

Gertrude Ederle

Question Book:

Year 5, pages 2-3

Author / Source:

Louise McEvoy

Genre:

Non-fiction — article

Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (gender equality)
- PE (water safety; circuit training)

Introduction

Gertrude Ederle is best known for being the first woman to swim the English Channel. Her achievement was greatly celebrated, and she became an American superstar. Ederle went on to play herself in a Hollywood movie and gave swimming demonstrations across the USA. This article documents Ederle's 1926 Channel swim and describes how it changed the way people viewed women's sport. Before pupils read the article, discuss what they think attitudes towards women were like in the 1920s. How were they different to attitudes today?

Answers

1. E.g. Because the article is about swimming in the sea, so "waved away" is a play on words. It means 'dismisses', but it could also be talking about the waves on the sea.
2. E.g. "Steely" makes the sea sound uninviting. It suggests that the sea is grey and makes it sound cold.
3. E.g. Because it's a quote from Gertrude, so it's an important part of the text. It also introduces the next section of the article.
4. E.g. achievement; accomplishment; act
5. E.g. It made people think women could be just as good at sport as men because it proved that a woman could break a sporting record set by a man.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. She was brave because she carried on swimming even though she was advised to stop. She was also determined because she swam the Channel, even though some women had failed before she made her attempt.



Extra Activities

- Explain that New York City held a celebratory parade for Gertrude when she returned home. Ask pupils to write a diary entry from Gertrude's perspective the day after the parade. Encourage pupils to imagine Gertrude's experiences during the parade and her feelings about her achievement.
- Ask pupils to imagine that the school wants to organise a visit from a famous sportsperson. Get pupils to think of a sportsman or sportswoman they would like to invite, then research their main achievements. Pupils should use their findings to write a short speech persuading the school to consider their choice. They should explain why their sportsperson is a good role model and how they inspire others.
- Give pupils two minutes to list as many sportspeople as they can, then ask them to count the number of men and women on their lists. Are they surprised by the results? As a class, discuss why sportsmen are generally more famous than sportswomen. Do pupils think this will ever change?
- Ask pupils to research safety tips for swimming in the sea, then get them to create a leaflet about water safety. Pupils should include useful 'dos' and 'don'ts', and advice on what to do if you get into difficulty.
- Explain that circuit training is a good way to build fitness for sports like swimming. Get pupils to write simple instructions for activities you could use in circuit training (e.g. sit-ups, star jumps). Use ten of the activities for a PE lesson. Pupils should do each activity for one minute, with 30 seconds' rest in between.

The Unluckiest Boy in the World

Question Book:

Year 5, pages 4-5

Author / Source:

Andrew Norriss

Genre:

Fiction — novel extract

Cross-curricular links:

- PSHE (loneliness)
- Art (cartoon strip)

Introduction

Andrew Norriss worked as a history teacher before becoming a full-time writer when he was in his mid-thirties. He has written several popular novels for young people, as well as a number of successful children's television series, including *Woof!* and *Bernard's Watch*. He is known for his light-hearted, comical writing style. After reading the introduction, ask pupils to share what they know about curses with the rest of the class. Ask if they have heard of any rumoured curses in real life, e.g. the curse of Tutankhamun.

Answers

1. E.g. The curse caused lots of strange accidents, like a mountain-lion getting into the school.
2. E.g. in general; normally; most of the time
3. third
4. E.g. evil; malicious; hostile
5. Any appropriate answer. E.g. Yes, because they've surrounded Nicholas with calm people, which reduces the strength of the curse. They've also made the Safe Room, which hides Nicholas from the curse. OR E.g. No, because the curse is supernatural, so I don't think it can be stopped by such simple changes. I think it will find a way to overcome the changes and keep on affecting Nicholas and those around him.
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. He might feel angry and upset that the curse causes people to get hurt. He might also feel guilty that he's partly responsible for the bad things that happen.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. No, although the curse makes it difficult for him to lead a totally normal life, Nicholas can still go to school and he is surrounded by people who care about him. Some people face much worse situations than Nicholas. OR E.g. Yes, lots of bad things happen when he's around, like the "mountain-lion incident" and the "incident with a tarantula", so I think he is really unlucky.

Extra Activities

- Ask pupils to write a review of the extract, explaining what they did and didn't like about it.
- Make sure pupils understand the concept of comparatives and superlatives, then ask them to identify the superlative in the extract's title and some comparatives in the first three paragraphs of the extract (e.g. "better", "noisier", "more excitable"). Get pupils to write down ten more adjectives and form their comparatives and superlatives.
- Get pupils to come up with their own imaginary curse and ask them to write a short story about it.
- In *The Unluckiest Boy in the World*, the curse makes it difficult for Nicholas to make friends. In small groups, get pupils to discuss the issues of loneliness and isolation. Can they think of a time when they felt lonely? How does it feel to be alone? How can they prevent other pupils from feeling isolated or lonely?
- Ask pupils to imagine what they think happened during the "mountain-lion incident" mentioned in line 7 of the extract. Get them to draw a cartoon strip to tell the story.

Baby Birds

Question Book:

Year 5, pages 6-7

Author / Source:

www.rspb.org.uk

Genre:

Non-fiction — information text

Cross-curricular links:

- Science (garden birds)
- Maths (statistics)

Introduction

The RSPB was founded in 1889 to campaign against the killing of birds in order to use their plumages in clothing. Since then, it has grown into the UK's largest nature conservation charity, with over a million members and 200 nature reserves. The charity aims to protect the natural world, and it runs conservation projects in Britain and around the world. Before pupils read the text, get them to write down five adjectives that they would use to describe baby birds.

Answers

1. E.g. They aren't just cute — they're also quite tough.
2. d. alliteration
3. E.g. Because they don't have any feathers, so it's hard for them to keep warm. Also, they can't see, so they rely on their parents to do everything for them.
4. E.g. dangerous; risky; perilous
5. E.g. Because they're subheadings, so they need to stand out from the rest of the text.
6. E.g. Not getting enough to eat or being caught by a predator.
7. E.g. To separate the points about what to do if you find a baby bird and to make them stand out, so it's easier for the reader to remember them.
8. Any appropriate answer. E.g. To help protect birds by informing people about what they should do if they find a baby bird in their garden.



Extra Activities

- As a class, discuss the words that pupils wrote down before reading the article. Has the article changed their view of baby birds at all? Would they use any different words to describe baby birds now?
- Show pupils photos of some birds (e.g. a duckling, a sparrowhawk) and ask them to suggest alliterative phrases to describe them. Pupils could use their phrases to write a poem describing one of the birds.
- Get pupils to write and illustrate a story about a baby bird. They should use the information in the extract and their own imaginations to describe the bird's experiences as it hatches and develops.
- Assign pupils common garden birds (e.g. robins, sparrows, blue tits). Pupils should research their bird and design an informative poster that describes its appearance, calls, behaviour and habitat.
- Ask pupils to keep a tally of the different birds they see outside their home or in the school grounds. To help them identify the birds, pupils could use the posters from the previous activity or the Internet. Using a computer, pupils should then create a pictogram to display their results. As a class, collate all the pupils' results. How many different types of bird were seen? Which bird was most common?
- Split the class into groups and get them to research the RSPB, e.g. its history, its aims, and some of the work that the charity does. Then, as a class, discuss what pupils found out.

Johnny and the Dead

Question Book:

Year 5, pages 8-9

Author / Source:

Terry Pratchett
Stephen Briggs

Genre:

Fiction — playscript

Cross-curricular links:

- Drama (script-writing; performance)
- D&T (3D models)

Introduction

Terry Pratchett was a hugely popular fantasy novelist who was the UK's bestselling author of the 1990s. Pratchett's novel *Johnny and the Dead* was first published in 1993. In the novel, Johnny sees and talks to dead people in the cemetery near his home. When the local council plans to build on the graveyard, Johnny and the residents of the cemetery put together a plan to stop them. The story was turned into a play by Stephen Briggs in 1996. Before reading the extract with the class, ask pupils whether they have ever seen a stage or film adaptation of a book.

Answers

1. E.g. Because they tell you where the scene takes place and what it looks like.
2. E.g. To make it easy for actors to spot their lines when they act out the script.
3. E.g. To suggest that Wobbler's stammering because he's afraid.
4. E.g. Pretending to be a zombie.
5. E.g. He is scared by Johnny's behaviour, so he makes an excuse to leave. The stage directions say that he starts to run, which shows that he wants to get away from Johnny as quickly as he can.
6. E.g. Because Johnny is acting as a narrator as well as a character. This means Johnny can explain directly to the audience what is happening and how he is feeling.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. *The Bed and Breakfast Star* by Jacqueline Wilson because I really like the main character, Elsa, so I'd enjoy seeing her brought to life in a play. Also, I think the hotel room in the book would work well as a stage set.



Extra Activities

- Get pupils to write a diary entry from Johnny's perspective about the events of the script.
- Ask pupils to imagine they are standing in front of a door that has something frightening behind it. What would be behind the door? How would they feel? Would they knock on the door? Get them to write a short monologue describing their thoughts and feelings as they stand in front of the door.
- As a class, discuss whether pupils prefer to read books or watch their film adaptations. Ask them to justify their opinions.
- Ask pupils to choose a short extract from a novel they like and rewrite it in the form of a playscript. Make sure pupils use an appropriate layout and include clear stage directions in their scripts.
- Choose the most suitable playscripts and ask pupils to perform them. Encourage pupils to think about how they can convey their characters' emotions through their tone of voice, gestures and body language.
- Get pupils to design a set for the scene from *Johnny and the Dead*, or for the script they wrote for the fourth activity. They could sketch their design first, and then make a 3D model inside a shoebox.

Goodnight Mister Tom

Question Book:

Year 5, pages 10-11

Author / Source:

Michelle Magorian

Genre:

Fiction — novel extract

Cross-curricular links:

- Drama (role play)
- History (propaganda; WW2 rationing)
- Science (nutrition)

Introduction

Published in 1981, *Goodnight Mister Tom* was Michelle Magorian's first novel. It has proven so popular with audiences that it has been adapted for both stage and screen. The story begins just before the outbreak of the Second World War, when the protagonist, Willie, is evacuated from his abusive home in London and sent to live with an elderly widower called Mister Tom. Although Tom seems bad-tempered and unwelcoming at first, the pair form a close bond. Before pupils read the text, make sure they understand the concept of evacuation.

Answers

1. E.g. To help the reader imagine how Tom's accent sounds.
2. E.g. She feels uncomfortable. She gives Tom "an awkward smile" and blushes when she's talking to him.
3. E.g. confused; puzzled; perplexed
4. E.g. It makes the reader feel sorry for the girl. She is "tiny" and holds on to a "teddy-bear" which makes her sound very young and vulnerable.
5. Yes — he says that it's "obligatory".
6. Any appropriate answer. E.g. To make the story seem more realistic.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. No, because Tom seems very grumpy, so I think he will be unkind and impatient towards the boy. The boy sounds weak and unwell, so I think he will be frightened of Tom. OR E.g. Yes, because sometimes people who seem grumpy are actually kind underneath. I think Tom will feel sorry for the boy because he's "thin and sickly-looking" and so he'll take good care of him.

Extra Activities

- Split the class into groups of three and give the pupils in each group the roles of Tom, Willie and one of the other evacuees. Pupils should take turns to interview each other about how their characters' feelings change as the extract progresses. Encourage pupils to stay in character while they are being interviewed.
- Get pupils to rewrite the extract in the first person, from the perspective of the character they were assigned for the first activity. Pupils could then compare their work and discuss how and why the characters might see the same episode differently.
- Show pupils some examples of Second World War propaganda posters (e.g. from the National Archives) that encouraged people on the home front to contribute to the war effort. As a class, discuss the message of the posters — why were things like growing food and avoiding waste important during the war? Get pupils to explain the techniques used to make the posters persuasive, then challenge them to create their own wartime propaganda posters, using similar techniques.
- Direct pupils to a reliable source, e.g. the BBC Primary History website, and ask them to make a list of foods that were rationed in Britain during the Second World War. Were there any foods that were unavailable? As a class, discuss the similarities and differences between children's diets today and during the war. Would pupils enjoy eating war rations? Which diet do they think is healthier?