



The Steam Train

Written by Paul Shipton and illustrated by Nick Schon, based on the original characters created by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta.

Teaching notes written by Catherine Baker.

Text type: fiction

Topic: transport through the ages

Synopsis

Dad is excited because an old steam train is about to visit a nearby station. He wants the children to come and look at it. But just before they set off, the magic key glows and takes the children back in time to see a steam train in action. There's nearly a disaster when a cart gets stuck halfway across the railway track. But Chip warns the stationmaster who manages to stop the next train from crashing into the cart. The children arrive back home just in time for Dad's trip.

There is a topic-linked non-fiction book to partner this title, which is called *Faster, Faster!*.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the story

- ➔ Look together at the front cover and read the title. Ask: *Have you ever seen a train like that? It's an old-fashioned steam train.* Share any experiences the children might have of seeing or riding in this kind of train.
- ➔ *(Predicting)* Ask: *What kind of adventure do you think Biff, Chip and Nadim might have involving a steam train?*
- ➔ *(Predicting)* Ask: *How do you think Biff, Chip and Nadim are feeling in the cover picture?*

Vocabulary check

- ➔ As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *t-r-ai-n*, *th-u-n-d-er*.
- ➔ This story includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending new words. There are also some high frequency tricky words used in the book. These words are common but may not conform to the phonic teaching that children will have learned at this point. Support the children with reading these words, explaining that they are tricky but common and useful. If necessary, simply read the word for them:

looked asked oh

- ➔ There are a number of story words used in this book. These include words that may be familiar but do not conform to the phonic teaching that children will have learned at this point, and subject-specific vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to children. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list and their definitions. Explain to the children that these words may be challenging but they are important for the topic. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the story.
countryside reins strange old-fashioned stationmaster

Reading the story

- ➔ Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Where necessary, encourage the children to re-read sentences to focus on meaning.
- ➔ *(Predicting)* After reading p5, ask: *What do you think is making the sound like thunder?* Read on to see if the children were right.
- ➔ On p6–7, ask: *Apart from the steam train, what other clues show that the children have gone back in time?* (Answer: the horse and cart; the man’s hat and clothes)
- ➔ *(Predicting)* After reading p13, say: *I wonder how the children will get to the station on time.* Encourage the children to make predictions.
- ➔ *(Questioning)* After reading p17, ask the children to think of some questions they would like to ask Chip. Prompt them by saying: *I wonder what it’s like to ride that old-fashioned bike; Chip must feel under a lot of pressure to get to the station quickly.*
- ➔ On p20, ask: *Why is the station master shaking Chip’s hand? Why was it so important for the children to get the message to the station so that the train would stop?*

Returning to the story

- ➔ Look again at p15 and ask the children to describe the old-fashioned bike. Ask: *What makes it different from bikes we ride now?*
- ➔ *(Clarifying)* Look again at p18–19, and check that the children understand what the stationmaster did to give the message about the blocked railway line to the train driver. Ask them to explain it in their own words.
- ➔ *(Summarizing)* Ask: *What do you think Chip would have said to the others when they arrived at the end of the story? What would he have told them about how the accident was prevented?*
- ➔ *(Summarizing)* Look together at the story map on p22. Invite each child in the group to take turns to retell one part of the story as concisely as possible, taking one of the story map pictures each. Can they retell their part of the story in just one sentence?

Independent reading

- ➔ Introduce the story as in the Introducing the story section above.
- ➔ Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- ➔ As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *c-ar-t-wh-ee-l-s, b-i-c-y-c-le.*

- ➔ This book also contains a number of story words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list and their definitions. If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- ➔ Remind the children to use the pictures to support them when reading the text.
- ➔ For suggestions of questions to ask the children after they have read the story to check comprehension, please refer to the Look Back, Explorers page in the book.

Speaking, listening and drama activities

- ➔ Ask the children to work in pairs to role-play the scene where Chip arrives at the station. One child should take on the role of Chip, and one should take on the role of the stationmaster. Ask: *What will Chip say to persuade the station master that there is an emergency?*
- ➔ Ask pairs to share their role plays with the rest of the group. Encourage the others to listen carefully and make constructive comments about things that they did well, as well as give suggestions for improving the scene.

Writing activities

- ➔ Ask the children to write a simple newspaper article about the incident on the railway track. You could support them by showing some examples of real newspaper articles, or making a simple writing frame with space for a headline, a 'photo' and a few sentences describing what happened.
- ➔ The children could work independently or in pairs to write their newspaper pages. Share the finished work as a whole class and draw the children's attention to any good examples of headlines, or effective summaries of the story.

Cross-curricular activity

History

- ➔ Encourage the children to find out more about what it was like to travel on a steam train, using books or child-friendly sites on the Internet, or interviewing older family members who might have experience of this.

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Curriculum links and assessment

Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale

- Can read phonically decodable two and three syllable words, e.g. photograph, collector. (ORCS Standard 2, 20)
- Can locate specific information on a given page in response to a question. (R) (ORCS Standard 2, 21)
- Can relate stories/texts to their own experiences, including story settings and incidents. (D) (ORCS Standard 2, 22)
- Can comment on obvious characteristics and actions of characters in stories. (ORCS Standard 2, 23)

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

	National Curriculum objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Spoken language	Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates (SpokLang.9)	During the role-play activity, check the children can speak in role as the character they are representing, and use their voice appropriately to convey the character's feelings.
Reading: Word reading	Read other words of more than one syllable that contain taught GPCs (Y1 ReadWord.6)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to read decodable words of more than one syllable from the story, e.g. 'cartwheel', 'thunder'.
Reading: Comprehension	Discussing the significance of the title and events (Y1 ReadComp.2iii)	Check the children understand why it is so important to stop the train from hitting the cart that is stuck on the railway line, and how the stationmaster signals to the train.
Writing: Composition	Sequencing sentences to form short narratives (Y1 WritComp.1iii)	Check the children can write a short sequence of sentences to sum up what happens in the story, when writing their newspaper report.

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

	Experiences and outcomes	Book-related assessment pointers
Listening and talking	I can communicate clearly when engaging with others within and beyond my place of learning, using selected resources as required (LIT 1-10a)	During the role-play activity, check the children can speak in role as the character they are representing, and use their voice appropriately to convey the character's feelings.
Reading	I can use my knowledge of sight vocabulary, phonics, context clues, punctuation and grammar to read with understanding and expression. (ENG 1-12a)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to read decodable words of more than one syllable from the story, e.g. 'cartwheel', 'thunder'.
	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)	Check the children understand why it is so important to stop the train from hitting the cart that is stuck on the railway line, and how the stationmaster signals to the train.
Writing	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 (LIT 2-26a)	Check the children can write a short sequence of sentences to sum up what happens in the story, when writing their newspaper report.

WALES Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework, Year 1

	Framework objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Oracy	Adopt a role using appropriate language (Y1_OracSpea.7)	During the role-play activity, check the children can speak in role as the character they are representing, and use their voice appropriately to convey the character's feelings.
Reading	apply the following reading strategies with increasing independence – phonic strategies to decode words (Y1_ReadStrat.5i)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to read decodable words of more than one syllable from the story, e.g. 'cartwheel', 'thunder'.
	Look for clues in the text to understand information (Y1_ReadStrat.12)	Check the children understand why it is so important to stop the train from hitting the cart that is stuck on the railway line, and how the stationmaster signals to the train.
Writing	Use a simple plan to support and organise writing, e.g. story boards, thinking maps (Y1_WritStru.4)	Check the children can use a simple writing frame to help them to organize and create their newspaper article.

NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum:

Primary Level 1/2

	Levels of progression	Book-related assessment pointers
Talking and listening	Use a general vocabulary to express thoughts, imaginings and opinions (L2_com_talk.3)	During the role-play activity, check the children can speak in role as the character they are representing, and use their voice appropriately to convey the character's feelings.
Reading	understand that words are made up of sounds and syllables and that sounds are represented by letters (L1_com_read.2i) use a range of reading strategies (L2_com_read.2)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to read decodable words of more than one syllable from the story, e.g. 'cartwheel', 'thunder'.
	Understand, recount and sequence events and information (L2_com_read.1)	Check the children understand why it is so important to stop the train from hitting the cart that is stuck on the railway line, and how the stationmaster signals to the train.
Writing	Write using a given form (L2_com_writ.3)	Check the children can use a simple writing frame to help them to organize and create their newspaper article.

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL Primary English Curriculum Framework: Level 1

	Learning objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
Speaking and listening	Engage in imaginative play, enacting simple characters or situations. (1SL9)	During the role-play activity, check the children can speak in role as the character they are representing, and use their voice appropriately to convey the character's feelings.
Reading	Use phonic knowledge to read decodable words and to attempt to sound out some elements of unfamiliar words. (1R06)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge to read decodable words of more than one syllable from the story, e.g. 'cartwheel', 'thunder'.
	Talk about events in a story and make simple inferences about characters and events to show understanding. (1Ri2)	Check the children understand why it is so important to stop the train from hitting the cart that is stuck on the railway line, and how the stationmaster signals to the train.
Writing	Write a sequence of sentences retelling a familiar story or recounting an experience. (1Wt1)	Check the children can write a short sequence of sentences to sum up what happens in the story, when writing their newspaper report.