

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

A folktale from Germany

Recommended Key Stage: 1/2

Synopsis The town of Hamelin is overrun by rats. One day a stranger comes into town, who says he can solve the problem. All he wants in return is 100 florins.

He plays his pipe and the rats follow the sound, whereupon he leads them to a river to drown. The Mayor is delighted the rat problem has been dealt with but only pays the piper 50 florins.

Seeking his revenge, the Pied Piper plays another tune. This time the children of Hamelin follow after the Piper, who leads them away from the town, up into the mountains where they are never seen again.

Part 1: Share the Story

Use a map to find the town of Hamelin and the river Weser in Germany.

Watch **Stories from the Woodshed: The Pied Piper**

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

KS1 questions	KS2 questions
What might it be like to live in a place overrun by rats? How might you feel? What word could you use to describe the Piper? Was he a good person? Can you explain why you think he was a good person or a bad person? Why do you think the Mayor didn't want to pay the piper the agreed amount? Do you think the Mayor was a bad or good person?	Why do you think the Mayor didn't want to pay the piper he agreed amount? Do you think the Mayor was a bad person? What about the piper? Was he a good or bad person? This story deals with the theme of vengeance. Do you think the Mayor and the townspeople deserved the Pied Piper's revenge? Was the Pied Piper's revenge too heavy? What would you have done if you were the Pied Piper? Are there some situations in which revenge might be necessary or deserved? What could be a better response when some one upsets you? Why might some people choose forgiveness over revenge? Why might some people still choose revenge over forgiveness? This story is based on a true story. Which parts do you think are real and which parts may be made up or altered?

Part 3: Play the Story

KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities
Follow the Pied Piper A simple warm-up exercise. A volunteer, or the teacher, is the Pied Piper. The other students stand behind the Pied Piper as rats or children. The Pied Piper leads the students around the room, and can include actions, clapping, silly walks etc. Whatever the Pied Piper does, the students must copy.	Play the Pied Piper Pretend that you have a magical pipe like the Pied Piper. Make up your own piece of music (or use your favourite song) and create your very own rat dance. How would the rats move when dancing to the piper's tune? What expression would they have on their face? What sounds would you make?
Story Walk Students stand in their own space around the room. They have each become the Pied Piper in their own story worlds. Read out Resource A line by line. As you read, the students use the space to mime the story.	Court Case Imagine the Pied Piper has been found and will now go on trial. The class will prepare and improvise a courtcase. Allocate roles to individuals, or organise the class into groups representing one role, for the following: <i>Judge * Jury * Mayor * Pied Piper * Witness (a towns person/several towns people) * Defence lawyer * Prosecution lawyer * Clerk</i> Use Resource B as a suggested way to start to structure the courtcase and for ideas to adapt for your own class.
Hot Seat the Character The teacher or another adult takes the 'hot seat' and pretends to be the Pied Piper. Show the class how to 'become' the character through the use of posture and voice, or costumes and props if available. Encourage the students to ask questions linked to the story, focusing on the feelings and behaviours of the Pied Piper. For example: - Do you like rats? - When did you find out your pipe was magical and could charm the rats? - Why did you decide to take all the children away? Another student becomes a different character in the hotseat: the Mayor, a rat, a child who follows	Monologues Write a monologue for TV or radio interview or podcast as one of the characters from the town at the beginning of the story. Points could include: - Your name and your age - What your job is, and/or what your hobbies are - Your likes and dislikes - How your life has changed since Hamelin became overrun by rats. For example: <i>Hi everyone, I am a shopkeeper in Hamelin town. I am a greengrocer, but at the moment the whole town is completely over run by rats! All the fruit and veg in my shop has been nibbled by the annoying</i>

Learning Resources

the Pied Piper, or one who stays behind. The rest of the class ask questions, again focusing on feelings and behaviours. For example: - What was your life like before this happened? - How did you feel when...? - Why did you....?/ What made you.....? - If you could change the past, is there anything you would do differently? - What do you want to do tomorrow/in the future?	<i>little things. No one wants to buy nibbled food and I don't want to sell it but what option do I have? The town Mayor is a lazy person, as are all the councillors. I went to see them last week, with a load of other shopkeepers, to ask what they were going to do about the problem but they had no ideas what so ever. Argh! I'm so cross with this whole situation.</i> Practise, perform and share monologues.
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Part 4: Story Stimulus

Ratty Stories Create a Rat Character and mini story, using these points: - What is your name? - How old are you? - What is your favourite food/game/sport/hobby? - Your grandfather has warned you never to follow the sound of a pipe! - One day, you do hear the sound. What do you do? Do you run away – in which case, where do you go? Do you follow the sound to warn your friends? - What happens in the end?	Stories of Forgiveness and Revenge Return to the discussion topic of the nature of revenge versus forgiveness. In groups or independently, make up a story entitled The Great Rescue Mission. Use the following questions to structure the story: - Who from the town will lead the Rescue Mission? - How will the mission leaders enter the mountain? - How will they rescue the children? - Half way through the rescue, the Pied Piper appears. Do the townspeople choose to forgive the Pied Piper, or punish him? - How does the story end? Happily or tragically?
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Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

The Elephant and the Giraffe (Africa)

Rapunzel (Europe)

Sleeping Beauty (Europe)

The Birth of Taliesin (Wales)

Wider Curriculum Links

KS1 PSHE

- about rules and age restrictions that keep us safe
- to recognise risk in simple everyday situations and what action to take to minimise harm
- about the people whose job it is to help keep us safe
- how to respond safely to adults they don't know
- basic techniques for resisting pressure to do something they don't want to do and which may make them unsafe

KS2 PSHE

- reasons for following and complying with regulations and restrictions; how they promote personal safety and wellbeing
- how to predict, assess and manage risk in different situations
- strategies for keeping safe in the local environment or unfamiliar places
- how to respond safely and appropriately to adults they may encounter (in all contexts including online) whom they do not know
- how to recognise pressure from others to do something unsafe or that makes them feel uncomfortable and strategies for managing this
- where to get advice and report concerns if worried about their own or someone else's personal safety (including online)

Learning Resources

Resource A Story Walk Prompts

You are asleep on the ground. Wake up! It's a beautiful new day.

- Ugh! What's that? A rat just ran over your foot!
- Aha! You have had an idea.
- You put on your beautiful long cape. Now take your beautiful hat and comb the feather. And put the hat on.
- Put on your long beautiful boots.
- Now, most importantly, take your pipe and give it a polish. Blow the pipe to check it's in tune.
- Perfect! You are ready!
- Start walking to the town square. It's a beautiful day. Nod and smile to the passers-by.
- Now you have reached the town square. Make a deal with the Mayor and shake on it. He is going to give you 100 florins! Yes! Show how happy you are!
- Now, stand in the town square and start to play your pipe. Yes – they are coming – all the rats. Ha ha! Give an evil laugh!
- Now's the time to start leading them away. Start walking away from the town square, over the hills. Keep playing your pipe. The rats are following you!
- You are approaching the river. Get ready and wade - carefully – in the thick muddy river – one step – two step – keep playing your pipe.
- You have reached the other side. Now have a look. The rats have followed you into the river – and have drowned! • Hurray! Give yourself a pat on the back.
- Now go back to the town.
- Huh?! What's this?! The Mayor is only giving you 50 florins! He won't argue about it! Jump up and down with rage! • Now stop. You have had an idea! Give an evil laugh.
- Go to the town square and start to play your pipe again.
- Yes! The children have appeared in the town square, listening to your tune! Now- start walking away from the square again. Over the hills and through the valleys. Over – and down. Over – and down.
- Aha! You have reached the mountain. Now click your fingers.
- The door has appeared! The magic door! Trace the outline of the door to show how big and grand it is.
- Now – take a key from your pocket. Open the door.
- Beckon the children to come inside.
- Give an evil laugh

Learning Resources

Resource B: Courtcase

Use this resource as a stimulus or inspiration for a role play or improvisation for your class.

The Jury sit in a row along the middle. The Judge sits in the centre with the Clerk. To the right is the Pied Piper and the Defence Lawyer. To the left is the Mayor, the Prosecution Lawyer and the Witnesses. The Witnesses could include the three children who did not follow the Pied Piper and members of the town.

- Judge:** Good morning, Court. We are gathered here today on the _____ day of the _____ month of the _____ year to hear the charges brought before Mr Pied Piper. Mr Pied Piper is charged with the disappearance of the town's children.
- Prosecution Lawyer:** Your honour, the defendant Mr Pied Piper refuses to bring back the children, even though he promised in the first place only to get rid of rats. He had NO RIGHT to take the children from the townspeople.
- Clerk:** Call the first witness, Mr Mayor. Mr Mayor, do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?
- Mayor:** I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.
- Prosecution Lawyer:** Mr Mayor, please give your evidence to the court.
- Mayor:** We had a terrible time in Hamelin with rats. Mr Pied Piper kindly agreed to get rid of them on payment of 50 florins. When he did so, and was paid, he suddenly became angry for NO REASON! He then led the children away from the town and they were never seen again! We do not deserve this treatment!
- Defence Lawyer:** Objection!
- Judge:** Sustained.
- Defence Lawyer:** Mr Mayor is lying!
- Judge:** Let the cross-examination begin.
- Defence Lawyer:** Mr Mayor, are you an honest man?
- Mayor:** Yes.
- Defence Lawyer:** So why did you just LIE to the court?! You promised the Pied Piper 100 florins!
- Mayor:** I DID NOT LIE!
- Defence Lawyer:** DOUBLE LIE!
- Pied Piper:** Yeah, TRIPLE LIE!
- Judge:** Thank you Mr Mayor. You may step down. We now wish to hear from the defence.

Learning Resources

Clerk: Mr Pied Piper, please give your evidence to the court.

Pied Piper: The students may now improvise the rest of the scene, or write a script, following this structure:

- The Pied Piper gives his side of the story.
- The Judge calls on the second witness, who could be a member of the town or one of the children who disappeared
- The second witness swears to tell the truth and gives their side of the story.
- The Prosecution Lawyer and Defence Lawyer ask their questions.
- The Judge may call on other witnesses.
- The Jury make their decision and announce the verdict and sentence.