

# Mantle of the Expert: The Society for the Protection of Bog Babies\*

\* as created by Jeanne Willis in her book 'The Bog Baby'

What can the children do? How can we increase the challenge in each step? What can we prepare as givens? What will the teacher do? What will the children do? What will we do together? How will we publish what we know at each stage?

<b>Step 1: Theme</b> Woodland and other habitats and creatures Make believe creatures Caring for our environment	<b>Step 2: Overview of learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Knowledge:</b> Features of a woodland; animals in a woodland; what animals need to survive; names of some trees; how woodlands change throughout the seasons; other geographical features (eg. ponds)</li> <li><b>Skills:</b> simple map drawing; large and small-scale building skills; tree/ plant identification; identifying animal footprints; animal identification; discuss and debate</li> <li><b>Understanding:</b> how people affect habitats; the responsibility we have to look after woodlands and animals; caring for the environment</li> </ul>	<b>Step 3: List of things that make the theme interesting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bog Babies/imaginary creatures</li> <li>Woodland habitats</li> <li>Animals in the woodlands</li> <li>Tracking animals</li> <li>Learning outside the classroom</li> </ul>	<b>Step 4: Generate questions for inquiry</b> <i>Social, political, historical, environmental, critical, ethical, philosophical, spiritual</i>  <b>Should we take animals from the wild to keep as pets/in zoos?</b> <b>What responsibilities do we have towards wild animals?</b> <b>How should we treat wild animals?</b> <b>Should habitats be destroyed so that people can have what they want?</b> <b>How can we care for wild animals?</b> <b>What do woodland animals need to survive?</b> <b>How can we protect wild animals?</b>
<b>Step 5: Invent a narrative – include tension, location and time</b>  <b>Tensions:</b> imminent habitat destruction; Bog Babies being taken to a zoo; Bog Babies in danger; other woodland animals in danger (death/harm);  <b>Time:</b> Present day.  <b>Location:</b> A co-created, fictional woodland but with the use of local woodlands and other habitats.	<b>Step 6: Select the expert team and list powers, responsibilities and values</b>  <b>Team:</b> a team of Bog Baby Experts  <b>Powers:</b> Advise other bodies about Bog Babies; remove and rehome Bog Babies as a last resort; influence the public in their knowledge of and attitude towards Bog Babies.  <b>Responsibilities:</b> To advocate the cause of Bog Baby protection; to educate the public about Bog Babies; to protect Bog Babies; to re-locate Bog Babies where necessary  <b>Values:</b> To preserve and protect Bog Babies. To educate and inform other about Bog Babies. To care for Bog Babies and their habitats.	<b>Step 7: Decide on the client and their role, purpose and authority</b>  <b>The Parks Trust:</b> The body that oversees the parks and woodland areas around MK and Whaddon.  <b>Role:</b> The Parks Trust will commission the Bog Baby Society to research the local area, find groups of Bog Babies and educate the public about them.  <b>Authority:</b> The Parks Trust will demand a high standard of work including producing educational leaflets for the public and writing formal letters to different organisations.	<b>Step 8: Devise the commission</b>  The Parks Trust has discovered some unusual creatures in one of its parks. They contact the Bog Baby Society as they believe the creatures might be Bog Babies. They commission the team to establish what the creatures are, to find out where they are and whether there are any more groups of them around MK and Whaddon. They further commission the team to educate the public about Bog Babies to ensure they are protected. When the habitat of one group of Bog Babies is threatened, the Parks Trust requires further help from the team.
<b>Step 9: Other points of view</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Bog Babies</li> <li>Other animals in the habitat</li> <li>The railway developers</li> <li>The trees</li> <li>Visitors to the woodland</li> <li>Children that want to see the Bog Babies</li> <li>Mother Nature/ the Spirit of the Wood</li> </ul>	<b>Step 10: Possible team tasks and classroom activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learn about different habitats</li> <li>Establish the natural habitat of a Bog Baby</li> <li>Map the woodlands of MK/Whaddon and where Bog Babies might be found</li> <li>Create information leaflets about Bog Babies</li> <li>Search for Bog Babies and report back on their findings.</li> <li>Map the locations of groups of Bog Babies</li> <li>Consider how to protect the Bog Babies: write a report on this, or produce diagrams</li> <li>Consider the pros and cons of a railway/road being built through the Bog Babies' habitat</li> <li>Write to authorities about the impact this could have on Bog Babies.</li> <li>Create detailed drawings/diagrams of Bog Babies in order to inform the public about them.</li> <li>Recording 'footage' of Bog Babies in order to observe their behaviour</li> </ul>	<b>Step 11: Possible EYFS and NC links</b> <i>Subject to change as the mantle develops</i>  <i>See highlighted objectives below</i>	<b>Step 12: Sequence of steps into the fiction</b>  See below for steps  <b>7 aspects of planning a start:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What's happening? Location, people, events?</li> <li>What signs are there for the students to interpret – words, pictures, movement?</li> <li>What's going to attract their interest – the tension?</li> <li>What questions are raised – the inquiry?</li> <li>What tasks are the students going to do to bring them into the fiction?</li> <li>How are students going to take on the mantle of the expert team?</li> <li>How are they going to be introduced to the client and the commission?</li> </ol>

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Steps in:

**Step 1:** Share the book 'The Bog Baby' by Jeanne Willis.

**Step 2:** Children make their own Bog Babies using clay and paint.

**Step 3:** Create a display in the classroom about Bog Babies: use this as an opportunity for children to learn about non-fiction sentence writing. Children could take photos of their Bog Baby for the wall, label its features and write sentences about Bog Babies (e.g. 'Bog Babies are usually blue). For younger children, adults could scribe the children's ideas.

**Step 4:** Say to the children 'if our Bog Babies were real, and if they lived here in Whaddon or in Milton Keynes, I wonder where they would live?' Use this as an opening to discussing habitats with the children. Use the book and the learning done so far to establish what a Bog Baby habitat is, and how they are suited to their habitat. Use a map of the local area to look for bogs or wetlands. If possible, go for a walk in the local area to explore this further. An outcome of this step will be for the children to establish where their Bog Babies live and to have this marked on a map somewhere clearly; allow the children to take the lead and to decide whether their Bog Babies live in one big group somewhere or in different places. Giving each child a sticker, ask them to mark the location of their Bog Baby on the map.

**Step 5:** Have prepared an A4 envelope. Inside have 'photos' (blurry/part images) of sightings of a Bog Baby/Bog Babies. As children come in/as the session begins say, 'There's a bit of a mystery and I'm wondering if you might be able to help me with it.' As children agree, say, 'However, it's not my mystery – can I introduce you to someone that needs our help?'

**Step 6:** Invite children to watch carefully. AIR, possibly with 'outdoors' style clothing/coat on. They take the envelope and pull out the images inside. They 'notice' the Bog Baby display board and begin to compare the images to the display (though not saying anything). Then freezes in that pose.

**Step 7:** Say to the children 'I wonder what is in the envelope/what this person is thinking? Allow time to discuss and speculate. Adults to model ideas, eg 'She is spending a lot of time looking at our Bog Baby information.' At an appropriate moment, invite children to talk to the visitor.

**Step 8:** AIR talks to the children: he/she is a member of the Milton Keynes Parks Trust. They have received the images in the envelope from a member of the public – they were taken near X (insert name of local woodland/bog/pond). It is a mystery. AIR to explain she has been phoning every woodland and waterland expert she can think of and no one can help her with what these photos are of: but then someone mentioned 'Bog Babies'. She has never heard of such creatures and is looking for the Society for the Protection Bog Babies to help establish whether these creatures are Bog Babies or not. Can the children help?

**Step 9:** As children agree to help, AIR to share out the images between them. Facilitating adult to support the children in looking at and talking about the images, comparing them to what we know about Bog Babies. AIR to act as 'inexpert', asking children what they think and expressing interest in what they have to say about Bog Babies and what they know about them.

**Step 10:** Once it has been established that the creatures are probably Bog Babies, AIR to begin to set the commission: she/he needs a group of Bog Baby experts to find out whether or not these are Bog Babies, and if so what we should do about them. Facilitating adult to support children to think about what they need to do next and to set themselves up as the Bog Baby Society.