

Oxford Level 8

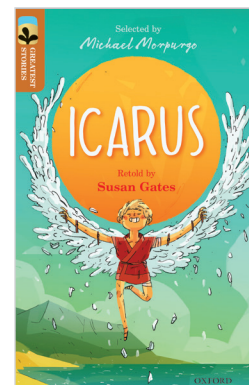
Icarus

Author: Susan Gates

Illustrator: Joe Todd-Stanton

Teaching notes author: Tina Christie

Book type: short story



Synopsis

Daedalus and Icarus are locked in a tower by King Minos and they are desperate to escape. One day, looking at the birds gives Daedalus a great idea. It is a big risk, but he is an inventor and refuses to believe that anything is impossible. Will they succeed in breaking free?

Group or guided reading

Introducing the book

- (*Prediction*) Ask the children to read the blurb and look at the picture on the cover, and then predict what they think might happen in the story.
- Ask the children to look closely at the picture on the cover and think about how they would feel if they were the character in the picture. They should explain the reasons for their feelings.
- Ascertain, from the blurb, that this is a legend from Ancient Greece. Encourage children to share any information about Ancient Greece that they might know.

Strategy check

- Remind the children to use the context to work out the meaning of words then check them in a dictionary, e.g. *inventor* (page 4), *boredom* (page 5), *boasted* (page 18), *soared* (page 21).
- Point out that sea is an example of a homophone and discuss the alternative spelling/meaning with the same sound. Ask the children to identify any other homophones in the text (e.g. *one, sun, to, die, so, no, night, threw, piece* – all on pages 3–9).
- Ask the children to identify the simile on page 3 (*flew like a bird*). Then help them to find further similes in the story (pages 7 and 23: *paced ... like a tiger in a cage; fell from Icarus's wings like snow; fell like a stone*) and discuss how using them improves the picture in the reader's head.
- If children encounter words they find challenging, encourage them to use their phonic skills to decode them. If necessary, read the word for the child.

During reading

- Ask the children to read Chapter 2 (pages 6–9) aloud and help them where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read.
- If the children meet words where the meaning is unclear, remind them to read the whole sentence to try to work out the meaning from the context.
- Focus on page 7 and discuss the words that tell us about Icarus's behaviour and how he is feeling.

- (Questioning) Ask the children why Daedalus and Icarus could not just walk out of the tower, like Amara could.
- (Questioning) Ask the children what gave Daedalus the idea for his *brilliant plan*.

Independent reading

- (Questioning) Ask the children to continue to read the book independently. Explain that you want them to think about the following question while they are reading: What do we know about the characters of Daedalus and Icarus?
- (Summarization) At the end of a section or chapter, encourage the children to summarize that section.
- (Clarification) Encourage the children to re-read any sentences they find difficult to understand.
- (Clarification) As the children read the text, check that they are dealing with difficult vocabulary.

Returning and responding to the book

- (Questioning) Explain that the writer uses words such as *swooped* and *soared* to describe how Amara and Icarus were flying, respectively. Discuss the meaning of these terms (look them up in a dictionary) and how they improve the way that we as readers can imagine more precisely what they are doing.
- Ask the children to explain what Amara's secret was (page 18).
- (Questioning) Ask the children why the sea is now called the Icarian Sea.
- (Prediction) Discuss the ending of the story and ask children how they think Daedalus and Amara each might have felt.

Speaking and listening activities

- Working in pairs, ask the children to take the roles of Daedalus and Icarus and have a conversation in character. Encourage the children to think about how their character would speak and act, using gestures, facial expressions and movements appropriately.
- Ask the children to work with a partner to find words that describe Icarus's personality.
- Children should work in small groups with one person taking the role of Amara and the others being the children to whom she told the story. Imagine she has just finished telling the story and ask her questions about it, e.g. how she felt at different points, is there anything she regrets, what she thought of Daedalus and Icarus, has she seen Daedalus since.
- In small groups, ask the children to talk about what they think it might feel like to fly. Imagine their own flying journey and describe it to others in detail, thinking carefully about their wording.

Writing activities

- Ask the children to plan a newspaper report, eyewitness account or diary entry from the point of view of someone who saw Daedalus and Icarus flying. Encourage the children to use informal and contemporary language and descriptive phrases.
- Ask the children to make up their own legend, where the main character is able to do something superhuman (e.g. have X-ray vision, be able to lift heavy objects). Encourage the children to draft a plan, particularly thinking about character, setting and plot.
- Ask the children to write an information text or set of instructions for Daedalus's wings. Encourage children to include a labelled diagram if appropriate.
- Using information from the speaking and listening activity, ask the children to write their own flying journey. Look at examples of fronted adverbials in the text, e.g. *Many years ago* (page 3) *Suddenly* (page 8). Ensure they include some fronted adverbials to add to their description.



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Curriculum links and assessment

Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale:

- Can apply phonic skills and knowledge to recognize an increasing number of complex words. (RCS Standard 3, 3)
- Can summarize a story, giving the main points clearly in sequence. (RCS Standard 3, 18)
- Can talk about how different words and phrases affect meaning, including the use of some simple literary language (e.g. alliteration). (RCS Standard 3, 21)
- Is beginning to read between the lines, using clues from text and illustrations, to discuss thoughts, feelings and actions. (RCS Standard 3, 23)
- Can confidently relate texts to their own experiences. (RCS Standard 3, 24)

ENGLAND The National Curriculum in England: English Programme of Study, Years 3–4

	National Curriculum objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Spoken language	consider and evaluate different viewpoints, attending to and building on the contributions of others (SpokLang.11)	Children should be able to listen to, consider and show respect for others' views, expanding them where appropriate.
Reading: Comprehension	using dictionaries to check the meaning of words that they have read (Y3/4 ReadComp.1iii)	Ensure that children are able to look up the meaning of words they don't know, or are unsure about, in a dictionary.
	drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence (Y3/4 ReadComp.2iii)	Encourage children to talk about what they think a character might be thinking and feeling, and to support their ideas with reasons (using evidence from the text and their own experience).
Writing: Transcription	spell further homophones (Y3/4 WritSpell.2)	Ensure that children are able to differentiate between homophones (spellings and meanings).
	in narratives, creating settings, characters and plot (Y3/4 WritComp.2iii)	Check that children are focusing on character, setting and plot when planning their writing.
Writing: Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation	using fronted adverbials (Y3/4 WritVoc.1v)	Check that children can use fronted adverbials to improve the description of their own flying journey.

SCOTLAND Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English experiences and outcomes, First Level

	Experiences and outcomes	Book-related assessment pointers
Listening and talking	When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can exchange information, experiences, explanations, ideas and opinions, and clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more (LIT 1-09a)	Children should be able to listen to, consider and show respect for others' views, expanding them where appropriate.
Reading	I am learning to select and use strategies and resources before I read, and as I read, to help make the meaning of texts clear (LIT 1-13a)	Ensure that children are able to look up the meaning of words they don't know, or are unsure about, in a dictionary.
	I can share my thoughts about structure, characters and/or setting, recognise the writer's message and relate it to my own experiences, and comment on the effective choice of words and other features (ENG 1-19a)	Encourage children to talk about what they think a character might be thinking and feeling, and to support their ideas with reasons (using evidence from the text and their own experience).

Writing	I can spell the most commonly used words, using my knowledge of letter patterns and spelling rules and use resources to help me spell tricky or unfamiliar words (LIT 1-21a)	Ensure that children are able to differentiate between homophones (spellings and meanings).
	Having explored the elements which writers use in different genres, I can use what I learn to create my own stories, poems and plays with interesting structures, characters and/or settings (ENG 1-31a)	Check that children are focusing on structure, character and setting when planning their writing.

WALES Programme of Study for English in Wales: Year 3

	Objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Oracy	express basic opinions about topics and written texts, e.g. discuss topics that are within their scope of experience, discuss a character in a story (Y3_OracColl.2)	Children should be able to discuss their opinions on the text, building on them by listening to, considering and showing respect for others' views.
Reading	look for specific information in texts using contents, indexes, glossaries, dictionaries (Y3_ReadStrat.6)	Ensure that children are able to look up the meaning of words in a dictionary or glossary and use contents and indexes appropriately.
	make links between what they read and what they already know and believe about the topic (Y3_ReadResp.5)	Encourage children to support their ideas about a text with evidence (from the text and their own experience).
Writing	use strategies including knowledge of word families, roots, morphology and graphic knowledge to spell words, e.g. most common polysyllabic words (Y3_WritGPSH.8)	Ensure that children are able to differentiate between homophones (spellings and meanings).
	use the characteristic features of simple continuous and non-continuous texts in their writing, using imagination where appropriate (Y3_WritMean.2)	Check that children are focusing on character, setting and plot when planning their writing.
	use adjectives and adverbs to expand simple sentences and phrases (Y3_WritGPSH.3)	Check that children can use adjectives and adverbs to improve the description of their own 'flying journey'.

NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Primary Level 2

	Levels of progression	Book-related assessment pointers
Talking and listening	follow discussions, make contributions and observe conventions of conversation (L2_com_talk.2i)	Children should be able to listen to, consider and show respect for others' views, expanding them where appropriate.
Reading	use a range of reading strategies (L2_com_read.2)	Ensure that children are able to look up the meaning of words they don't know, or are unsure about, in a dictionary.
	express opinions and make predictions (L2_com_read.5ii)	Encourage children to support their ideas about a text with evidence (from the text and their own experience).
Writing	spell and write common and familiar words recognisably (L2_com_writ.4ii)	Ensure that children are able to differentiate between homophones (spellings and meanings).
	express thoughts, feelings and ideas, from within their experience, using a general vocabulary (L2_com_writ.2i)	Check that children are focusing on character, setting and plot when planning their writing.