

Home Learning Branches

The Dragon Machine by Helen Ward

Spelling Investigations

Look at this passage below – it could have come from the story of *The Dragon Machine*. Trouble is, the pesky dragons have left muddy footprints on the writing and have splodged some words. Can you work out what the missing words are using the shapes? Words to find: *behind, busy, climb, could, doors, floor, many, parents, people, wild*. Now try to learn how to spell the words.

George **could** see dragons everywhere – **wild** dragons! The more he looked, the more he saw! He **could** see them all over the **floor**, under the bed and hiding **behind** open **doors**. They **would** sometimes **climb** on furniture and break things too. No one else saw them though – just like they didn't see George! He went unnoticed by **most people** including his own **parents**. They were just too **busy**.

Wider Curriculum Links

DT Can you design and make a model of a dragon machine. What features will it have? Will there be any moving parts?

PSHE In the story, George felt lonely, overlooked and unnoticed. What could you do if you felt the same way? How might you help someone else who felt this way?

Discussion Questions

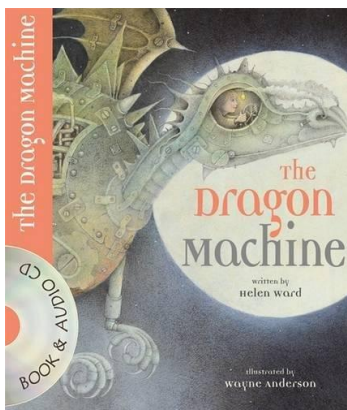
What does it mean to be lonely?

Have you ever felt like George in the story?

Why do you think he decided to help the dragons find their way home?

How do you think George felt when his family came to collect him?

Were you surprised at the ending? Why?



Key Vocabulary

How many of these words do you know? Can you find the meanings of new words?

noticed
unseen
ignored
overlooked
perched
troublesome
captured
wilderness
undercarriage
lumbered

Writing Opportunities

1. Can you make a warning poster, warning people that dragons are on the loose? Try to use a question, a command and some statements.
2. Now why not try to write a dragon spotting guide? Use verbs to say *what* the dragons might be doing, prepositions to tell the reader *where* the dragons might be found and conjunctions to explain *why* dragons might choose their hiding places.
3. George needs your help! Can you write a letter to give him some advice on what to do about the dragons? Remember to use *could*, *should* and *would* and also the conjunctions to help explain your ideas!
4. Can you make and label your own 'Dragons Be Here' map and then include this in an encyclopaedia of dragons? Try using questions for the section headings.
5. Design and make a model of your own dragon machine. Can you write an explanation of how it works? How about using some noun phrases to describe each part?
6. Now the time has come to plan and then write your own story about dragons. It could be called, *The Dragon Catcher*.

Further reading

The Tin Forest by Helen Ward

Lost and Found by Oliver Jeffers

Yeti and the Bird by Nadia Shireen

The Invisible Boy by Trudy Ludwig

Rosie Revere, Engineer by Andrea Beatty

FaRTher by Grahame Baker Smith

Want to find out more? Why not download the full Planning Sequence on our website and access the video [Learning Log video sessions?](#)



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- 1 Dragon tails have appeared! Can you set up a dragon hunt at home? You could use card or fabric to make tails or you could even use dinosaurs if you have some. Now create statements about where dragons are hiding. Use prepositions!

There is a dragon under the table.

Prepositions

under
on
inside
between
behind
amongst
below

Why not make a warning poster?

Statement

Question

Command

WARNING!

Dragons are on the rampage!
Have you seen any dragons?
If you have, call the helpline immediately.

- 2 Try writing a dragon-spotting guide! Here is a starter for you:

Some people thought that dragons were mythical creatures but lately I have been spotting dragons in my house! Here is a guide to where you might find them.

Under the table

Dragons like to hide under the table because it makes them feel safe and they can also eat scraps dropped by humans.

verbs

noticed
saw
identified
glimpsed
sat
perched
hid

prepositions

under
on
inside
between
behind
amongst
below

conjunctions

but
and
or
because
when
that
if

- 3 A letter has arrived and it's from George! He needs your help. To give advice, we can use these tricky words:

could
should
would

Dear Friend,
I have a bit of a problem and was wondering if you could help me please? My dragons are becoming much too troublesome! They follow me everywhere and keep breaking things! I'm spending so much time clearing up! Do you have any advice? What should I do?
Best wishes,
George

Now try writing back to George. Here are some ideas:

I think that you would feel better if...

If you could get the dragons to... then...

I think you should ask for help so that ...

- 4 **HERE BE DRAGONS!**



George found a map in *An Encyclopaedia of Dragons*. Let's write our own Encyclopaedia.

Sorting out sentence types

Can you identify which are questions, commands, statements or exclamations?

Why do dragons like to hide?
Read on to find out more.
What a tragedy it is that dragons have been captured!
In which faraway lands might dragons be found?
Dragons sometimes live amongst us but they originally come from magical places.
How amazing that dragons have flown all this way!

Section ideas

What do dragons eat?
How do dragons behave?
For how many years do dragons live?
Fun facts about dragons

- 5 Design and make your own model of a dragon machine. Use noun phrases to label and describe it!

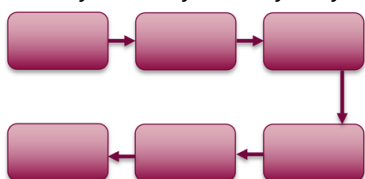
e.g. shiny, silver fuselage
large flashing lights
strong green wings

Its strong green wings beat at 120 miles per hour so that dragons can be transported at speed.



The shiny, silver fuselage would house the controls that guide the machine

- 6 Before you write your story, why not plan on a story map?



Change the main character from George to another lonely child.

Try changing the dragon machine to a 'dragon catcher' or a 'dragon tidier-upper'.

Now begin to write your own version story in the style of, *The Dragon Machine*. Here's a starter for you:

It all started on a sunny Thursday afternoon, when we began to notice dragons all over the house. The more we looked, the more we could see. They were hiding under tables and..