

The Coming of the Unicorn

This resource was produced in partnership with Oxygen for The Story Exchange project (focusing on *how oral storytelling can support teachers to improve emotional literacy in the classroom?*). Funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

A story from Scotland

Recommended Key Stage: KS2

Synopsis: The King is very solemn, and no one can figure out why! Until the Queen goes to meet a few sorcerers in the woods, who decide to create a new, magical creature for the King to hunt to bring back his good spirits. What could go wrong?

Part 1: Share the Story

Share with the children some photos of Unicorn statues around Scotland. Explain that the Unicorn is a national animal of Scotland, which is why there are so many statues. This is a story from Scotland that tells us where the first Unicorn came from.

Watch the video **Stories from the Woodshed: The Coming of the Unicorn**

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

Questions

- How would you describe the King?
- How would you feel if you were a villager in that kingdom?
- What would you do if you were the Queen?
- How could you cheer up a King?
- What would be your first thought if you saw a unicorn?
- If the sorcerers were designing a creature to make you happy, what would it be like?

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities	
Drama/oracy Conscience Alley When the King first meets the Unicorn, he has an important decision to make – should he kill/banish the Unicorn or leave it alone? The children should get into two lines, leaving a walkway in the middle. One child should be chosen to play the King. The King will walk slowly down the walkway, stopping at each person to get some advice. One side will tell him why he should get rid of the Unicorn, while the other side will argue that he should let the Unicorn go. For example: One person might say: “The Unicorn could hurt somebody” while another might argue: “It hasn’t hurt anyone yet, if you leave it alone, it will leave you alone.” When the King reaches the end of the path, he should say how he feels and what he has decided to do.	Freeze Frames Children get into groups and choose a key moment from the story to freeze frame: • When the King is miserable and the Queen is trying to help. • When the sorcerers are creating the new creature. • When the unicorn is causing havoc in the kingdom. • When the King hears about the unicorn. • When the King finds the unicorn and decides not to kill it. Encourage children to think about what the characters are thinking and feeling in that moment. Each person should come up with a short sentence to describe their thoughts, and adults can then do some thought tapping by tapping each person on the head to find out what they’re thinking.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities	
Emotional Literacy Task If the mirror could talk – Children to get into groups of 5, with 4 people sitting in a square. These 4 children are acting as mirrors, with the 5th person acting as a character in the story. This could be the King, the Queen, a villager, maybe even the Unicorn. The character should step into the square and face one of the “mirrors”. When they do, the “mirror” will speak back to them and give them advice or tell them a hard truth. For example: the mirror might tell the King at the beginning of the story, ‘Cheer up, good things will come soon’, or they might tell the Queen that ‘you shouldn’t give up, you can help the King feel happy again.’ This will allow the children to empathise with the characters and consider how they can best support others.	Creative Challenge Design your own mythical creature for the King! Children can work independently or in groups to design a new mythical creature – just like in the story, children can choose animals they already know to build their creature. They should consider: • What animals have you used to influence your design? (e.g. the head of a lion, the body of a snake and the legs of a tarantula). • How would you describe your creature? • Is your creature kind or fearsome? • Large or small? • What will the King use it for? (A royal pet? A beast to hunt? A steed to ride into battle?) Children could dress up as their creature or create and act out a new story using their mythical creature.

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

The Selkie (Scotland)

The Birth of Taliesin (Wales)

The Wawel Dragon (Poland)

Wider Curriculum Links

Art and Design: produce creative work exploring the children's ideas

Oracy: use spoken language to develop understanding through imagining and exploring ideas

Reading: increase children's familiarity with myths and legends and retell those orally

The Story Exchange was a Paul Hamlyn funded project run in partnership between Oxygen and the Story Museum focusing on the inquiry question: *how can oral storytelling support teachers to improve emotional literacy in the classroom?* Storytellers from the Story Museum worked with class teachers in seven Oxfordshire schools to co-teach sessions which have been distilled into these resources to share with the wider community.



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