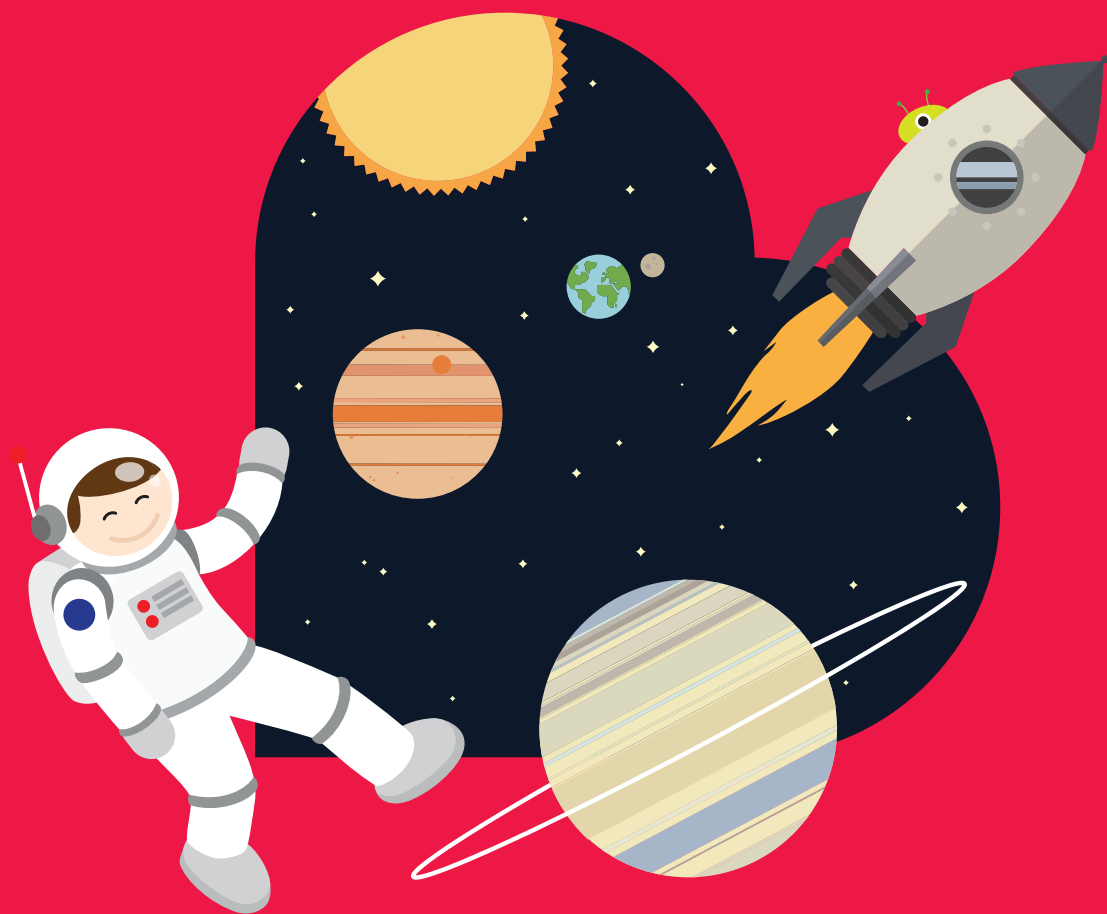


SPARK

Creating a Sensory Story

Teachers' Resource



Introduction

Welcome to the Creating a Sensory Story resource for teachers.

This resource aims to inspire a love of stories and books in children with additional needs through resources designed to support practitioner engagement with reading for pleasure in the classroom.

This resource explains how to create a Sensory Story using *The Dragon Machine* by Helen Ward and Wayne Anderson (Templar books, 2007). However, many other books could work equally well. To illustrate this, we have also suggested ways of using other books, such as *A River* by Marc Martin (Templar books, 2007).

You may also want to refer to the generic resources, *A Guide to Sensory Stories and Assessment and Evaluation*.

Resource Contents

This resource contains everything you need to know about how to run the session:

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Introducing Sensory Stories

A Sensory Story is a short story of a few lines (or a longer story which has been pared down to a few short statements) brought to life through a selection of meaningful sensory props. Sensory Stories represent an ideal way of engaging special school audiences with books and reading.

You may well develop your own ideas for sensory stimuli but this resource contains an initial selection of suggestions and how to source and use them. It also contains a range of ways in which you can build on the basic Sensory Story experience with movements and various other possible activities.

You can also find lots more detail on Sensory Stories in the resource, *A Guide to Sensory Stories*.

Objectives

The overall aim of this activity is to generate student engagement, understanding and enjoyment of a selected book (in this case, *The Dragon Machine* by Helen Ward and Wayne Anderson).

You know your students best and will want to create appropriate individual objectives for your students. These will depend on the individuals concerned but might, for example, include the following objectives.

Literacy objectives:

- P1** - To encounter experiences related to *The Dragon Machine*.
- P2** - To be happy to have help to explore the sensory stimuli relating to *The Dragon Machine*.
- P3** - To join in with activities relating to *The Dragon Machine* with less support.
- P4** - To respond to *The Dragon Machine*.
- P5** - To respond to questions about *The Dragon Machine* activities happening now, eg when searching through grass: 'What did you find?' 'Dragon!' (See sensory stimuli, page 10)
- P6** - To take turns with one or two other people when sharing the sensory experiences linked to *The Dragon Machine*.

P7 - To talk about what happens in *The Dragon Machine*.

P8 - To use conjunctions when talking about what happens in *The Dragon Machine*, or when talking about activities related to *The Dragon Machine*, eg 'George built a machine 'cos' he wanted to take the dragons home.'

These resources are intended to be flexible so that they can be used with any assessment tool. You may also want to refer to the Assessment and Evaluation resource for more detailed information on objectives, assessment and evaluation.*

***We have included links to the P scales as a flexible guide to support your planning and assessment.**

Timing and Resources

Timing

We recommend that you allow approximately one hour for a single session, however, you may want to approach this material over several sessions.

Resources

Primary resources:

- Sensory stimuli (see list, page 6)
- A copy of *The Dragon Machine*
- *The Dragon Machine* CD or alternative music.

Secondary resources:

You will only need these if you choose to do the specific activities that they each relate to.

- Fresh grass
- A bucket of mud, or cornflour slop, and toy dragons
- Pictures of dragons
- A selection of sound making items, made from wood, metal and another material (to represent the dragon)
- Pictures from the story/symbols linked to the story
- Wrapping paper and cardboard boxes
- *Don't You Dare, Dragon!* by Annie Kubler, (Child's Play, 2006)
- A list of same/different items from *The Dragon Machine* and *Don't You Dare, Dragon!*

See 'Sourcing the Sensory Stimuli' on page 10, for detailed advice.

You will also find a Movement Sequence on page 7 of this booklet. This can be used to complement the Sensory Story and provide stimulation to the subconscious proprioceptive and vestibular senses. You can use this however you choose, according to the specific needs of your students, but the ideal is (with a bit of practice!) to be able to perform the movements whilst you are reciting the story.

Tips for using other books:

You can develop a set of resources for almost any book. If you are using *A River*, this might include a cardboard frame to represent a window and very long ribbon to be the river. Or, try a local haberdashery for a suitably long and wonderful, almost liquid-like swathe of shiny fabric. Cut a large sheet of paper into the shape of a sail that can be blown near students' faces to make it flutter and move.

Session Plan

Session	Suggested Activity
1. Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show the students the book and then open it. • If you are using <i>The Dragon Machine</i>, you might play the music from the accompanying CD as a cue to symbolise the beginning of your journey together.
2. Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the overall aim and individual objectives with students. • You may want to introduce the Silent Star (detailed in the Assessment and Evaluation resource). If so, show them how to Silent Star themselves if they accomplish their objective.
3. Sensory Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share the Sensory Story together – see page 6. • According to the needs of your students you may want to choose to structure learning around the Movement Sequence (page 7) instead of the Sensory Story, or you may wish to combine the two.
4. Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose further activities to take part in from the selection on page 8. • Remind students of their individual learning objectives as they move to their activity. • Students can work individually or in small groups. • You can assess whether to expect students to complete one activity or several activities. You could ask a student to work independently on an exploratory activity and then in a small group on a focus activity. • If creating a series of lessons you may choose to repeat activities week on week to allow students to deepen their understanding and involvement, or to rotate activities providing different options for different weeks.
5. Circle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share and celebrate your work together. • Evaluate the group objective and individual learning objectives. Silent Star each other. • Talk about how you could improve upon your success next time and how the session went (see Assessment and Evaluation, page 9). • Enjoy experiencing the Sensory Story again.
6. End	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cue the end of the lesson by closing the book. If using <i>The Dragon Machine</i>, you might play the CD music as the students move to their next activity.

The Sensory Story

The following represents an abridged version of the story of *The Dragon Machine*. Underlined words indicate the cues for the sensory experiences that follow (in navy). Details of how to source and deliver these experiences can be found at the end of this resource in 'Sourcing and Delivering the Sensory Stimuli', page 10.

Use a sound such as an audio dragon clip (available online) or scrunching of cellophane as a background experience every time the word 'dragon' is said, and after the final sentence in the story.

Top Tip

If you are using *A River*, be sure to repeat the word 'river' as often as possible in your abridged version of the story!

- 1) A wet day with dragons everywhere.**
Water spray
- 2) Perching dragons, chasing dragons, sinking dragons.**
Fan card
Optional extra: Feed the dragons.
Biscuits!
- 3) Muddy dragons, messy dragons, troublesome dragons.**
Hands into mess
- 4) The dragons ought to be at home, but it's far, far away.**
Move dragon stimuli away from student
- 5) Build a machine, climb in, lead the dragons home.**
Clank metal
- 6) Tick, tick, tick, into the night sky we fly, us and the dragons until...**
Knock two pieces of wood together
- 7) CRASH! The dragons are gone.**
Darkness
- 8) Search the towns and fields. Only dreams of dragons are left.**
Grass
- 9) Friends gather round. Here is a present for you.**
Box
- 10) It's a dog.**
Dragon stimuli

Movement Sequence

The following movements are designed to be performed in one fluid sequence.

Run through them once slowly, speaking the line and then trying the movement.

With a bit of practice you will be able to perform the Movement Sequence whilst reciting the story. The movements are much simpler to perform than they are to describe in words. Read through them yourself before the session so that you can show them to your students, rather than asking them to interpret the descriptions.

Top Tip

If you are creating a Movement Sequence for *A River*, keep repeating the river movement on each page and try turning yourself into the various animals encountered on the journey. This works well with students holding hands and moving together to represent the river. Additional movements can reflect the changing nature of the journey as it unfolds.

1) **A wet day with dragons everywhere.**

Show hands as claws to represent dragons. Hand to eyes, looking into the distance.

2) **Perching dragons, chasing dragons, sinking dragons.**

Move arms as if running. Show hands as claws to represent dragons at the end of the movement.

3) **Muddy dragons, messy dragons, troublesome dragons.**

Ball hands into fists, to show the troublesome nature of dragons, end with clawed hands to represent the dragons.

4) **The dragons ought to be at home, but it's far, far away.**

Fingertips to fingertips, elbows out, to represent the roof of a house. Hand to eyes, looking into the distance.

5) **Build a machine, climb in, lead the dragons home.**

Move hands as if climbing a ladder. Claw hands to represent dragons.

6) **Tick, tick, tick, into the night sky we fly, us and the dragons until...CRASH!**

Lift arms majestically to indicate soaring flight. claw hands to represent dragons. Throw hands downwards to represent the CRASH.

7) **The dragons are gone.**

Lift hands from 'crash' move to in front of face, fingers spread, and then gently move them apart as if they were vapour dispersing. Gaze about wondering where the dragons have gone.

8) **Search the towns and fields. Only dreams of dragons are left.**

Hand to eyes, looking into the distance. Claw hands and move them apart in the same fashion as previous movement.

9) **Friends gather round. Here is a present for you.**

Let clawed hands drop in a circle and come together as if shaking hands. Smile and look up.

10) **It's a dog.**

Look suddenly to one side, in shock, and re-claw hands in the direction of sight.

Further *Dragon Machine* Activities

The following ideas for further activities are divided into 'exploratory' and 'focus' activities. Exploratory activities can be done with minimal adult support and are intended to be student led. Focus activities will need an adult to direct them.

You may want to arrange your classroom so that some students can be taking part in exploratory activities whilst small groups of students work on focus activities. Students can then rotate through a mixture of exploratory and focus activities during the session, or over a number of sessions.

Exploratory activities

- Search-based activities can be incredibly valuable. Students can pretend to be hidden dragons in a game of hide and seek, look for pictures of dragons around the room or hunt for objects hidden in boxes, grass, a bucket of mud or just balled up paper.
- Explore sound by setting up three tables, each offering materials with which to make different sounds from the story. One table might provide wooden objects, one metal objects and the third any other objects to create different sounds. Students explore each table and talk about the section of the story to which each sound relates.

Focus activities

- Share the story in pairs or small groups. Take turns to ensure each student gets to experience the appropriate sensory stimuli.
- If you were George, who would come looking for you? Ask students to recall people who are close to them (and draw them or write their names, if appropriate).
- Try comparing the book with another dragon-themed book, such as *Don't You Dare, Dragon* by Annie Kubler.

Creating a Sensory Story with *A River*

We hope that you can use some of the ideas we have provided for *The Dragon Machine* to help you create your own Sensory Stories. If you are using *A River*, why not try the following?

- You might decide to use the long ribbon or swathe of fabric as your start cue for all your storytelling and associated activities. It could be left lying across everyone's laps to connect them to each other and to the story for the duration of the activity. The ribbon could be drawn in and hidden away to signify the end of the activity.
- Could you work in 'search' activities, like those described for *The Dragon Machine*? Perhaps students might work their way along the ribbon or stretch of fabric, to find items that are relevant to the story.
- Or, use a particular section of the river adventure (for example the jungle scene) to encourage students to find/identify different animals they might encounter.
- *A River* lends itself particularly well to movement activities for students of all abilities. Explore different ways of representing the river at different stages in the journey through movement.
- Likewise, music can be perfect for illustrating the nature and speed of the river at different points.
- You might seek out books that would create good stories to compare and contrast with *A River*, using similar themes or approaches. For example, try looking at *Window* by Jeannie Baker (Walker Books, 2002).

Assessment and Evaluation

- At the end of the session, you will want to evaluate its impact, reminding students of the overall aim of the session and then together reviewing individual learning objectives.
- Discuss their reactions to the activity and involve them in discussing how the activity could be improved next time.
- If using the Silent Star, encourage students to Silent Star each other.

You may find it useful to refer to the Assessment and Evaluation resource for more details.

Sourcing and Delivering the Sensory Stimuli

The following list details tried and tested stimuli and ideas on how to obtain and use them in creating your *Dragon Machine* Sensory Story.

You can use this list as inspiration to help you develop, try and test your own stimuli for other books, such as *A River*.

Dragon

Source:

Cellophane in flame colours, or a silk candle flame. Online sound banks could provide suitable 'dragon' noises to enhance this stimulus.

Delivery:

Scrunch the cellophane, use the dragon sound or switch the silk flame on every time the word 'dragon' is used, and for the word 'dog' in the final sentence.

Water Spray

Source:

Buy an empty spray bottle (eg from a garden centre), or wash out a used spray bottle.

Delivery:

Spritz over students.

Card

Source:

A stiff piece of card.

Delivery:

Fan past the students so that they feel a rush of wind as if someone had run past them.

Card and scent

Source:

You'll need a piece of stiff card, a cotton pad with a few drops of floral smelling essential oil on, and a Tupperware container. Seal the scented cotton pad into the container ahead of delivering the story.

Delivery:

On cue, fan the students as described, but this time hold the container, now open, in front of the fan so that the air that reaches them is fragranced.

Biscuits (optional)

Source:

Buy some biscuits. You could choose a cheesy flavoured cracker as this could tie in well with the story, even something like cheesy puff crisps would do.

Delivery:

Feed your students as if they were dragons.

Mess

Source:

Have some mess in a bucket. You might be brave enough to make this a muddy, sludgy mess - a cornflour mixture with lumps of marshmallow could work well. Alternatively, balled up paper or anything with an interesting texture will work well, just choose something you can use every time.

Delivery:

Allow students to plunge their hand into the mess. You can give students physical support to do this.

Machine

Source:

Any two metal objects to clank together. Alternatively, if you want to be impressive and can do so safely and consistently, you could use a hammer and nails, or a saw and piece of wood.

Delivery:

Simply make a rhythmic sound using the materials you've chosen.

Tick, tick, tick

Source:

Any two wooden objects, or a football rattle, to click.

Delivery:

Use the materials to deliver a click rhythmically on each 'click' word.

Darkness

Source:

If you have the capacity to black out the room you are working in, do this! If not, then you can create darkness by draping a tightly woven blanket over students.

Delivery:

Plunge students into darkness on cue.

Grass

Source:

Pick a few handfuls of grass just before the session so that it is fresh.

Delivery:

Spread the grass over a tray and offer it to students to explore with their hands and to smell.

Gift

Source:

Choose a cardboard box big enough to contain your dragon stimulus. This will be easy if you are using the cellophane stimulus. If you are using the silk candle flame you may be able to find a large box and slip the stimulus into it between sentences, or you may be able to buy a smaller flame that will fit into the box - these can sometimes be picked up in pound-shops or similar.

Delivery:

Deliver the gift with warmth, eg a hand on the upper arm or a hug. Allow students to open the box and look inside.

Tempo

- Throughout this story sounds occur in sets of three.
- You can facilitate your students' ability to anticipate the next part of their experience of the story by maintaining a consistent tempo for all of these sounds.
- With more able students you may be able to make the first two sounds and pause and have them interject to provide the third sound.

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