

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Teaching Ideas

Strap on your seat belt for the original breathtaking adventure...



Our Autumn 2014 competition, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang's Magical Reading Tour, challenged children to go on their very own reading journey, and was inspired by the original Chitty Chitty Bang Bang story by Ian Fleming. Use the teaching ideas in this resource to complement the reading challenge and really immerse your pupils in the wonderful world of the Pott Family and their magical car...

Introduction

The film is engrained in most of our childhood memories and new generations are introduced to Chitty year upon year through the film, the successful musical and the fabulous series of sequels by Frank Cottrell Boyce. Now why not spend time with your class to go right back to the beginning and meet the world's most loved magical car.

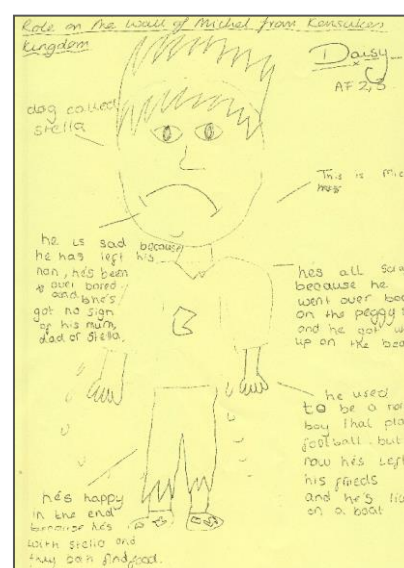
Ian Fleming's one and only children's book, the original *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, is a masterpiece of adventure, written with humour, flair and the voice of an author who knows his audience well. So jump into the passenger seat

(Chitty's are soft, red leather with arm rests!), strap on your seatbelt (actually Chitty doesn't have them, even when flying!) and prepare to embark on a breath-taking ride through this classic book with your class.

This resource is designed for teachers and pupils to explore the book together, immerse themselves in the lives of the eccentric Pott family and hopefully begin a lifelong friendship with a very special car. A whole host of cross-curricular activities are interwoven into the exploration of the story which can be dipped into individually or used together as a whole extended unit of work. 22 October 2014 sees the 50th anniversary of the book's publication, so why not celebrate in style by immersing pupils in all things Chitty for the day. Or build a whole unit around the book with the day as a final celebratory focus to showcase all that wonderful Chitty inspired work?

Meet the inspiration

A few weeks before the unit begins, build up the intrigue by sending parcels to the class at school. Each one might have a clue to something in the story, wrapped up to explore and discuss; a few old car parts sourced from the local garage, a mini replica of the Eiffel Tower, a large lollypop, a whistle, a packet of fudge, perhaps a model airplane. Get the pupils to describe and discuss each one as they arrive and predict what the story might be about and how the objects might link to together. Pupils love this activity and it builds a real sense of anticipation. Of course the delight is, as they move through the story they are challenged to spot where each object fits in. The objects can then be used as part of the whole-class environment to create a display of all the work throughout the unit.



The inspiration is of course Chitty herself and the brief author's note at the beginning of the book reveals the fact that Chitty herself was inspired by a real life car and her maverick owner, the very literary sounding Count Zborowski!

You could:

- Set pupils the task of researching Zborowski and his obsession with racing motor cars.
<http://www.chittybangbang.com/>
- Find out about the famous Brooklands Lightning Short Handicapped Race – a place for Zborowski to fulfill his passion for driving very fast! Brooklands now has its own museum dedicated to motor sport and aviation.
<http://www.brooklandsmuseum.com/index.php?/history/motoring-history-1920-1929>
- Encourage pupils to write a newspaper article about the tragic Brooklands crash in 1922.
- If you don't have them already in the class, make a writing journal specifically for this unit and begin to capture vintage car details (Zenith carburettors, valves, pushrods) and maybe start a whole class glossary to become experts like Zborowski himself

Meet the Crackpots!

As you read the first chapters with pupils, they are introduced to the Pott family. Encourage your class to close read and make notes as you find out more about this slightly eccentric family. You could dedicate a page in your writing journal to each member of the family and begin a role on the wall for each with details and facts about them on the outside of the figure and more insightful comments about their personality noted from their actions and discussions on the inside. These can be added to as you move through the book and delve

more into the characters. Or create large whole-class ones where everyone can ‘graffiti’ and collect their comments.

Caractacus Pott – Inventor, explorer

Caractacus really deserves a character study of his own. Named after a British chieftan who fought the Romans (more research here would be fun!), Jeremy and Jemima’s inventor father spends his days locked away in his workshop developing mad inventions; collapsible coat hangers, edible gramophone records, cubical potatoes and of course the crackpot whistling sweets made famous by the film. Explore the world of the inventor with pupils:

- Using clues and details from the book, encourage children to describe, draw and label what they imagine Caractacus’ workshop is like. Perhaps use the short film ‘The Shirt Machine’ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rliGlp4ddXs> to help stimulate their imaginations.
- Great books to support work around ‘unusual’ inventions are:
Until I met Dudley by Roger McGough
How Dogs Really work by Alan Snow
Dotty Inventions (and some real ones too) by Roger McGough
- Research and write reports on the world of real life inventors and explorers both old and new. Darwin makes a whole topic in himself, and James Dyson would be a great choice too.
- Let pupils create their own weird and wonderful inventions. They can draw and label diagrams of their ideas, create models, write explanations of how they work and instructions of how to use them...we once had a pupil invent an eco-lawnmower with rabbits inside who nibbled the grass and managed to fertilize at the same time!

Meet the author

One of the huge attractions of the book is naturally that it has a very famous author. Fleming wrote the book for his son Caspar and it is the only children’s book in his glittering career. Encourage pupils to spend time researching the author. Create a fact file to display or even better get pupils to create their own trivia quizzes for each other where they try and find the most unusual, interesting and lesser known facts and challenge their friends to find answers.

A perfect introduction to all things Bond would be Charlie Higson’s wonderful *Young Bond* series and the new series by Steve Cole, a whole new generation of Fleming addicts will be born.

Transformation

The rebirth of Chitty is a wonderful part of the book to explore with pupils from the family’s first impressions of the apparent heap of junk under a tarpaulin in the old shed to the gleaming spectacle that emerges from Caractacus’ workshop months later.

- Drama is a wonderful way to bring this transformation alive with pupils. Create a soundscape with pupils using instruments of all the sounds and noises that they imagine would be coming from Caractacus' workshop. The leader or one member of the group acts as conductor, whilst the rest of the group is the 'orchestra'. Using their voices, instruments (and body percussion if appropriate!), the group paints a *soundscape* of the excitement and anticipation building as work progresses in the workshop to get Chitty back to full glory. The leader can control the shape of the piece by raising their hand to increase the volume or bringing it to touch the floor for silence.
- It might be fun to create a freeze-frame or tableau of the moment the family is introduced to the new and improved Chitty model and thought-track each family member's reactions. For other well exemplified drama techniques visit <http://dramaresource.com/>
- As the story develops, the family discover that the car not only looks amazingly original, but has some rather interesting and original features – not least of which is of course flying. Link back to Fleming and his Bond days and use this to help pupils design their own gadget car jam-packed with useful and fun features. They could draw and label their invention; explain how it works, write instructions on how to activate it and even design adverts for marketing or story board a TV advert slot.

The adventure begins

As the family climb aboard Chitty and begin their perfect day out, it would be fun to story map their journey. First from their home, across the woodland, the lake and island via the M20 and finally out to sea, towards Goodwin Sands and into France. Doing this mapping as they read closely helps pupils create a vivid image in their heads. When done collaboratively in groups it reinforces their thinking and helps them co-construct meaning from the book in a fun and engaging way.

The stop off for a swim at Goodwin Sands and the mention of the Lightship can also be explored. Fascinating stories of the use of lightships in the Channel and around our coast, and famously how tragedy struck the Goodwin Sands ship, could be a great area to discuss and research. See the National Maritime Museum's website for more details:

http://www.nmmc.co.uk/index.php?/collections/featured_objects/goodwin_the_forgotten_tragedy

As the plot develops and the family enter *mortal danger* via a spooky cave, the gangsters' vault and finally into the hands of Joe the Monster and his gang of henchmen, we can bring the atmosphere alive with pupils, again through drama as we wander with the family deeper and deeper into the cave. Opportunities to unpick how Fleming builds suspense in his writing and how we might use those techniques for our own writing abound.

Fleming is great at naming his characters for effect from Mimsie to the Mountain Man. How many can the pupils spot and collect as they read the story – Lord Skrumshus at the

beginning of the book is our favourite!

The start of something new: Chitty's next adventure

The amazing Frank Cottrell Boyce took on Fleming's mantle to write the wonderful sequel series following Chitty's first adventure. And now he is challenging your pupils to try their hand at it. For a special bonus writing category in our competition, Frank is writing a story starter for Chitty's next adventure...and he wants your pupils to finish the story. Can your class take on the challenge?

Here are some talking points to get them started:

- Where might Chitty head to next? A different country this time perhaps?
- We know Chitty can fly but I suspect she has a few other useful gadgets up her magical sleeves. I wonder what they will be and how your pupils' readers will find out about them. They seem to be revealed in a crisis moment...
- In the original *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* the family discovers a hidden secret in the caves of France. What secret or danger will they find in their new destination? No doubt mortal danger of some form or other! Of course Chitty will save the day but I wonder how this time...?

To celebrate the 50 year anniversary, why not celebrate as Fleming (and Chitty) would be proud of and share your sequels across the school, illustrate your stories, make books out of them and spend the day with staff, parents and other pupils keeping the legend of the world's most loved car alive.