



SKY HAWK- Exploring this text with Year 6.

When Callum's friends find a ragged girl, Iona, trespassing on Callum's farm, they chase her away – and Iona runs high into the hills. It is late and dark, and snow lies in the mountain gullies. Worried for Iona's safety, Callum follows to find her. But Iona is guarding a secret. A rare and precious osprey is hidden in the high forest above the dark waters of the loch. And when Iona and Callum make a pact to protect the bird, it is a promise that will change Callum's world forever... Soar far above the clouds in this enthralling tale of friendship, loyalty and hope, as you follow the majestic sky hawk from Scottish lochs and glens all the way to the African jungles.

This is an exciting wildlife adventure that tells a very human story of friendship and discovery. It explores themes like trust, loyalty and loss. Teachers can involve children in discussion, debate and drama about the issues and characters in this story. There are a whole host of writing outcomes and links across the curriculum to work on mountain environments, mountain biking, Scottish wildlife, the RSPB, The Gambia and the Bansang Hospital Appeal.

Learning Aims:

- To engage the children with a powerful text that they will enjoy.
- To respond critically to the text through discussion and role play
- To discuss issues arising from the story developing ideas through talk.
- To write in a variety of forms and at length.

Key Teaching Approaches:

- **Book talk**
- **Sequencing**
- **Word collections**
- **Visualising**
- **Text-marking**
- **Drama and role-play**
- **Storytelling**
- **Shared writing**
- **Writing in role**

Introducing the text:

- **What's the Story?** Provide a selection of artefacts from the novel. Can the children predict what the story might be about giving reasons for their thoughts. Record on post-its and place on working wall. As the children become familiar with the story, they can re-visit their predictions and add further comment or dispose of those that no longer apply. (PowerPoint slide 2)
- **Investigate the front cover-** what further ideas does the front cover provide? Does the blurb confirm or refute these suggestions? (PowerPoint slide 3)
- Use **book talk** to introduce the first chapter. Start with the first sentence only. What are their initial thoughts? Where might the story be set? Any thoughts about possible plot? Then add the next sentence. Have any of their thoughts changed? (PowerPoint slides 4-7)
- Use the set of sequencing cards and ask the children to order the initial dialogue from the first part of chapter 1. Can they add the narrative that comes in between? What have we learnt so far about the main characters? (Resources 1 and 2)
- **Constructing images** – draw the river as you visualise it from what we know so far.
- **Text marking** – Using Chapter one, ask the children to highlight everything that gives them information about the character of Rob from “I know her” said Rob...until the end of the chapter. This could be repeated with other characters if wished. Simple outlines could be drawn. Information gleaned from the highlighted sections could be

jotted inside the outlines and this information can be stored on the working wall for future reference. ([Resource 3](#))

- **Drama and role-play-** Hand out extracts from chapter one. In groups children can create a freeze frame for their extract from the story and a digital photo can be taken of each one. Display the photos on the whiteboard and use to form a simple story board. Tell the story of the chapter using the photographs as the stimulus. Print off the photos as a hand-out and add captions/ speech and thought bubbles as appropriate. ([Resources 4-13](#), [PowerPoint slide 8](#))
- By now the children should have a good working knowledge of the first chapter of the book and the characters that will play a significant part in the story. Ask them to summarise the key events in one or two sentences. Can they predict what they think Iona's secret may be and what they think will happen next. ([PowerPoint slide 9](#))
- **Other writing opportunities from Chapter 1:**
 - Rewrite the chapter from the point of view of Iona.
 - Create a page you would find in Iona's tatty notebook.

Ways into writing descriptions: ([PowerPoint slide 10-12](#))

Bird descriptions- Descriptions of living things need to be based on fact. Children need opportunities to do research and to acquire knowledge needed about things that are being described.

- Conduct a sorting activity- matching birds to sounds and movements to increase knowledge. ([Resources 14-17](#))
- Use a variety of fact files (e.g. on different birds of prey) and use them for categorising, and to support a host of speaking and listening activities. These activities will consolidate the children's understanding of the subject matter. ([Resource 18](#))
- Use good text models to support structuring of descriptions. (E.g. *Walk with a Wolf* by Janni Howker) Using one example from this text, teachers can demonstrate descriptive writing (e.g. *the first section, 'Walk with a wolf...' could be used as a model to write a section beginning. 'Soar with an osprey'...*). The children can then have a go themselves using a different example from the text to describe a different aspect of the bird. ([Resource 19](#), [PowerPoint slide 13](#))
- Remember the importance of the **visual**- use clips from YouTube or post-it pictures to build up repertoires of descriptive sentences and paragraphs. ([Resource 20](#))

Further writing opportunities:

There is a myriad of opportunities for writing in this novel covering narrative, poetry and non-fiction. See the mind map for some examples. There are also spin-offs in terms of topic based studies (e.g. mountain biking; fishing; The Gambia) As each writing task is introduced remember to support children in understanding the text type and form, provide good models for the children to use as a basis for their own writing and include activities where the children can “talk the text” before they write it!

ENJOY!