Unit One

Beowulf

Y6



Developing the writing skills of

advanced EAL learners

Stanburn Primary School, Harrow

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Resources Overview

**Literacy objective:** to write an epic poem – narrative (3 weeks)

**Success criteria:**

* powerful vocabulary (including old English words which relate to Viking theme)
* using figurative language to add detail in some paragraphs (including ‘pairs’, and kennings which feature in original epic poem)
* writing in an effective style that fits the purpose and audience
* to vary sentences to assist reader, including complex sentences, subordinate and embedded clauses
* to increase vocabulary related to theme/text

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| RESOURCES Folders | PUPIL ACTIVITIES | TEACHER NOTES |
| **1. Wallpapering activity** | Each pupil will be given two post it notes.  They then need to write something they already know about the Vikings and/or Epic poems on the post-it notes. The pupils ideas are then displayed around the class and shared.  Discuss in groups:  *What do you already know about the Vikings and epic poems? What new things have you learned? Are all the sentences true?*  *Finally feedback as a class using the speaking frame.* | This activity is to find out what the children already know about the Vikings before introducing the book ‘Beowulf’ by Michael Morpurgo and the term ‘Epic poem’.  Put up 4 large pieces of card or sugar paper around the classroom (each on a different wall – two labeled Vikings and two labeled An Epic Poem.  Activity will help identify pupils with prior knowledge and vocabulary and those pupils who may need extra support. |
| **2. Epic poem** | Introduction power point about the original Beowulf Epic Poem.  <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y13cES7MMd8&feature=related>    Explain that we are going to start by looking at an easier version of the story.  Split up Part 1 of the epic poem into 2 or 3 verse chunks (there are 15 verses) and share between groups. Ask each group to discuss their verses and decide what part of the story it is, what is happening.... Groups to highlight any ambitious or new vocabulary in their verses and look up their meaning if necessary. (NB. they could also illustrate that part of the poem by drawing an image to accompany it).  Then practise reading with expression (group to decide are they all reading together or splitting it up in a different way, but all group members must take part in some way). Once the class have had time to practise their section, each group takes turns to perform to the class. | Once the poem has been shared ask the class questions about the features included in the text.  Brainstorm around the words Beowulf Epic Poem, for example rhyming verses, split into a new verse every 4 lines, ambitious vocabulary, descriptive words, punctuation used……….  See if the class are able to work out order of the parts themselves as they begin to hear each other’s verses (Who has the beginning, which group has the next part? How do you know?...)  When the children perform the verses encourage use of expression where needed.  Different groups could illustrate some verses and then display verse and picture as a class display. |
| **3. Vocabulary activity – Tarsia puzzle** | Power point – Beowulf vocabulary looking at some old English terms.  Introduce the class to the Michael Morpurgo version of Beowulf. Explain that it is based on the original Epic poem – Beowulf. Read the introduction p13 – 21 (as a class or groups reading together). Explain that many of the words are unfamiliar to us because they are old English words, which we need to be familiar with to help us understand this text and use in our own writing. So we are going to complete a puzzle of some of the key words – Tarsia puzzle, matching a word to a definition.  In a group sort some of the words from the epic poem to their definition to complete a key vocabulary puzzle (including some Old English words).  Build a class version of a Beowulf glossary. | Take feedback on words/ phrases pupils don’t know. Ask the class if anyone can help. If no-one knows explain or direct the children to sources where they can find out themselves.  Pages 1 and 2 of the Tarsia need to be cut into triangles then put back together to make one large triangle.  The solution is on the word document – do not give this to the children at the start of the activity.  NB. You will only be able to open the original tarsia puzzle if the program is downloaded onto your computer (it is a free download – search Formulator Tarsia Puzzle, if you wish to download it). |
| **4. Boxing up features** | Main: Ask children to discuss in their talk partners what features might you find in the opening of a story- Feedback and list on the board.  Explain to children that as a class we are going to look at the opening to ‘Beowulf’’again. Give the children the opening pages (books or photocopies of the text) ‘Beowulf’ (up to the end of pg 9- picture book and p13-17 paperback version). Can also highlight different features on text in different colours.  Ask children what language features they noted down on their charts.  Discuss main features as a class. | Boxing up is an activity that enables the pupils to focus on the component parts of a text to help them understand how it is constructed.  Continue to read Beowulf book as class reader each day (discuss new vocabulary as it arises and add to word bank/glossary on wall, also highlight use of literary devices used for effect). |
| **5. Mead Hall – describing a setting** | Display pictures of the main mead hall/ and play some Anglo-Saxon music [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiwuQ6UHMQg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jiwuQ6UHMQg%20) - on the whiteboard and ask children in pairs to write as many adjectives, adjectival phrases, figurative language as they can to describe it.  Explain that is important in a story for the author to create a sense of place so the reader can imagine what it looks like.  Teacher to model a description of the mead hall- using adjectival phrases, figurative language etc… and talk through process of word choices, punctuation…..etc.  Then pupils to write own descriptions about the mead hall. | When modeling writing - it is important that teachers write the text they expect the pupils to write for themselves first. This helps to identify the potential difficulties for pupils and clarifies the natural elements of the text type. It also provides a useful resource that can be used to model different aspects of the text. Eg How to write a descriptive setting.  Teacher to write a modeled opening (describing the setting) and talk through your decisions as a writer. Tell them you are stuck. Ask pupils to help you continue to describe the setting. |
| **6. Beowulf and Grendel -describing characters** | Explain to children that in this lesson we are going to explore the main characters in Beowulf - The hero and the monster.  Display pictures of Grendel on the board. Teacher reads the Introduction of Grendel (pg 10- 13 picture book version p17-21 paperback) , as teacher reads children make notes on white boards about Grendal’s character.  Then as groups on a large piece of sugar paper make notes around a picture of Grendal about his characters appearance and personality.  Then look at example description of Grendel – is there more the children could add? What do they notice about the style it is written in?  Continue reading to (page 20 picture book and p 30 paperback- Introduction of Beowulf- again children make notes and feedback at the end (2 min pairs brainstorm on small whiteboards).  As a class discuss what we know about Beowulf.  Hot seating activity – adult or child to be Beowulf, children in class to ask questions to find out more about his character.  Feedback using the speaking frame.  Complete a character profile of Beowulf or write a passage to describe Beowulf in the style of an Epic poem. | Is important that teacher models both the speaking frame and hot seat activity first so the children know the kind of language expectations to use (use different features of language such as old English words, similes, metaphors….)  This will then help to support moving the children into writing this way. |
| **7.Dictagloss activity** | Class watch a film clip from Beowulf three times.  <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4mewuHpzrg>  The first time they hear it, they just listen.  The second time they hear they write notes focusing on verbs and adverbs used.  The third time they hear it, they focus on adjectives and descriptive phrases included in the clip.  Then they partner up and compare your notes – add anything they have missed.  Then give 20 mins to re create the text as close to the original as they can.  Feedback using the speaking frame. LAP can also use this as a writing frame. | Hugging the text!!  Play the video clip until you reach 2 mins and 35 seconds.  Purpose of this activity is to get pupils to imitate a style as closely as they can without having to think of their own content. It helps to internalize features, vocabulary and style of text or film clip |
| **8.Boast** | Explain to pupils that prior to Beowulf going to battle with Grendel he was very boastful about his talents.  Display Beowulf boasts- Ask children to discuss in pairs what he was boasting about?-  Pairs read Beowulf’s boast –p32-33 in paperback version.  Explain that in Anglo-Saxon times being boastful was a good thing. It was seen as important that people knew what you were good at. Would the Danes believe that Beowulf could defeat Grendel if he hadn’t of spoken about what he had done before?  Explain to children that today they are going to write boasts in the style of an Epic poem for Grendel or King Hrothgar. Discuss the kinds of things they would be proud of. | Explain that all of us have things that we are really good at, but in today’s world we are encourage not to be boastful. Ask children to discuss why they think this is? |
| **9. Embedded and subordinate clauses** | Grammar activity that looks at how clauses can add extra description into a sentence. | Linked to text so taught in context of this story. |
| **10.Kennnings** | Look at Kennings PowerPoint. Children work with a partner to try and guess what the Kenning is about.  Children to write own Viking Kenning about a dragon (lap), sword, shield or Beowulf. Write finished Kennings as best and final copies on the Kenning templates to create a display. | Make sure that the pupils are clear about exactly constitutes a Kenning. Needs to be a short phrase, usually 2 words (but not a long description) that describes the substituted word without using a noun. |
| **11.Levelling up sentences** | Show class a boring sentence, pairs work to leveled up on white boards in order to improve content of sentence. Take feedback and verbalise improvements the children have made (e.g.I like the way you have used Old English words, dropped in a clause, added ambitious vocabulary, figurative language….. | Activity to support children as a reminder of types of sentences needed within an Epic poem.  Also a chance to verbalise ideas using the 6 sentence story speaking frames. |
| **12. Alternative endings** | To compare and contrast the ending in the film and book. Compare and contrast on a Venn Diagram.  Feedback using a speaking frame.  Pairs to plan and shared write own endings , then check features against writing ladder.  Book – p 125 to 135  Film clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWmwAdK48vg> | Use of a graphic organizer to record how the endings are similar/different in a visual way.  Ask some pairs to read out their endings. Discuss features of an Epic poem that they have used well. Make a suggestions for what could be improved. |
| **13. Plan and write own epic poem (assessed writing)** | Independent Write: Children write their own epic poem (Assessed writing)  Look at success criteria as a class. (allow more than 1 day)  Give pupils time to plan and then write their own Epic poem (may focus on changing one or two things from original story or look to plan entirely new ideas for an epic poem.  L.A: Word mats. | Is really important that the children have time to edit and improve their own work. They could read to a peer and see if there are any features missing or parts that do not make sense. (2 stars and a wish). Edit in another colour so teacher can see what has been altered. |
| **14. Perform and evaluate epic poems** | Give pupils the opportunity to read their epic poems to each other.  Starter: Remind children that Play versions of Beowulf being performed. Play examples on the IWB. Ask children what they notice about the performances?  As a class come up with a success criteria for performance. Set the scene by using props (fireplace on IWB, fur throw over a chair, cape and Viking helmet ….)  <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IR464WBmA2s> – Look at example of Reading/performing Beowulf to make story more dramatic.  <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eyU3bRy2x44> Background fireplace |  |
| **15. Extra resources** | Beowulf Fact sheet  Background and ideas PowerPoint  Epic poem resources  <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sll/disciplines/english/beowulf/contents.htm> |  |