The Tempest

Author: William Shakespeare (1564–1616)
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Information about assessment and curriculum links can be found at the end of these Teaching Notes.

Synopsis

Prospero, Duke of Milan, and his daughter, Miranda, are banished by Prospero’s brother Antonio. Cast adrift, they find themselves on an island – the home of Caliban, a witch’s son. Prospero and his helper, the spirit Ariel, use their magic to create a tempest so that Antonio, Alonso the King of Naples, and others are shipwrecked on the island. Antonio and the others fall under Prospero’s magical power, revealing Antonio’s guilt and Alonso’s repentance.

Social and historical context

The Tempest was written in the ‘Age of Exploration’, around 1611. Slavery is a theme within the play and it was commonplace for people to have slaves. The play is set during the beginning of colonialism, when people were discovering and building new countries. Some thinkers of the time emphasized the study of classical culture and literature to promote a more civilised society.

Group or guided reading

Introducing the book

• Discuss the author of the play. Have the children read other plays by William Shakespeare? What do they remember about his stories? Can they find out when Shakespeare was alive?

• (Clarifying, Predicting) Discuss the title The Tempest. What do they understand about the term? Do they know that it is another word for a storm? Look at the chapter headings. Can the children use these headings to consider what the story might be about? Now draw their attention to the characters in the story (pages 94–95). Are there any clues to the potential conflict that might be the main event of the story? (The note that tells the reader that Antonio has made himself Duke of Milan.)

• (Predicting) Read page 7 to the children and ask them, in pairs, to tell each other how they think Prospero and Miranda came to lose their palace.

During reading

Objective: Understand underlying themes, causes and points of view.

• Read to the end of Chapter 3 with the children. When reading dialogue, ask the children to read different parts aloud so they can begin to develop an understanding that this story was originally a play. Encourage them to use their voices to build atmosphere.

• (Clarifying) As they read ask them to begin working out how each of the main characters – Prospero, Miranda, Caliban, Ariel and Ferdinand – came to be on the island.

• Ask the children to focus on the vocabulary that is used to set the scene and build atmosphere. The children could play the echo game with some of the words; this is a way of collecting and sharing ideas, sounds and vocabulary. The group stands in a circle and each member in turns offers a sound, word or phrase as appropriate, which is then repeated by the rest of the group. It is a good idea to give the children thinking time before you start and to tell them that it doesn’t matter if ideas are repeated.
Independent reading

- Ask the children to read to the end of the story independently. As they read, ask them to focus on the mood and theme of magic. Can the children identify an underlying theme to The Tempest?
- Ask the children to write new or unfamiliar words they discover on a chart. Encourage them to find the definitions as they read. When they have finished the chart ask them to find a partner and to each explain to their partner the meaning of three new words.

**Assessment**: Check that children:
- can interpret the events in the text
- can deduce or infer the theme of the story.

Returning and responding to the text

- *(Imagining, Clarifying)* Ask the children to skim read the text, gathering clues about what the island looked like. They could draw a map and label it with key elements of the story to help consolidate their understanding, e.g. where Ferdinand was first sighted on the island.
- *(Questioning)* Go into role as Caliban and encourage the children to question you about how you feel being a slave.
- *(Clarifying)* Ask the children to draw conclusions about what the key moral to the story might be, e.g. that there are always lessons you can learn about yourself.
- *(Questioning)* Ask the children to look at the pictures on pages 32–33. What can they see? What do they think is happening? What do they wonder about each picture?

**Assessment**: 
- Can the children infer ideas about the story from the images?

Speaking, listening and drama activities

**Objective**: Improvise using a range of drama strategies and conventions to explore themes such as hopes, fears and desires.
- Ask the children to use a ‘consciousness alley’ to explore whether Prospero should have treated Caliban as a slave.
- One member of the group represents Prospero. The rest of the group make an ‘alley’ of two lines facing each other; one line is in favour of one outcome and the other line is in favour of the other outcome. Prospero walks slowly down the alley hearing pros and cons from alternate sides (the people represent the voices inside his head). At the end of the alley, he makes his decision, based on what he has heard.

Writing activities

**Objective**: In non-narrative, establish, balance and maintain viewpoints.
- Discuss the theme of slavery in The Tempest.
- Ask the children to write an argument against the keeping of slaves. Remind them of the key features of an argument. Discuss whether they want to write a balanced argument or a one-sided persuasive piece.

**Assessment**: 
- Can the children produce texts that keep to the argument they have chosen?
Whole class reads

Books on a similar theme:
- *Kensuke’s Kingdom* by Michael Morpurgo
- *Plundering Paradise* by Geraldine McCaughrean

Cross-curricular links

**Geography**
- Ask the children to scan the text to make notes on the location of different parts of the island. They could then use the notes to draw a map with a birds-eye view of the island.

**History**
- Invite the children to find out what they can about explorers during the time when William Shakespeare was alive.
## Comprehension strategies

Comprehension strategies are taught throughout the Teaching Notes to enable pupils to understand what they are reading in books that they can read independently. In these Teaching Notes the following strategies are taught: Predicting, Questioning, Clarifying, Imagining

## Spoken language

Pupils should be taught to participate in discussions, presentations, performances and debates (SpokLang.9)

Pupils should be taught to consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others (SpokLang.11)

## Reading: Word reading

Pupils should be taught to apply their growing knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes (morphology and etymology), as listed in Appendix 1, both to read aloud and to understand the meaning of new words that they meet (Y5/6 ReadWord.1)

## Reading: Comprehension

Pupils should be taught to maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths, legends and traditional stories, modern fiction, fiction from our literary heritage, and books from other cultures and traditions (Y5/6 ReadComp.1iii)

Pupils should be taught to maintain positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by preparing poems and plays to read aloud and to perform, showing understanding through intonation, tone and volume so that the meaning is clear to an audience (Y5/6 ReadComp.1viii)

Pupils should be taught to understand what they read by checking that the book makes sense to them, discussing their understanding and exploring the meaning of words in context (Y5/6 ReadComp.2i)

Pupils should be taught to understand what they read by asking questions to improve their understanding (Y5/6 ReadComp.2ii)

Pupils should be taught to understand what they read by drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence (Y5/6 ReadComp.2iii)

Pupils should be taught to understand what they read by predicting what might happen from details stated and implied (Y5/6 ReadComp.2iv)

## Writing: Composition

Pupils should be taught to plan their writing by noting and developing initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary (Y5/6 WritComp.1ii)

Pupils should be taught to draft and write by selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning (Y5/6 WritComp.2i)
### Listening and talking

When I engage with others, I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, show that I value others' contributions and use these to build on thinking (LIT 2-02a)

To help me develop an informed view, I can distinguish fact from opinion, and I am learning to recognise when my sources try to influence me and how useful these are (LIT 2-08a)

### Reading

Through developing my knowledge of context clues, punctuation, grammar and layout, I can read unfamiliar texts with increasing fluency, understanding and expression (ENG 2-12a)

To show my understanding, I can respond to literal, inferential and evaluative questions and other close reading tasks and can create different kinds of questions of my own (ENG 2-17a)

I regularly select and read, listen to or watch texts which I enjoy and find interesting, and I can explain why I prefer certain texts and authors (LIT 2-11a)

I can select and use a range of strategies and resources before I read, and as I read, to make meaning clear and give reasons for my selection (LIT 2-13a)

To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text and use supporting detail (LIT 2-16a)

### Writing

I can use my notes and other types of writing to help me understand information and ideas, explore problems, make decisions, generate and develop ideas or create new text.

I recognise the need to acknowledge my sources and can do this appropriately (LIT 2-25a)

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information, organise these in an appropriate way for my purpose and use suitable vocabulary for my audience (LIT 2-26a)

### WALES Programme of Study for English: Year 5

#### Oracy

Learners are able to listen carefully to presentations using techniques to remember the main points, e.g. making notes, summarising (Y5_OracList.1)

Learners are able to explore issues and themes through role play (Y5_OracSpea.5)

#### Reading

Learners are able to infer ideas which are not explicitly stated (Y5_ReadComp.2)

Learners are able to identify and explore ideas and information that interest them (Y5_ReadComp.3)

Learners are able to use a range of strategies to make meaning from words and sentences, including knowledge of phonics, word roots, word families, syntax, text organisation and prior knowledge of context (Y5_ReadStrat.1)

Learners are able to read extended texts independently for sustained periods (Y5_ReadStrat.2)

Learners are able to identify how punctuation relates to sentence structure and how meaning is constructed in complex sentences (Y5_ReadStrat.4)

Learners are able to scan to find specific details using graphic and textual organisers, e.g. sub-headings, diagrams (Y5_ReadStrat.6)

#### Writing

Learners are able to use different sentence structures, including complex sentences showing relationships of time, or cause, e.g. before you start … , if you do this then ... (Y5_WritGPSH.2)

Learners are able to use language appropriate to writing, including standard forms of English (Y5_WritLang.1)

Learners are able to use appropriate vocabulary, including subject-specific words and phrases (Y5_WritLang.2)

Learners are able to write with a clear purpose, showing consideration for the reader, e.g. by choosing appropriate vocabulary and presentational devices (Y5_WritMean.1)

Learners are able to expand upon main idea(s) with supporting reasons, information and examples (Y5_WritMean.3)

Learners are able to use techniques in planning writing, e.g. mindmapping, sequencing, placemat activities (Y5_WritMean.4)
**Talking and listening**

- Pupils can listen attentively (L4_com_talk.1i)
- Pupils can develop a role (L4_com_talk.1ii)
- Pupils can make relevant contributions to discussions (L4_com_talk.2i)

**Reading**

- Pupils can show understanding by identifying and summarising information (L4_com_read.1i)
- Pupils can locate relevant information and use it appropriately (L4_com_read.3)
- Pupils can understand explicit meanings and recognise some implicit meanings (L4_com_read.3ii)
- Pupils can explain opinions about what they read (L4_com_read.5)

**Writing**

- Pupils can express thoughts, feelings, ideas and opinions, giving reasons when appropriate (L4_com_writ.2i)
- Pupils can express meaning clearly, using an appropriate vocabulary and level of detail (L4_com_writ.2iii)
- Pupils can choose from and use a range of forms, as appropriate (L4_com_writ.3)
- Pupils can vary word order and use linking words within sentences (L4_com_writ.4i)