...* The poems need not go with the illustration on the *Time for a Rhyme* page: children might choose an illustration from the *Animal World* or *Storytime* pages, for example.
- Make a 'word collection' wall: draw out a large brick wall and gradually fill each brick with words the children find interesting to say, whether frightening, mysterious, humorous...This 'wall of words' can be enjoyed for itself or referred to when the children are writing their own poems.
- Make a 'wall of rhymes' where each brick has words added which rhyme with the first one in there. A further wall could collect made-up words!
- Ask the children to collect poems they like and choose one to illustrate as a poster or a page for StoryBox!

We hope this guide will help you and your pupils get the most of each issue of AdventureBox and the activities will allow them to learn while having fun. This is only a starting point, and any new ideas or comments are welcome. So please share yours with us and other teachers!