



Oxford Level 9

The Sand Witch

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Teaching notes author: Gill Howell

Book type: novel

About *All Stars*

All Stars is a series of chapter fiction books written specifically for able readers aged 5 to 7 years. The books offer engaging, content-appropriate stories for infants at reading levels that will motivate and challenge your high-ability readers. *All Stars* are primarily for independent reading, but can be used in a variety of ways, including in able-reader guided reading sessions and in speaking, writing and drama activities.

All Stars is endorsed by Potential Plus, a leading charity which supports children with high learning potential. You can find out more about Potential Plus at www.potentialplusuk.org.

Synopsis

When Hagbag comes to stay with Drusilla, the Sand Witch, she eats all Drusilla's food, takes over her bed and treats Drusilla like a servant. In an attempt to force Hagbag to go home, Drusilla cooks up a cake-spell to give Hagbag the Squoozles, but Hagbag stays and expects Drusilla to look after her. Exhausted, Drusilla eats a bit of the leftover cake and gets the Squoozles herself. The next day, Hagbag is better – but when she sees Drusilla has the Squoozles, she rushes back home before she can catch them again.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- (Predicting) Look at the image on the cover. Ask: *Who do you think the lady is?*
- (Clarifying / Predicting) Read the title. Ask: *What do you think this story might be about?*
- (Predicting) Turn to the back cover and read the blurb. Ask: *What sort of spell might make Hagbag go home?*
- (Predicting / Clarifying) Look at the illustration on page 10. Ask: *How do you think Peg, the cat, feels about Hagbag's visit? What does this tell you about what Hagbag might be like?*
- (Predicting / Clarifying) Look at the illustration on page 17. Ask: *What do you think Drusilla is doing?*
- Some of the more challenging words and their definitions are listed on the front inside cover of the book. Encourage the children to look at these words and talk about their meaning to help build familiarity before children read the story.
- Here are some additional tricky words that may be useful:
 - squeezed – pressed very hard
 - plumped – dropped heavily
 - relief – a pleasant feeling when something unpleasant stops
 - ached – felt a dull pain

Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read.
- (Clarifying) At the end of page 6, ask: *Can you find a letter in the illustration?* Help the children read the writing on the wall if needed.
- (Clarifying / Summarizing) At the end of page 10, ask: *How do Drusilla and Peg feel about Hagbag's visit? Why?* Encourage children to find examples in the text to support their answers. Discuss what Drusilla turning pale shows us.
- (Clarifying) On page 15, ask the children to read Drusilla's words using an expressive tone. Ask: *How does the word 'got' in italics help you to read with expression?*
- (Predicting) Pause at the end of page 17 and ask: *What do you think the Squozzles might be? Is it going to be nice or nasty?*
- (Predicting) Pause at the end of page 23 and ask: *What do you think will happen next? Is Hagbag going to go home? Has Drusilla's plan worked?*
- (Clarifying) Pause at the end of page 24 and check that children can sound out the word 'unbearable' correctly.
- (Predicting / Summarizing) Pause at the end of page 29 and ask: *How do you think Hagbag will react to Drusilla having the Squozzles? Can you think of ways she has acted in the past that gives you this idea?*

Returning to the story

- (Clarifying / Summarizing) Look back at page 9. Ask: *What is unusual about the food Hagbag ate? Why do you think there was jellyfish jam and seaweed tea?*
- (Clarifying / Summarizing) Ask: *How would you describe Hagbag? Can you think of three interesting adjectives?* Encourage children to find evidence in the story to support their answers.
- (Clarifying / Summarizing) Ask: *What do you think of Hagbag's behaviour as a guest? What would you have done differently if you were Drusilla's guest?*
- (Clarifying) Ask: *Why do you think Drusilla made her spell as a cake?*
- (Clarifying / Summarizing) Ask: *What went wrong with Drusilla's plan to get Hagbag to go home?*
- (Clarifying / Predicting) Ask: *What do you think Drusilla might have thought or felt when she realized she had eaten the cake she had baked for Hagbag?*
- (Clarifying / Summarizing) Ask: *Why didn't Drusilla mind having the Squozzles?*
- (Questioning) Ask: *What questions could you ask Drusilla about how she decided to get rid of Hagbag?*

Independent reading

- Introduce the story as in the Group/Guided reading section above.
- Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- Encourage the children to use a dictionary to look up any unfamiliar words.
- Encourage the children to answer the questions on the inside covers of the book.
- Able readers often read quickly but sometimes skim words or do not fully understand what they are reading. Try:
 - stopping the children from time to time and asking them to explain what is happening in the story at that point, or who a character is,
 - asking the children to examine the pictures and speech bubbles (if present). Encourage the children to tell you what information the pictures or speech bubbles give us,
 - reminding children to look out for any difference between what is being said and what is being thought by the characters. Can they show you an example?

- Prompt more able readers to think about alternative language choices when exploring the text. For example, ‘Can you think of any other words the author could have used to describe how this character felt here?’
- Even able readers may need to pause to work out a new or tricky word. Encourage them to reread the whole sentence again to make sure they understand the context of the word.
- Find even more books for your able readers at BookMatch, the children’s book recommendation tool specially designed for teachers, available free on Oxford Owl. Filter by year group and Oxford Level to find age-appropriate books to stretch your most able: www.oxfordowl.co.uk

Speaking, listening and drama activities

- Hot-seating Hagbag.
 - Invite children to sit in the hot seat in the role of Hagbag.
 - Remind them of their ideas about how to describe Hagbag.
 - Ask them to retell Hagbag’s visit from Hagbag’s point of view, keeping in role as they describe what happened.
 - Encourage the others in the group to ask Hagbag questions to draw out how she felt about her visit.

Writing activities

- Writing rules for visitors.
 - Discuss what Hagbag did and said that made her an unwelcome visitor.
 - Suggest that Drusilla could draw up a set of rules for visitors in the future.
 - Ask the children to discuss with a partner the rules they think Drusilla would like.
 - Ask them to write three or more rules to make visits more pleasant for Drusilla.

Cross-curricular suggestion

Science

- Ask the children to find out about creatures that live at or near the seaside.



The Sand Witch

Curriculum links and assessment

Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale

- Can make plausible predictions about characters, using knowledge of the story and own experiences. (RCS Standard 2, 10)
- With support, can answer simple questions/find information in response to a direct question. (RCS Standard 2, 12)
- Can retell an unknown story (unfamiliar before first reading) using beginning, middle and end; retelling may only be in simple terms because of its unfamiliarity but children have got the general gist of the story and its sequence. (RCS Standard 2, 16)
- Can comment on obvious characteristics and actions of characters in stories. (RCS Standard 2, 23)

ENGLAND The National Curriculum in England: English Programme of Study, Year 1

	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)	Can the children retell the events of the story in sequence from Hagbag's point of view?
Reading: Word reading	apply phonic knowledge and skills as the route to decode words (Y1 ReadWord.1)	Encourage the children to sound out and blend unfamiliar words.
Reading: Comprehension	making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done (Y1 ReadComp.2iv)	Encourage the children to explain how Drusilla feels about Hagbag's visit.
	predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far (Y1 ReadComp.2v)	Pause at appropriate points and ask the children what might happen next.
	explain clearly their understanding of what is read to them (Y1 ReadComp.4)	Can the children describe the main events of the story?
Writing: Composition	saying out loud what they are going to write about (Y1 WritComp.1i)	Check that the children discuss and compare their rules for visiting Drusilla before writing.

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)	Do the children engage in the discussions?
Reading	I can use my knowledge of sight vocabulary, phonics, context clues, punctuation and grammar to read with understanding and expression. (ENG 1-12a)	Encourage the children to sound out and blend unfamiliar words.
	I can share my thoughts about structure, characters and/or setting, recognize 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 the children to explain how Drusilla feels about Hagbag's visit. Can they relate it to their own experience? Can they predict what might happen next?
	To show my understanding across different areas of learning, I can identify and consider the purpose and main ideas of a text. (LIT 1-16a)	Can the children describe the main events of the story?
Writing	I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience. (LIT 1-20a / LIT 2-20a)	Check that the children format their rules for visiting Drusilla appropriately.

WALES Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework, Year 1

	Framework objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Oracy	contribute to conversations and respond to others, taking turns when prompted (Y1_OracColl.1)	Do the children engage in the discussions?
Reading	apply the following reading strategies with increasing independence – phonic strategies to decode words (Y1_ReadStrat.5i)	Encourage the children to sound out and blend unfamiliar words.
	look for clues in the text to understand information (Y1_ReadStrat.12)	Encourage the children to explain how Drusilla feels about Hagbag’s visit.
	use prediction in stories, adding more detail (Y1_ReadComp.5)	Pause at appropriate points and ask the children what might happen next.
	identify information related to the subject of a text (Y1_ReadComp.2)	Can the children describe the main events of the story?
Writing	talk about what they are going to write (Y1_WritMean.4)	Check that the children discuss and compare their rules for visiting Drusilla before writing.

NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Levels 1 and 2

	Levels of Progression	Book-related assessment pointers
Talking and listening	ask and answer questions to develop understanding (L2_com_talk.2ii)	Encourage the children to ask open questions about the events.
Reading	understand that words are made up of sounds and syllables and that sounds are represented by letters (L1_com_read.2i)	Encourage the children to sound out and blend unfamiliar words.
	express opinions and make predictions (L2_com_read.5ii)	Encourage the children to explain how Drusilla feels about Hagbag’s visit. Pause at appropriate points and ask the children what might happen next.
	understand, recount and sequence events and information (L2_com_read.1)	Can the children describe the main events of the story?
Writing	talk about what they are going to write (L1_com_writ.1)	Check that the children discuss and compare their rules for visiting Drusilla before writing.