

Tom's Midnight Garden by Philippa Pearce

Recommended Year Group: **Year 6**
Recommended Edition: **9780192734501**
Suggested Term: **Spring**



Unit overview

This seven-week unit is a study of classic children's story *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Philippa Pearce. This sequence of learning will develop pupils' understanding of this complex story, create empathy with characters and explore themes, archaic language and grammatical structures. The pupils' understanding will be deepened through building their knowledge of the social, emotional and historic context, not only of when the story was written but also of late Victorian times, when the story is partly set. The unit includes many opportunities for the pupils to develop their reading fluency and comprehension, incorporating activities that will strengthen their strategies and skills for the reading test. The pupils will talk and write in character, which will be in a more formal style than most characters they will have written as. They will write in the style of the author, developing their understanding of the complex language used to tell the story. They will also write non-fiction in an extremely formal style and complete a range of writing specifically focused on achieving 'Working at Greater Depth'. The teaching of grammar and punctuation is embedded within the analysis of the language and structures used to tell the story, with pupils exploring the effect these might have on readers. The pupils should be taught to apply these to their own writing, making choices to affect their reader's thoughts and feelings. The learning journey culminates in a final piece of writing, where the pupils apply all that they have learned to write a short sequel to the story, in the style of Philippa Pearce. **All extracts, resources, session planning and teaching slides are included within this unit.**

Key questions

- What do we learn about Tom?
- How does reading aloud affect your understanding?
- How do you talk to different people?
- How do you think Tom feels?
- What is time?
- Is lying ever justified?
- How is the story written?
- Are girls and boys different?
- What do we learn about Hatty?
- What do you need to do to answer 2- or 3-mark questions?
- What did you do to improve the sound of your writing?
- What techniques does Pearce use, such as vocabulary and sentences structures?
- How does Philippa Pearce show that Tom cares for Hatty?
- How formal does your writing need to be? How are you going to create that formality?
- How do you want your reader to feel?
- Can time stand still?
- What is a friend?
- How did it feel to write as Philippa Pearce? What did you learn about her writing?

Related books for wider reading

- *The Railway Children* by Edith Nesbit
- *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett
- *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis
- *The Lost Magician* by Piers Torday
- *Harry Potter* series by J.K. Rowling
- *The Children of Green Knowe* by Lucy M. Boston
- *The Little White Horse* by Elizabeth Goudge
- *Goodnight Mister Tom* by Michelle Magorian

Writing outcomes

- **Internal monologue as Tom** (Session 5) – to reflect and evaluate
- **Free written letter from Tom to Peter** (Sessions 8–9) – to inform, explain and entertain
- **The next part of the story in the style of the writer** (Session 10) – to entertain
- **A description** (Session 12) – to entertain and create a visual
- **Write as Hatty** (Sessions 16–17, 28, 31) – to explore feelings and develop character understanding
- **Write in the style of the story** (Sessions 21–22) – to entertain
- **A leaflet, advice sheet or instructions** (Sessions 24–25) – to inform, advise or persuade young late Victorian women
- **The next part of the story** (Sessions 34–55) – to entertain

Essential teaching guidance

- The language and grammatical structures are complex as the story was written in 1958. With every reading opportunity, the pupils will need to explore and discuss the way that meaning is constructed and compare this to how stories are written now.
- A slow start to reading the book is essential to help the pupils to get used to the different structures and complex meanings.
- It is important that the pupils are taught to hear the musicality and 'sound' of the writing, so that it becomes internalised for them to understand and use.
- This will be aided by the opportunities to read aloud, so that they can hear the sound of the writing in their own heads and get their mouths around it.

Themes and cross-curricular links

- **SMSC** – time, friendship, gender, ghosts and angels
- **PSCHE** – growing up, gender, grief
- **History** – late Victorian era, 1950s Britain, frost fairs
- **Philosophy** – the nature of time
- **Art** – drawing pictures based on descriptive writing
- **Geography** – skating route along the river from Castleford to Ely, meteorological causes of the great frost of 1894–95, Little Ice Ages
- **RE** – the story of Cain and Abel, the Book of Revelation, angels
- **Drama** – acting out scenes, hot seat activities, role play

Recommended Year Group: **Year 6**
Recommended Edition: **9780734415868**
Suggested Term: **Autumn**

The Arrival by Shaun Tan



Unit overview

This study of *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan explores the characters, plot and structure of all five chapters in this beautiful and moving wordless story. The learning is centred on the experiences, thoughts and feelings of the father as he leaves his family and settles in a strange land, with an emphasis on talk to share the children's own experiences. The unit will develop children's understanding of how pictures alone can tell a story, including how different modes create meaning within and between the pictures, to improve their reading skills of inference, deduction, analysis and interpretation. The children are given opportunities to voice the story at different points and from different perspectives, creating writing that expresses their own interpretation of the characters and story. The final piece of writing allows the children to draw on what they have learned about the whole story, as they write in role as the father advising his wife and child about their forthcoming journey, in the light of what has happened to him.

Key questions

- What skills do we need to use to understand a book with no words?
- What is an immigrant? And immigration? Why do people emigrate?
- Is the process of immigration necessary?
- What might the author want the audience to think and feel?
- What impact do the images have upon the reader?
- How does the author evoke such emotive themes?

Themes and cross-curricular links

- **History** – WW2 links: evacuees arriving in the countryside, Jews migrating across Europe/Ellis Island
- **SMSC** – Relationships, cultural diversity, changes, identity
- **Art** – focus on images from *Stepping Stones* – recreate images from *The Arrival* using the same artistic medium
- **Drama** – role-playing scenes, hot-seating, freeze frames, reading aloud

Curriculum coverage

Spoken language:

- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role-play, improvisation and debates
- provide reasoned justification for their views
- use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas

Reading:

- discuss and evaluate author's intentions, consider the impact on the reader and ask questions to improve their understanding
- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives justify inferences with evidence
- identify how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- make comparisons within and across books
- retrieve, record and present information from non-fiction
- identify themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing

Grammar, punctuation and spelling:

- ensure correct subject and verb agreement when using singular and plural, distinguish between the language of speech and writing and choosing the appropriate register
- use expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely

- use modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility
- use passive verbs to affect the presentation of information in a sentence
- use the perfect form of verbs to mark relationships of time and cause
- use relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, and that, or with an implied (i.e. omitted) relative pronoun
- recognise vocabulary and structures that are appropriate for formal speech and writing, including subjunctive forms

Writing:

- identify the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own
- note and develop initial ideas, drawing on reading and research
- in writing narratives, consider how authors have developed characters and settings in what they have read, listened to or seen performed
- summarise longer passages
- select appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning
- use a wide range of devices to build cohesion within and across paragraphs
- use presentational devices to structure text and to guide the reader
- proofread for punctuation and spelling errors
- propose changes to vocabulary, grammar and punctuation to enhance effect and clarify meaning
- assess the effectiveness of their own and others' writing

Writing outcomes

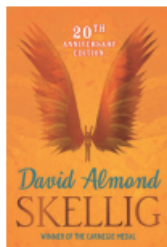
- **A farewell letter (session 5)** – from the father to his daughter – to inform and reassure
- **Journal entries (sessions 7, 11 and 14)** – A series of journal entries documenting a journey to a new place, and exploring a character's feelings
- **A narrative (sessions 21–24)** – An extended narrative based on a character in the book – to entertain
- **A letter from the father to his family (sessions 27–29)** – A letter of guidance/instruction from the father to his family – to inform and advise

Essential teaching guidance

- Teachers will need to have a secure understanding of the term multimodality when leading the discussions around the graphic novel.
- The themes explored throughout the unit are emotive and reflect current life. Teachers will need to set guidance for respecting each other's feelings and experiences.
- The majority of writing produced throughout the unit is in the voice of 'Father' so plenty of time is included for the children to explore his character fully in order to embed his voice, perspective and feelings in these writing tasks. It is important that the children be given this time.

Skellig by David Almond

Recommended Year Group: **Year 6**
Recommended Edition: **9780340944950**
Suggested Term: **Autumn**



Unit overview

This six-week unit is a study of David Almond's *Skellig*. It will develop children's understanding of the story, characters, themes and language. The unit teaches reading, including fluency, vocabulary and comprehension, and meaningful writing, for a range of form, purpose and audience. The teaching of grammar and punctuation is embedded within analysis of the language and structures used to tell the story; through activities that explore the effect these might have on readers. The children are taught to apply what they have learnt to their own writing, making choices to affect their reader's thoughts and feelings. All learning in the unit builds towards a final piece of writing, where the children can use everything they have learned, in this case to write a story of their own. **All extracts, resources, session planning and teaching slides are included within this unit. This unit also includes a piece written by the author about how he wrote *Skellig*, to further inspire the children's writing.**

Key questions

- Are you ever truly isolated?
- What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?
- What is Skellig?

Writing outcomes

- **Internal monologue** – to explore Michael's feelings (he is problem solving and therefore the purpose for the reader is to empathise at this point – same with the other monologues and diaries)
- **Personal narrative** – to describe and entertain
- **Internal monologue** – to explore Skellig's feelings
- **An extra excerpt for the story** – to entertain
- **Mina's diary** – to explore Mina's feelings
- **Michael's diary** – to explore the change in Michael's feelings
- **Final piece** – Story – to entertain
- **Formal piece of non-fiction writing** – The children may also wish to write a one-sided or balanced argument on the topic of home school vs state school.

Essential teaching guidance

- The *Read in to Writing* approach supports meaningful reading experiences within a rich book study. This unit also offers SATs style questions/preparation (see Teaching slides), which may be used in guided reading lessons or focussed SATs prep sessions, still linked to the book that's being studied, in depth, in English. The reading comprehension within the unit of work, and the reading aloud to improve fluency and understanding threaded through the unit, is excellent SATs preparation also.
- Children are urged to freely discuss their feelings throughout, so it is important that there is clear guidance about respecting the thoughts and emotions of others
- As this story focuses on the theme of 'life vs death' it is advisable that any individuals with personal experience are spoken to prior to beginning the unit (if deemed appropriate), as there is the potential that it may cause distress, or stir up repressed feeling
- Teachers may want to ensure that they are clear in their understanding of the two terms *juxtaposition* and *intertextuality*, as they are key concepts discussed within this unit and interwoven in *Skellig*

Themes and cross-curricular links

- **History** – Romanticism period (art/writing) William Blake
- **Geography** – Skellig Michael (the location is the inspiration for the story)
- **Science** – Evolution, Darwin and fossils
- **RE** – creation story compared to evolution theories and links to angels
- **DT** – create fossils made from clay
- **Art** – Romanticism artwork (draw Skellig/birds/nature)
- **SMSC** – Relationships, change, loss
- **Drama** – Performance of scenes from Skellig, hot-seat, poetry read aloud
- **Extra curriculum:** A trip to a Natural History Museum to explore fossils or visit Darwin's house

Related books for wider reading

- *What Mr Darwin Saw* by Mick Manning

Curriculum coverage

Spoken language:

- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments

Reading

- recommending books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices
- identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- making comparisons within and across books
- discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader
- explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary
- provide reasoned justifications for their views

Grammar, punctuation and spelling

- using expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely
- using modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility
- using relative clauses beginning with who, which, where, when, whose, that or with an implied (ie omitted) relative pronoun
- using commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity in writing
- using hyphens to avoid ambiguity
- using brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis
- using semi-colons, colons or dashes to mark boundaries between independent clauses

Writing

- identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own
- noting and developing initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary
- in writing narratives, considering how authors have developed characters and settings in what pupils have read, listened to or seen performed
- selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning
- in narratives, describing settings, characters and atmosphere and integrating dialogue to convey character and advance the action
- assessing the effectiveness of their own and others' writing

Macbeth by William Shakespeare

Recommended Year Group: **Year 6**
Recommended Edition: **9780198324003**
Suggested Term: **Summer**

MACBETH



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Unit overview

This six-week unit is a study of one of Shakespeare's most popular plays, *Macbeth*. This sequence of learning will develop pupils' understanding of the plot, characters, themes and language. The unit teaches reading, including fluency, vocabulary and comprehension and meaningful writing, for a range of form, purpose and audience. There are many opportunities for drama and reading aloud, so that the pupils can gain a true experience of the text as a play for performance. The teaching of grammar and punctuation is embedded within the analysis of the language and structures used to tell the story, with pupils exploring the effect these might have on readers. Pupils are taught to apply what they have learned to their own writing, making choices to affect their reader's thoughts and feelings. This learning culminates in a final piece of writing, a persuasive closing statement in defence of Macbeth, where the pupils apply all that they have learned about the play and its characters. This task will give the pupils an opportunity to write in a highly formal style and manipulate the response of their reader. **All extracts, resources, session planning and teaching slides are included within this unit.**

Key questions

- Who was Shakespeare and when did he live?
- How will you act this scene in your groups? Why did you make the choices that you did?
- What kind of man is Macbeth?
- What is the purpose of a description? Who might the audience be for our writing?
- What do we learn about Lady Macbeth?
- What do you think Shakespeare wants you to think of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth?
- How do we want someone to feel when we want them to agree with us?
- Do you believe in the supernatural? How does it affect the play?
- Do you think Macbeth was in control of his actions?
- How easy is it to defend or blame each character?
- What is the purpose of this speech? Who is the audience?
- How do you want your audience to feel? What do you want them to think?
- Does the speech sound right? Is the speaker convincing?
- Is Macbeth guilty of murder?

Essential teaching guidance

- It is highly recommended that teachers use the Macbeth resources in the education section on the RSC website. There are lots of videos and drama activities that will enhance the teaching of this unit.
- The final piece of writing in this unit is intended to be highly formal to give children the opportunity to manipulate vocabulary and grammatical structure to influence their reader. This means they should not use the language of speech or contractions.
- The unit teaches the play up to Act 2, Scene 2, so you may want to find a suitable version to share with the pupils so they see the rest of the story.
- Another useful resource is *Shakespeare for All Ages and Stages*, which is a National Strategy booklet available online. The national curriculum content is out-of-date, but the activities and ideas are still useful.

Writing outcomes

- **The opening of a story** (Session 2) – to entertain/engage
- **Macbeth's internal monologue** (Sessions 5, 12 and 23) – to recount and reflect
- **A description of the heath** (Sessions 8–11) – to entertain/engage
- **Lady Macbeth's soliloquy** (Sessions 13–14) – to develop understanding of character
- **Macbeth's speech to Lady Macbeth** (Sessions 18–20) – to persuade
- **Defence or prosecution statements** (Sessions 24–26) – to persuade
- **A closing statement for the defence** (Sessions 27–30) – to persuade

Themes and cross-curricular links

- **SMSC** – power, ambition, supernatural, deception and dissembling
- **Drama** – performing a script, characterisation, role play
- **Music** – music to create mood and atmosphere, especially foreboding
- **Art** – colour and texture to create ominous moods and meaning
- **History** – medieval times, Shakespearean times, the court of James I

Related books for wider reading

- Other Shakespeare plays

Wonder by R. J. Palacio

Recommended Year Group: **Year 6**
Recommended Edition: **9780552565974**
Suggested Term: **Summer**



Unit overview

In this six-week study, themes of kindness, being 'different', relationships, coming of age, bullying and change will all be explored. Children will be given many opportunities throughout the learning journey to express their understanding of these themes through making connections with them, selecting and analysing content from the story as evidence of these themes as well as engaging with them on a personal level. Children will develop understanding of and empathy with August, what he experiences, how this affects him and his relationship with others. They will explore how the story is written, the different perspectives and how these impact on our impression of Auggie and the other characters. There are a range of writing opportunities within this study, including writing internal monologues, non-fiction and telling the story from a third-person perspective. Finally, the children will apply all that they have learned from the unit to create their own part of the story from Julian's POV, giving the story another perspective. **All extracts, resources, session planning and teaching slides are included within this unit.**

Key questions

- Does everyone deserve a standing ovation at least once in their lives? What constitutes a need for a standing ovation?
- What is more important, inner or outer beauty?
- What is the difference between being kind and nice? Can they be separate?
- Are there reasons for the way bullies act or are people just born mean?
- How do relationships have lasting effects on who you are or how you treat others?

Themes and cross-curricular links

- **Science** – Science experiments, science fair projects
- **Geography** – Map out states in America and make connections with how to get to school from home
- **Art** – Sketching skills: comparing self-portraits to portraits of others to see how we identify/view ourselves compared to others
- **SMSC** – Relationships, friendship, dealing with change and bullying
- **Drama** – Performance of scenes from *Wonder*, hot seating
- **Extra curriculum** – Host a science fair

Related books for wider reading

- *The Boy at the Back of the Class* by Onjali Q Rauf
- *The Day I Was Erased* by Lisa Thompson
- *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupery
- *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom* by Louis Sachar
- *Holes* by Louis Sachar
- *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* by J. K. Rowling
- *Street Child* by Berlie Doherty
- *Matilda* by Roald Dahl

Curriculum coverage

Reading:

- speak audibly and fluently with an increasing command of Standard English
- recommend books that they have read to their peers, giving reasons for their choices
- identify and discuss themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing
- make comparisons within and across books
- discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader
- explain and discuss their understanding of what they have read, including through formal presentations and debates, maintaining a focus on the topic and using notes where necessary
- draw inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence
- predict what might happen from details stated and implied
- provide reasoned justifications for their views
- identify main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph and summarise these

Grammar, punctuation and spelling:

- use expanded noun phrases to convey complicated information concisely
- use conjunctions, adverbs and prepositions to express time and cause
- indicate possession by using possessive apostrophe with plural nouns
- use modal verbs or adverbs to indicate degrees of possibility
- use relative clauses beginning with 'who', 'which', 'where', 'when', 'whose', 'that' or with an implied (i.e. omitted) relative pronoun
- use commas to clarify meaning or avoid ambiguity in writing

- use hyphens to avoid ambiguity
- use brackets, dashes or commas to indicate parenthesis
- use semi-colons, colons or dashes to mark boundaries between independent clauses
- use and punctuate direct speech

Spoken language:

- ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge
- give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes, including for expressing feelings
- maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments
- compose and rehearse sentences orally (including dialogue), progressively building a varied and rich vocabulary and an increasing range of sentence structures

Writing:

- identify the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own
- note and develop initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary
- write effectively for a range of purposes and audiences, selecting the appropriate form and drawing independently on what they have read as models for their own writing (e.g. literary language, characterisation, structure)
- exercise an assured and conscious control over levels of formality, particularly through manipulating grammar and vocabulary
- in writing narratives, considering how authors have developed characters and settings in material read, listened to or seen performed
- select appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning
- use further organisational and presentational devices to structure text and to guide the reader (for example, headings, bullet points and underlining)
- in narratives, describing settings, characters and atmosphere and integrating dialogue to convey character and advance the action
- assess the effectiveness of their own and others' writing

Writing outcomes

- **Personal narrative about a big move (session 3)** – To entertain
- **Diary entries (sessions 4 and 6)** – To reflect
- **Continuations of the story (sessions 10, 15, 16)** – To entertain
- **Non-fiction piece on friend qualities (session 12)** – To explain
- **Internal monologues (sessions 14, 19, 23, 24)** – To reflect
- **Apology letter (session 20)** – To explain
- **Email/text string (session 21)** – To reflect/to inform/to entertain (depending on the topic of the messages)
- **A story from Julian's POV (sessions 26–30)** – To entertain

Essential teaching guidance

- This unit is written in such a way that children can freely discuss their feelings throughout, so it is important that there is clear guidance about respecting the thoughts and emotions of others. There are many themes discussed throughout this unit, but the two main ones are 'coming of age' and 'bullying/friendship issues'. *Wonder* is all about growing up, how we handle things and the knock-on effect this can have on others. It also helps to be more aware that things aren't always as we perceive them and to be more open to what others might be going through.
- As the reading and writing are closely related, it would be optimal to have guided reading and English lessons close together. You may also consider completing some of the reading at other times throughout the day to ensure all reading is complete before the next session's activities.