

Description: A collection of ideas, which allows children to develop their extended writing skills using the Naughty Workhouse Lad song as a starting point. The activities could then be adapted and used with a range of other songs providing the starting point.

National Curriculum links:

History - **QCA Unit 11:** What was it like for children living in Victorian Britain?

Key Stage(s):

This activity was intended for use as a writing stimulus for Key stage 2. However, the differentiation for this activity is mainly by outcome. It can be accessed by all age groups and may also be suitable as an activity for Key stage 3.

Suggested Activities

1. Word Level – Investigating the meanings of Geordie words.
2. Planning a story based on the workhouse lad and writing the story as a storyboard
3. Newspaper Reports
4. Research Task

What the pupils will do:

1. Word Level Activity

Provide the children with copies of the song and a highlighter pen. Ask the children to highlight any words, which, belong to the Geordie dialect. Encourage them to think about the meaning of the words. Are they words that they are familiar with? Can they write a definition of the words for people who do not come from the North East? If they don't recognise the words they could be asked to use a Geordie dictionary to look them up. A dictionary is available online at: <http://www.geordiepride.demon.co.uk/dictionary.htm> They could then explore ways of presenting their definitions either as a glossary or by making their own Geordie dictionary.

2. Story Writing

Provide the children with copies of the workhouse lad song. Encourage them to think of the song as another way of telling the story. You may also want them to listen to the song or have a go at singing it themselves.

Encourage the children to think about who the characters in the song are. What do we know about these characters? What do they do? What are the consequences of their actions? They will also need to think about what happens at the beginning of the story, in the middle and how the story ends/concludes. The different verses in the song provide a good indication of how to write in paragraphs and this may be something that you wish to emphasise with older children.

The children can then be given a copy of the storyboard for the workhouse lad. This version has the opening paragraph for the story already written. However if you prefer a blank storyboard template has also been provided. They could then draw the pictures into each space to help with the planning process and to help them decide

what they are going to write in each paragraph. The children can then write the story into the writing spaces.

Older or more able children could use the storyboard template as a planning sheet to plan the pages of a book and then write an extended story. There is also a template for making a 3D book, which children could use to display their story, however the writing space available is limited.

3. Newspaper Reports

This activity assumes that the children are familiar with the style of a newspaper report and have done some previous work reading and writing examples of this genre.

The events in the Workhouse Lad could also be used as the basis for writing a newspaper report. They could be asked to think about the song and talk about what the headline might be. They could also think about who may have witnessed the events so that they can include quotes etc as part of their report. They can then plan and write their newspaper report based on events in the workhouse lad song. A template for the workhouse lad report has been provided which includes a headline but a blank template is also available if the children have headlines of their own.

4. Research Task

The children could be asked to use the Workhouse Lad song as a starting point for finding out about life in a Victorian Workhouse and how this would have affected children's lives. They could be encouraged to identify any clues, which the song gives about workhouse life. They could then write a list of questions, which they could use to find out more about workhouse life and plan ways to find the answers using a variety reference books or the internet. One useful website for finding out about this is www.workhouses.org.uk The children could then present their findings in different ways such as a verbal presentation, a written report or by using the 3D template to create their own workhouse and using the spaces at each side to present their findings.

Learning Objectives:

- To understand that ways of life differed greatly across Victorian society
- To write a narrative using historical detail
- To compare modern and Victorian schooling
- To communicate through drama their understanding of the nature of school life in Victorian times



Resources:

- The Workhouse Lad Storyboard
- The Workhouse Lad newspaper report sheet
- Storyboards
- The Workhouse lad in PowerPoint
- The Workhouse Lad song sheet.
- The Naughty Workhouse Lad –song, on
- Workhouse art sheet for making a 3D book – this needs to be photocopied and enlarged to A3.
- www.workhouses.org.uk

<http://www.geordiepride.demon.co.uk/dictionary.htm>

Learning Outcomes:

Improved story structure

Improved understanding of a child's life in a Victorian Workhouse.

Extension Activities:

Use the process and ideas for writing based on the workhouse lad and explore story writing, book making, report writing and research tasks based on other songs. Song sheets and PowerPoint presentations have been provided for:

- The Backworth Ghost
- The Destruction of Seaton Hall*
- A Ride on the Swing Bridge*
- The Lost Children
- A Tragedy of the Fells

Alternatively you could search the FARNE archive and choose songs that you think will appeal to your class or link to a current topic. You could also use other songs, which the children enjoy and/or familiar with as a basis for writing. Blank templates for the storyboard and the newspaper article have also been provided

** Templates for making a 3D book are also provided for these songs.*