

Task 1: The Dragon Who Ate Our School

- Read or listen to the poem *The Dragon Who Ate Our School* (provided as a sound file and provided below).
- This is a good example of a poem which is meant to be read expressively and performed to others.
- Have a go at reading it out loud for yourself.
- Can you make the beat of the poem clear as you read?
- Can you learn any of the poem off by heart?
- Can you practice reading it aloud and perform it to your family?

The Dragon Who Ate Our School

The day the dragon came to call, she ate the gate, the
playground wall
And slate by slate, the roof and all, the staff room, gym and
entrance hall
And ev'ry classroom big or small. So.....
She's undeniably great.
She's absolutely cool,
The dragon who ate, the dragon who ate
The dragon who ate our school.

Pupils panicked, teachers ran. She flew at them with wide
wingspan.
She slew a few and then began to chew clean through the
lollipop man,
Two parked cars and a transit van. Wow !
She's undeniably great.
She's absolutely cool,
The dragon who ate, the dragon who ate
The dragon who ate our school.

She bit off the head of the head.
She said she was sad he was dead !
He bled and he bled and he bled.
And as she fed, her chin went red and then she swallowed the
cycle shed. Oh.....

She's undeniably great.
She's absolutely cool,
The dragon who ate, the dragon who ate
The dragon who ate our school.

It's thanks to her that we've been freed.
We needn't write, we needn't read.
Me and my mates are all agreed, we're very pleased with her
indeed.

So clear the way, let her proceed. Cos....
She's undeniably great.
She's absolutely cool,
The dragon who ate, the dragon who ate
The dragon who ate our school.

There was some stuff she couldn't eat.
A monster forced to face defeat,
She spat it out along the street the dinner ladies' veg and meat
And that pink muck that they serve for sweet. But..

She's undeniably great.
She's absolutely cool,
The dragon who ate, the dragon who ate
The dragon who ate our school.

Nick Toczek

- **Extension Activities and things to think about:**
- Write or draw out the things the dragon ate in order
- How many things did that hungry dragon manage to eat?
- How do the teachers feel?
- Why did the children say they were freed?
- How would the poem have been different if it was another creature who visited the school? Write or show some examples of these differences

Task 2: How the Tortoise got his shell

- Read *How the Tortoise Got His Shell*.

How the Tortoise Got His Shell

Come to my feast!
cried the great god Zeus.
Today I shall be wed!
And from each corner of the earth
all Zeus's creatures sped...

The fliers and the creepers,
The long, the short, the tall;
The crawlers and the leapers,
The feathered, furred and bald;
Hunters, biters, finders, fighters,
Hooters, whistlers, roarers;
Squeakers, screamers, squawkers, dreamers,
Nibblers, gulpers, borers.
Paws and claws from hills and shores
From south, from north, from west and east,



From mountain tops and forest floors
all Zeus's creatures joined the feast
except

the tortoise

They raved, they pranced, they feasted, danced;
six days and nights each creature stayed
to chatter, flatter, clap and cheer
at the great god Zeus's grand parade
except

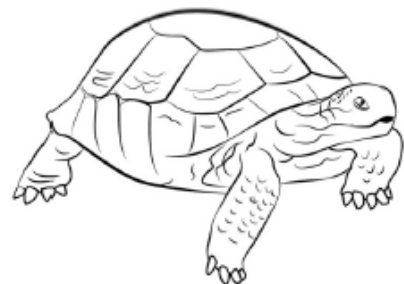
the tortoise

Next day...

*Why weren't you there, my friend, asked Zeus,
the day that I was wed?*

The tortoise smiled her small, slow smile
and raised her small, slow head.

*A wedding feast is fun, I guess,
But I'm a simple one.
I'm happy by myself, she said.
There's no place quite like home!*



*How dare you stay away! roared Zeus.
I'll show you just what for!
From this day on you'll carry your home
On your back, for evermore!*

- **Now have a go at the following questions:**

- 1) What did you like about the poem?
- 2) What patterns did you notice?
- 3) Why was Zeus so angry with Tortoise?
- 4) How did Zeus punish Tortoise? Do you think this was fair?

- Find a grown-up and read them the poem. Can you help them to understand the story by the way that you read the poem?

Can you perform the poem and film it to share with someone else?

Task 3: The Ant and the Pigeon

The Ant and the Pigeon

Once there was an Ant, who wandered to the river as he was incredibly thirsty. He scuttled to the very edge and leant down to quench his thirst when suddenly a rush of water swept him up and carried him downstream. He coughed and spluttered in the water and thought that he would surely drown.

A Pigeon was sitting on a branch overhanging the river and saw the Ant in the water below. She picked a leaf and let it fall into the river beside the Ant. He gratefully climbed onto it and floated to the river bank and clambered to safety. He thanked the Pigeon for saving him and vowed to be more careful when beside the river in future.

The following day, a Hunter trekked by the riverbank. He began to make a cage beneath the tree where the Pigeon slept. He silently laid lime-twigs above the cage to trap her.

The Ant saw what the Hunter was doing and scurried over and bit him on the leg. The Hunter shrieked with pain and threw down the rest of the twigs, making quite a racket! The noise woke the Pigeon and she flew away from danger.

Later that day, the Pigeon thanked the Ant for alerting her to the danger and saving her life.



Recall

1. Why did the Ant go to the river?

2. What did the Pigeon pick to help the Ant?

3. What did the Hunter lay above the cage?

4. Where did the Ant bite the Hunter?

5. What woke the Pigeon?

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Vocabulary

1. Find and copy a word that means *screamed*.

2. What does the phrase '*...making quite a racket.*' mean?

3. '*... and vowed to be more careful ...*'

What does the word *vowed* mean?

4. Describe how the Ant is moving when he '*scuttled*'.

.....

Inference

1. Why was the Ant coughing and spluttering in the water?

2. Why did the Pigeon pick a leaf?

3. Why was the Hunter laying twigs '*silently*'?

4. Why did the Hunter make lots of noise?

5. Why do you think that the Ant wanted to help the Pigeon?

Explain, referring back to the story.

6. This story is an example of an Aesop's Fable.

These were told in Ancient Greece to teach people a moral lesson.

What lesson do you think this story teaches people?

Task 4: Foxes

Foxes are members of the dog family. They can be found in both urban and rural areas, with about 33 000 living in towns and cities.

They have long slender faces, with pointed ears. Their coats are reddish brown with a white throat and belly. Usually weighing about 4 to 8 kg they are about 65 cm long with a bushy tail adding another 40 cm.



They are nervous animals and generally try to avoid humans. However, they are curious animals and often enter gardens at night to look for food. They live in a den called an earth and the females give birth to 4 or 5 cubs, usually in March. They are blind and deaf at birth, relying on their mother's milk for the first few weeks of their lives. Each adult male fox has a territory for its family and other foxes will keep out of this area. This territory is marked by the fox's scent.

After about six weeks they start eating earthworms, beetles and insects. There are many sources of food for foxes in towns, including worms, crane flies, beetles, berries and windfall apples. Adult foxes are carnivores (meat eaters) and will eat rabbits, rodents and birds' eggs as well as unprotected pets such as guinea pigs. They are solitary animals and unlike some other dogs do not hunt in packs. In towns at night they often meet cats but the two creatures seem to ignore each other.



Captive foxes may live up to 14 years but most wild foxes only live for two to three years, with over half of all foxes not living for more than one year. Whilst foxes have been voted the second most popular animal in Britain they also have lots of enemies. Many people consider them a nuisance and many are killed by humans or by cars at night. Old sayings about foxes describe them as sly and cunning.

1. About how many foxes live in the towns and cities of Britain?

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2. Describe a fox.

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3. When do female foxes give birth to their cubs?

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4. Draw a picture of a fox.

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5. What do baby foxes rely on for food?

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6. Name some of the things an adult fox might eat.

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7. Use a dictionary to help find the meanings of the following words as used in the passage:

urban:

territory:

solitary:

carnivore:

Task 5: Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are one of the best known creatures that can be found in our gardens. They are the only British mammal with spines, which are very useful as protection against predators such as foxes. When faced with an enemy a hedgehog will roll up into a tight ball and the sharp spines make it almost impossible to attack it.



Sometimes they cover their spines with saliva, but no-one knows the reason for this.

Hedgehogs are nocturnal, sleeping during the day and foraging for food at night. Their eyesight is weak and they rely on their sense of smell and hearing to find food. Small creatures such as insects, worms and snails are favourite foods but they have also been known to eat birds' eggs, mice, frogs and even small snakes. They hibernate during the winter months, when their heartbeat can drop from about 190 beats to 20 beats per minute.

The young are born in nests of leaves and up to eleven babies, or hoglets, can be born at one time. They are born blind and rely on their mother to provide milk for the first six or seven weeks of their lives. They then set off on their own to find food and shelter.



Hedgehogs used to be quite common in our gardens, but there are far fewer of them today and they are considered an endangered species. There are two things in particular that humans do that have a bad effect on hedgehogs. One is to put slug pellets on the garden. The second is to try and feed them with milk, as they are lactose intolerant.

1. Describe a hedgehog and how it protects itself.

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2. What do hedgehogs eat?

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3. What do hedgehogs do during the winter?

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4. Draw a picture of a hedgehog.



5. What is the name for a baby hedgehog?

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6. Name two things which humans do that are bad for hedgehogs.

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7. Use a dictionary to help find the meanings of the following words as used in the passage:

lactose intolerant

predator:

Task 3 answers:

Recall

1. Why did the Ant go to the river?

to get a drink (because was thirsty)

2. What did the Pigeon pick to help the Ant?

a leaf

3. What did the hunter lay above the cage?

(lime) twigs

4. Where did the Ant bite the Hunter?

on the leg

5. What woke the Pigeon?

the noise; the Hunter shrieking and dropping the twigs

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Vocabulary

1. Find and copy a word that means *screamed*.

shrieked

2. What does the phrase '*...making quite a racket.*' mean?

This means that he was being very noisy.

3. '... and vowed to be more careful ...'

What does the word *vowed* mean?

promised

4. Describe how the Ant is moving when he '*scuttled*'.

The word scuttled shows that he was moving quickly/hurriedly.

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Inference

1. Why was the Ant coughing and spluttering in the water?

Because he had fallen in and was drowning.

2. Why did the Pigeon pick a leaf?

To save the Ant (as she could see that he was drowning)

3. Why was the Hunter laying twigs '*silently*'?

So that the Pigeon could not hear him (because he wanted to catch the Pigeon).

4. Why did the Hunter make lots of noise?

The Ant had bitten him on the leg (and it obviously hurt).

5. Why do you think that the Ant wanted to help the Pigeon?

Explain, referring back to the story.

The Ant wanted to help the Pigeon because she had helped him before.

6. This story is an example of an Aesop's Fable.

These were told in Ancient Greece to teach people a moral lesson.

What lesson do you think this story teaches people?

It shows that you should always help others and that they may then help you in return.

The moral is 'One good turn deserves another'.

Task 4 answers:

1. About 33 000 foxes live in the towns and cities of Britain?
2. A description of a fox.
3. Female foxes usually give birth to their cubs in March.
5. Baby foxes rely on their mother's milk for food?
6. An adult fox might eat earthworms, crane flies, beetles, berries and windfall apples. They will also eat rabbits, rodents and birds' eggs as well as unprotected pets such as guinea pigs.
7. urban: relating to towns and cities

territory: an area of land which is controlled and defended by a fox

solitary: alone, without anyone else

carnivore: a flesh eating mammal

Task 5 answers:

1. A description of a hedgehog and how it protects itself using its spines.
2. Hedgehogs eat insects, worms and snails, as well as occasionally eating birds' eggs, mice and frogs.
3. Hedgehogs hibernate in winter.
5. A baby hedgehog is called a hoglet.
6. Putting slug pellets on the garden and feeding hedgehogs with milk are both bad for the hedgehog.
7. lactose intolerant: a digestive problem; the inability to digest lactose, a sugar found in milk.

predator: an animal that lives by killing other animals for food.