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**Age: 7-11**

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Tales from Europe

Summer 2008

These programmes are available as audio on demand from the School Radio website. Refer to dates below to find out when each one is available.

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Introduction

*Tales from Europe* covers a number of traditional tales from around Europe. This particular selection addresses many of the themes of such stories: greed, love, triumph of good over evil. The stories are read by well-known actors.

The teacher’s notes accompanying the programmes are designed to allow you to address learning objectives from the National Literacy Strategy for Year 3 Term 2. However, there are additional objectives written into the notes so that the programmes and notes are relevant to a broader age group.

The programmes and the discussions which develop from them fit into shared text work. There are also suggestions for sentence and word level work and for independent activities.

Suggestions in the programme notes would offer material for two or three Literacy Hours or two or three lessons arising from each programme.

Notes for the programmes include:

**Programme title and summary**
This gives an overview of the story, including characters and main events.

**Before the programme**
This section contains suggestions for discussion and preparatory which will focus pupils’ attention on the programme. These activities may be carried out immediately before listening to the programme, or on previous days.

**During the programme**
This section contains suggestions for enhancing pupils’ appreciation of the story, and for preparing subsequent discussions. You should also consider the possibility of listening to the programmes more than once. It may be helpful for the class to listen to the programme once completely, and then to listen again, with you stopping the tape at appropriate points for discussion. Alternatively, you may wish to break up the story on first listening, and later listen to the story through without pause. It is important that pupils should have at least one opportunity to listen to the entire story. The tape may also be made available to groups at a listening centre.

**After the programme**
This section contains suggestions for developing speaking and listening and text, sentence and word level work.
Programme 1: The Pied Piper of Hamelin

A story from Germany
Storyteller: Tony Robinson

Programme summary:
The town of Hamelin is overrun with rats. The rat catcher is doing his best, but the rats have got out of control. A stranger arrives and tells them he can rid Hamelin of rats for one thousand guilders. His piping lures the rats to the river, where all but one drown – the remaining rat swims across the river, never to return. The Mayor refuses to pay the piper so the piper begins to pipe again and all of the children follow him up the mountain and through a door which closes behind them. Only the boy who could not keep up returns to the town.

Before the programme:
Tell the pupils that they are going to hear a version of the tale of the Pied Piper. Ask if anyone can tell the story in their own words. Make a note of the parts that the pupils can remember. Are there any details on which everyone agrees? Encourage the pupils to contribute, reminding them that there are different versions of the story. What do they think is the theme or moral of the story? What is it trying to tell the reader/listener?

During the programme:
Ask the pupils to visualise the scene. Where in Europe is the tale set? They should select evidence to support their hypothesis. The pupils should listen to see whether or not the details they remember from hearing the story are included in this version. This story is the subject of a poem by Robert Browning called the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Some of Browning’s lines have been used in this version of the story. Ask the pupils to make a note of any language which they think may have come from this poem.

After the programme:
SPEAKING AND LISTENING
What do the pupils think of the way in which the story is read? Do they think it is a good reading? Do they think the narrator practised before reading it or did he simply read it this way the first time he saw it? Does the music support the reading? Comment on this.

TEXT LEVEL WORK
Discuss the setting: the time and the place. What clues did the pupils pick up? Discuss the story and the language with them. What details did they remember? Why do they think they remembered these in particular? They may recall visual details (clothing, the image of the children disappearing into the mountain) or emotional moments (the betrayal, the loneliness of the child who was left behind).
Look briefly at the theme of the story and the pupils’ ideas on the theme. How much agreement is there?

Discuss the language of the story. In what ways is the language typical of traditional story language? Look at the Browning poem. Were the pupils able to identify the language from the original poem? How did they do this? They may have picked up the rhythm or the rhyme, or other aspects of poetic language such as repetition, alliteration (’a ruin of rats’), assonance (’a rat attack’) and metaphor.

SENTENCE LEVEL WORK
Explain that one of the ways in which this version of the story is brought to life is through the use of adjectives. These words describe things – they give you more detail. Ask the pupils to work in groups to generate lists of adjectives to describe the rats, the pied piper and the mayor. Collect the lists together. Which adjectives are common to most groups? How many have the pupils recalled from the story and how many have they worked out for themselves?

WORD LEVEL WORK
Look at the word ‘wrapped’. What is unusual about the spelling? If someone mis-spelt it, what would they do? Pupils will see that there is a silent letter at the beginning of the word. Can the pupils think of any other words which have a silent ‘w’?
Programme 2: Godfather Death

A story from Czechoslovakia
Storyteller: Griff Rhys Jones

Programme summary:

Stepan’s family are very poor. His wife, Hannah, has just given birth to their seventeenth child and they don’t know how they will manage. Stepan receives an offer from a potential godfather for the child – Death! Death offers Stepan a way of growing rich. He should set up as a doctor. Whenever he visits a patient and finds Death standing at the end of the bed, the person will recover. If Death is standing at the head of the bed, the person will die. All goes well until the King falls ill. Stepan tries to cheat Death. In doing so, he brings about his own death.

Before the programme:

Talk to the pupils about life in other times and other places. Ask them about how people provided for their families – there were no social security benefits. Of course, there were no designer labels either! Discuss how parents may feel when another child is born. Relate this to other areas of the world and to poverty. Explain to the pupils that they are about to hear a traditional tale with a moral. They should listen to decide what they think the theme or moral of the story is. What is it trying to tell the reader/listener?

During the programme:

Suggest that the pupils visualise Death. What does he look like? Think of adjectives to describe him, and make a note of them.

After the programme:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING
Talk about the way in which the story was read and the impact of the music on the story. Refer particularly to the way in which the dialogue is presented. What do the pupils think of the way the reader used his voice to convey the characters of Stepan and Death?

TEXT LEVEL WORK
Discuss the theme of the story. The pupils may offer a range of possibilities; see if there is any agreement. How many children offer greed as a theme? Refer to other stories with which the pupils may be familiar, particularly The Pied Piper of Hamelin. Do any of these stories have greed as a possible theme? Ask the pupils what they thought would happen when Death first made Stepan his offer. At what point did they feel they were able to predict the ending? Were their first predictions accurate? How do the pupils feel about the way in which Stepan reacts to the news of his death? His reaction is in two stages – were they surprised by either of these?
SENTENCE LEVEL WORK
Remind the pupils of previous work on adjectives. Can they explain what adjectives are and why writers use them?

WORD LEVEL WORK
Ask the pupils to contribute adjectives they have thought of for describing Death. Sort them into categories, perhaps relating to looks, colours, sounds, personality. Use a thesaurus or dictionary to look for other words which may be used. Experiment with using these words and phrases in the extract: delete, substitute, add words. Build up a picture of the character.
Programme 3: Reeta and the cow that ran dry

A story from Finland
Storyteller: Imelda Staunton

Programme summary:

Reeta is very poor. One day she meets the underground people. Her grandmother has told her about them, so she is very careful not to let them bewitch her. They give her a cow – a special cow – but tell Reeta that she must not over-milk her. When she gets back, Reeta is delighted. The cow yields much milk. However, before long Reeta forgets the advice and over-milks the cow. The cow disappears. Reeta is very upset and lives the rest of her life in fear of the anger of the underground people.

Before the programme:

Explain to the pupils that they are going to hear another European story. Ask them to listen carefully to the detail of the story and evaluate whether the theme of the story is guilt or carelessness. Explain that this will be debated after listening to the story.
Ask the pupils to listen carefully for clues about the type of life led by Reeta and her family: where they lived, what sort of people they were.

After the programme

SPEAKING AND LISTENING
Ask the pupils to talk about the choice of reader for the story. Why do they think that a woman – Imelda Staunton – has been asked to read it? Do they think she chose the story, or was she asked to read it? Think back to the other stories. Is there any link between the main character and the choice of narrator? Are there any other theories? These can be explored more fully in other stories.

TEXT LEVEL WORK
Discuss the setting: the time and the place. Did the pupils form any views on where the story is set, whether Reeta is rich or poor? Discuss these clues. What is the decision about the theme of the story? Ask the pupils to discuss this, justifying their views, until you come to a class decision.
Ask the pupils to write a version of the story based on their own time and place. Before writing, discuss the elements of the story which may have to be manipulated to make it modern and for it to make sense.

SENTENCE LEVEL WORK
Draw the pupils’ attention to the repetition of the adjective ‘red’. Experiment with taking out the repeated word. The meaning stays the same. Is the impact the same though? Discuss story language and the use of repetition. Link this to the pupils’ writing of their own version of the story on the use of commas in the punctuation of speech.
WORD LEVEL WORK
Look at the words ‘better’ and ‘larger’. These are special sorts of adjectives because they compare things. Something which is larger is more large than something else. Something which is better is more good than something else. Look at adjectives worked on in other sessions. Can all of them be transformed in this way? The pupils should note that this works with some adjectives but not others (for example, number words).
Ask the pupils to look for examples of comparative adjectives in their own reading. Generate a list of root words and comparative forms. Investigate the way the spelling changes when the suffix ‘-er’ is added (for example, change ‘y’ to ‘i’: happy-happier, double final consonant: sad-sadder etc.) Also collect words which have an ‘er’ ending, which are not adjectives (letter, teacher) and irregular comparatives (bad-worse).
Programme 4: The Lady of Stavoren

A story from the Netherlands
Storyteller: Sîan Phillips

Programme summary:

The Lady of Stavoren is very rich. She asks the captain of her ships to get her the most precious thing in all the world. After a great deal of thought, he returns with sacks of wheat, which represent life. The Lady is very angry and tips the wheat into the harbour. A blind man tells her that she will regret this. In time, the wheat grows underwater and blocks the harbour. Ships cannot sail in and the town becomes poorer. People leave and move on and the Lady is eventually reduced to begging.

Before the programme:

Tell the pupils the title of the story and ask them what they think it will be about. The previous stories have been about poor people. Do they think the main character in this story will be poor?

During the programme:

Ask the pupils to consider the way the story opens. Explain that you will be discussing the characters of the Lady and the captain, so they should listen carefully for clues, and make decisions about these characters. They should consider key things that make their minds up, and be able to explain when they made their decisions. Challenge the children to find out where Stavoren is (the Netherlands).

After the programme:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING
Discuss again the way in which the reader – Sîan Phillips – has enhanced the story. Discuss the choice of reader. Talk about televising the story of the Lady of Stavoren. Who would the pupils cast in the leading roles? Where would they choose as a setting? How would they dress the characters? The pupils should justify their views by referring to the story.

TEXT LEVEL WORK
The pupils should have a clear visual image of the story. Explain that they are going to write a character portrait of the Lady of Stavoren. Begin by generating a list of words or phrases which describe her. Organise these into categories relating to appearance, voice, personality etc. Discuss with the pupils the structure of a character portrait. It is a sort of report, therefore it needs an introduction, a paragraph about each area of the subject and a conclusion. In shared writing, begin by modelling the introduction and the first paragraph. Allow the pupils to continue work on the piece. Give each group a paragraph to contribute. In a later session, put the whole piece together and add a summary/conclusion.
SENTENCE LEVEL WORK
Review work on adjectives for use in shared writing. When the piece is completed, investigate uses of adjectives. Look for repetition; discuss whether this is helpful and adds to the story, or whether more variety is necessary. In revising, experiment with changing, deleting, and expanding adjectives and adjectival phrases.
Draw the pupils’ attention to the use of commas in writing. When revising the piece, ask the children to make sure the commas add to ease of understanding. Look at what happens if commas are removed or added. Explain to the pupils that they should use them when writing their own paragraph.

WORD LEVEL WORK
During shared writing, take the opportunity to demonstrate spelling strategies, particularly breaking words down into phonemes and using a dictionary. Revise use of spelling resources including word banks. Demonstrate the use of a thesaurus to find alternatives for over-used words, and provide one for children to use in their own writing. Consider the different uses of dictionaries and thesauruses. When would a writer use which? Collect synonyms for some of the adjectives discussed and construct thesaurus entries for these words.
Programme 5: Thor Goes Visiting

A story from Iceland
Storyteller: Willard White

Programme summary:

Thor and his companions were making their way to the Giants’ Hall. They met a giant who tricked them by getting them to put their food into his bag. When they were hungry, they were unable to open the bag to retrieve their food. Thor was angry; he hit the giant with his hammer, but the giant was unhurt. The giant directed Thor and his companions to the Giants’ Hall. Thor tried two tasks to show his power, but he was unsuccessful. The next morning, the giant king confessed that he had tricked Thor. Before the angry Thor could retaliate, the giant king and his castle disappeared.

Before the programme:

Tell the pupils that they are going to hear a story about Thor. Ask them to find out what they can about him. Discuss which books they could use to find this information. Give each group a reference book and allow them time to find the relevant information. Each group should then feed back. Discuss the differences in information provided by each book. Make a list of information about Thor.

During the programme:

Ask the pupils to be alert and remember any information about Thor that is not on their existing list.
Tell the pupils that it is important to remember the order of events in the story. Ask them to listen carefully to the dramatic reading. What skills does the reader display?
Ask the pupils to consider what theme or moral the story has.

After the programme:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING
Discuss the style of the reading; what do the pupils think is particularly interesting about it?
Ask two pupils, or two groups of pupils, to retell the story they have just heard. Listen carefully for any differences between the two stories. Listen for any phrases taken from the tape in the retellings. Discuss what happened in the story. Ask whether things like that are likely to happen to them? Discuss what would have changed in the story if Thor had not been tricked. How would it have ended?

TEXT LEVEL WORK
Discuss the structure of the story. Is this a myth, legend or a traditional story? Work with the pupils to produce a story plan for writing their own myth or legend. Discuss how they could change the characters or setting to make it more interesting. The pupils could write a sequel to the story, using phrases and expressions from the text.
SENTENCE LEVEL WORK
Most stories are written in the third person: the storyteller refers to he/she/they and talks about what happened. Tell the pupils that you want them to rewrite the story in the first person: I/we. Ask them to pretend that they are Thor and rewrite the extract or story as though it were happening to them. Talk it through, giving examples.

WORD LEVEL WORK
Consider the word ‘hadn’t’. It is a contraction; the fuller version would be ‘had not’. An apostrophe is used where letters have been omitted. Discuss other words like this, and list the contractions and the fuller versions on the same line on different sides of the page.
Programme 6: The Ugly Duckling

A story from Denmark
Storyteller: Josie Lawrence

Programme summary:

A duck's eggs hatched. One chick was large and ugly and not like the other babies. In the farmyard, he was jostled and bitten by the other ducks and hens because he was ugly. Eventually, he ran away, only to find that wherever he went, he was taunted and ridiculed. When winter came, he saw a flock of beautiful swans and wished he could go with them. After a terrible winter, the swans returned and he decided to fly down to them, expecting to be rejected again. As the swans turned to meet him, he saw his reflection in the water - he, too, was a beautiful swan.

Before the programme:

Ask the pupils if they have heard the story of The Ugly Duckling. What are the main events of the story that the pupils can remember? Write these down in the correct time frame, like a flow diagram. Discuss the character of the Ugly Duckling. What can the pupils remember about him? Do any of them remember extra details about the story? Discuss the theme of the story. What do they think is the moral or lesson in this tale?

During the programme:

The pupils should take note of any details in the story that could give more information about the character of the Ugly Duckling. Ask the pupils to note any parts of the story that they did not include when they listed the main events.

After the programme:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING
Discuss the way the story has been presented: narration, music, sound effects. Do the pupils feel that these effects make the story seem more interesting? What effect does the music have on their response to the story? Discuss the character of the Ugly Duckling. What events in the story gave them a more complete picture of him? Was he brave? Name the occasions when they think he showed bravery.

TEXT LEVEL WORK
The Ugly Duckling had many difficulties. Draw a line down the centre of the board and make an inventory of the good and bad things that happened to the Ugly Duckling. Why is the Ugly Duckling persecuted? Do the pupils think people would behave in the same way? What is the theme of this story? What did the author want the reader to learn?
Discuss other typical story themes: trials and forfeits, good over evil, weak over strong, wise over foolish. Can the pupils think of examples of stories with these themes?

SENTENCE LEVEL WORK
Ask the pupils what they understand by the terms ‘singular’ and ‘plural’. Can they find any plural words that fit their definitions? What is it about the words that make them recognisable as plurals? Choose a sentence from the story - for example:

Then the swans flew away south to a warmer country, and the duckling dived to the bottom of the lake.

Discuss the singular and plural words in the sentence. What would the pupils have to do to make this sentence plural? Would they have to alter all the words, leave things out, put things in? Would they need to make many changes?

Ask the pupils to underline the plurals in the text extract.

WORD LEVEL WORK
Discuss the basic rules for changing the spelling of nouns when ‘s’ is added. The plural of most words is formed by adding ‘s’ to the singular.

Can the pupils think of any words that add ‘es’ to form the plural? List these on the board. Do any words end in ‘ies’ in the plural? Group them into different categories: words that add ‘es’, words that add ‘ies’.

Look specifically at the words that add ‘ies’. Get the pupils to collect words that add ‘ies’ to form the plural.

Write the singular word next to the plural. Now look at the letters at the ends of these words. Look specifically at the singular words ending in ‘y’. If there is a consonant before the ‘y’, does the spelling alter? Discuss this in a whole class session.
Programme 7: Persephone Rising

A story from Greece
Storyteller: Helen Mirren

Programme summary:

Demeter loved her beautiful daughter, Persephone. Zeus’s elder brother, Hades, also loved Persephone. Persephone did not love Hades, the ruler of the underworld, so he came in his chariot and kidnapped her. He took her into the underworld. Demeter heard her daughter cry out and began to search for her. She forbade the plants and trees to grow whilst her daughter was missing. Weeks passed and nothing grew on earth. Zeus told Demeter to bring Persephone back on one condition; she should not have eaten anything in the underworld. But Persephone had eaten some seeds. So Zeus ruled that, each year, she should spend three months in the underworld and nine in the land of the living.

Before the programme:

Discuss myths, legends and fables. What are the differences? Explain that a fable is a short story not based on fact, often with animals as characters, and conveying a moral. A legend is a story which may be true and is handed down from the past. A myth is a traditional, imaginary story containing ideas or beliefs about ancient times or natural events. Explain that the story they are about to hear is a myth.

During the programme:

Ask the pupils to listen carefully and to be ready to identify episodes that demonstrate that the story is a myth. They should pay particular attention to the descriptions of the setting. The pupils should be able to quote from the programme when describing the setting.

After the programme:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING
The pupils should describe the setting of the myth.
Discuss the reading of the story. Did they enjoy it?
Could they suggest any changes that would make it more effective?
Ask the pupils how they think the story might sound if Persephone told it.

TEXT LEVEL WORK
Discuss the details of the setting. What phrases do the pupils particularly remember? Discuss the vocabulary used. What vocabulary would they use? What would fit?
Ask the pupils to imagine they are one of the characters in the story. How would they describe their experiences? Ask them to write the myth as if they were one of the characters. It must be from an alternative point of view. They should consider in what setting Hades would tell his story and how the vocabulary used would change.
SENTENCE LEVEL WORK
If you have a copy of the stories, select an extract and highlight commas in the text. Note where the commas occur and discuss their functions in helping the reader. Are there rules they could write about the use of commas, derived from the evidence they have found in the text extract? The pupils should return to their ‘alternative myths’ and check their use of commas. If they have not used many commas, they may want to add them to their text now.

WORD LEVEL WORK
Ask the pupils to discuss the terms ‘singular’ and ‘plural’. Select some words from the story and write them down in two columns: singular and plural. How many other words can they put into their lists? Do all plurals end in ‘s’? Are any words the same in the singular and the plural? Add another column for these words. Have a class plurals book to help with spellings.
Programme 8: Arthur the King

A story from Britain
Storyteller: John Hurt

Programme summary:

Britain had no king. The dead king’s son had been entrusted to foster parents who did not realise that they had the king’s child in their care. A tournament was announced at which a new king would be chosen. It was hoped that the king’s son would come forward. Arthur was twelve and accompanied his father and older brother to the tournament. They saw a sword stuck in a stone. Whoever could pull the sword from the stone would be declared the rightful king. Arthur collected his brother’s sword and took the sword from the stone for his brother. Arthur’s step-father realised Arthur was the rightful king.

Before the programme:

Ask the pupils what they know about the legend of King Arthur. Make a note of the events that they can remember. Do they believe that this is a true story? They should be able to give reasons for their opinions.

During the programme:

The pupils should listen carefully and make a note of words/phrases that they do not understand (for later discussion). Have the events they remembered been included in this version of the story? Is there anything that they would not have expected to be included?

After the programme:

SPEAKING AND LISTENING
Discuss the words/phrases that the pupils did not understand. Explain that some of these words would refer to items of clothing or equipment that we would not use now. Ask the pupils to become characters and act out parts of the story. Stop them at appropriate points and ask them what their character is feeling. This activity allows the pupils to see how characters are portrayed. It can help them decide what a character might say or how they might behave in different circumstances.

TEXT LEVEL WORK
Discuss the sequence of events in the story. Write them in chronological order like a flow chart. Can the pupils think of different ways to sequence the story: listing, charting, mapping, storyboards? If one of the events was missed out or if the order of events changed, how would that affect the rest of the story? What would change? Is this a myth, legend or fable? Pupils should use evidence from the text to support their opinion.
SENTENCE LEVEL WORK
In the story the words ‘THE SWORD IN THE STONE’ are in capital letters. Can the pupils explain why the author chose to do this? Can the pupils think of other occasions when capital letters are used in unusual places? Discuss the pupils’ responses and expand on them, if necessary. Ask the pupils to select a sentence from the text extract. Experiment with deleting words in the sentence to see which are essential to the meaning of the sentence and which are not.

WORD LEVEL WORK
The word ‘sunlight’ is used in the story. This is a compound word; two words put together to form a new word. Can they think of any other compound words that they know? Ask them to list them in their books. Eventually, these lists could be combined to make a class dictionary of compound words.