



Changing life stories

Rainbow Magic Adventures in Literacy

A National Literacy Trust resource

A trip to Rainspell Island

Fairies of all shapes and types, it seems, have taken over the imaginations of a generation of young readers. Whether Music Fairies, Showtime, Pop Star, Party or even Petal Fairies, the ongoing adventures of the small inhabitants of Fairyland draw pupils in to an imaginary world of fairies, goblins, magic and friendship. This enchanting mix has made the Rainbow Magic books an integral part of the journey into reading for so many of our pupils.

It all began, however, with the Rainbow Fairies. The first series of books introduces us to the very special island of Rainspell, the destination for two families setting out on holiday. The two daughters from the families, Kirsty and Rachel, meet on the ferry and see in each other special qualities which begin to draw them together – rich imagination and an enthusiasm for everything around them. Are there mermaids in the waves? Does the cliff look like a giant's face? And so a firm friendship begins which leads them into an unexpected adventure. While exploring Rainspell Island Rachel and Kirsty stumble upon an old black cooking pot nestling at the end of a rainbow, which happens to have the first of the Rainbow Fairies, Ruby the Red Fairy, trapped inside.

A trip to Fairyland with Ruby sends the two friends on an adventure to rescue the remaining Rainbow Fairies as they explore Rainspell Island across the seven books of the first series, rescuing a different fairy sister with each book and restoring the colour back to Fairyland. This is not an easy job when faced with the evil Jack Frost and his host of gruesome goblins, but friendship, bravery and a little help from the magic gifts of the Fairy Queen Titania make for memorable adventures. On the way friendships are strengthened and we find out more about the magical world of the Rainbow Fairies, a world full of imagination and one which captivates so many young readers.

Join us on a trip to Rainspell Island, immersing your pupils in the Rainbow Magic Adventures in Literacy. We begin with book one, which sets the scene, introduces our characters and gives us the template for a plot pattern that we revisit in the subsequent books across the series. With a rich rainbow of reading and writing activities across the curriculum you can use the following activities as a whole unit or just dip in and out to encourage and enthuse your pupils as they embark on our Rainbow Magic Summer Reading Adventure.

Going the extra mile to immerse pupils in experiential learning at the outset also has the knack of drawing in all types of learners. Fairy hoaxes over the years have gripped the nation, and with the joys of the internet, some superb footage and images abound. Why not use the original Cottingley Fairy photos and history to entice pupils into the possibility of fairies at the end of the garden (<http://www.cottingleyconnect.org.uk/fairies.shtml>) or the more recent news reports and evidence fabricated by Dan Baines (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/derbyshire/6514283.stm>), which unearthed a storm of “believers”. Or plant evidence around the school; the constant appearance of fairy dust, small stashes of gold hidden or perhaps a mini magic wand or two for pupils to find. You

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might even enlist the support of a “fairy expert” to visit the pupils, in person or via video, with suspicions of fairy activity and sightings in your school vicinity. A magical world awaits...

Worried about those boys? Children of all ages love magical adventures and though fairies may not be number one on a boy’s favourite character list, friendship, good overcoming evil, magical islands and especially goblins have huge appeal. Explore the wonderful character of Skarper in Philip Reeve’s book *Goblins* or introduce the idea of a different kind of fairy, the armed and dangerous type of Eoin Colfer’s *Artemis Fowl*, and Fairyland may just take on extra appeal for boys!

Working towards our own magical adventure

There is much we can draw from the books, both in terms of literacy and across the curriculum, so working towards an overarching outcome, embellished and explored along the way through a myriad of enrichment activities, makes for a super unit of work. Each book follows a familiar plot pattern, which gives an easily replicated structure and allows pupils to use this structure while putting their imaginative efforts into exploring and creating their own exciting magical characters, settings and problems. Knowing from the outset that they will have the opportunity to write their own spellbinding adventure means that all the activities immersing the children in the world of Rainspell Island can also be used to feed their imaginations and give a richness and purpose to their reading and writing.

The Power of a Map

Use the map of Rainspell Island to explore the island as you start to read Ruby the Red Fairy so that pupils can begin to build a vivid picture of Rainspell in their minds. Have any of the pupils been on a ferry journey or on holiday to an island? Get them to share their experience – how they felt when they had that first glimpse of land and how it feels to be going on holiday and staying somewhere new. Use clips from films such as *Muppet Treasure Island* or the ever-popular *Pirates of the Caribbean* to capture that moment of seeing an island for the first time and record words and phrases to describe the excitement, comparing their experience to that of Kirsty and Rachel as they near Rainspell for the first time. Take them through a guided visualisation using senses with closed eyes. What can they hear? The sound of seagulls, the waves rippling along the side of the ferry, the chug of the engine as they approach the white cliffs. What do they feel? The cool breeze of the wind, the warmth of the sun on their face, etc.

Continue to use the map to follow Ruby’s story and the two friends’ journey from the cottages to the forest. If children recreate and illustrate their own map of the island, as you progress through the series encourage them to annotate and add details and observations, mapping where each trapped fairy is found and the people and creatures they meet on the way. Story-mapping in this way helps pupils read a text more closely, looking for those smaller details and description whilst creating a vivid image of the setting and bringing the whole story alive. Add in time for illustration and artwork and the pupils will create treasured resources to take home and share with parents and carers.

Introduce to the children the idea of writing their own island fantasy adventure story and, as you unpick the plot of the Rainbow Fairies' rescue, challenge pupils to develop their own new stories with similar themes and structure.

- Use the **Rainbow Magic Story Mountain Guide (see below)** to help pupils plan their stories alongside the simple **Rainbow Magic Ideas Guide (see below)**.
- Creating a new story map of their own invented island setting, complete with interesting locations to match – perhaps replacing the Old Tower with a derelict castle or the Orchard with an abandoned graveyard – gives choice and enough structure to motivate yet support pupils in their planning and writing. This creative invention is the fun bit of being a writer!

Writing opportunities galore!

In the series, the vibrant colours of the rainbow represented by each fairy bring Fairyland alive with rivers of the brightest blue, the Fairyland Palace in silver and hills of greenest green. Jack Frost's curse banishes the Rainbow Fairies and with it he drains the colour from the land; the sky darkens and the bright colours of the land fade "until it looks like an old black and white photograph." Opportunities to explore colour and the nature of rainbows themselves can lead to a whole host of activities.

Colour Poetry

Immerse pupils in reading and writing poems with colour as their theme. Some wonderful examples such as Christina Rossetti's *What is Pink?* or the poems of Mary O'Neill, *What is Gold?* and *What is Red?* from her book *Hailstones and Halibut Bones* are great places to start. Play a few creative games to get pupils thinking; can they picture the world without the colour green or mix a recipe for orange soup? The Dream Jars of the *The BFG* by Roald Dahl provide a super stimulus for ideas. There are good dreams (golden phizzwizards) and nightmares (trogglehumpers) – I wonder what a good red dream has trapped in its jar or what might be lurking in the blue of a nightmare jar. Use the simple poetry scaffold **Rainbow Colour Poem (see below)** to model and then create poems around favourite colours. A wonderful starter to inspire writing would be the short BBC video with David Attenborough *What a Wonderful World* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/david-attenborough-what-a-wonderful-world/13983.html> 🎵 "I see trees of green, red roses too ..."

List poems

Other simple **list poems** help develop imagination and ideas for writing. Ruby is found trapped in a pot at the end of a rainbow, but traditionally we'd hope to find a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. Simple list poems where each line begins with "If I found a pot of gold..." are fun short activities.

Mnemonics games

These are fun to explore. How do you remember the colours of the rainbow? **Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain** is the classic – can pupils come up with their own new mnemonic? What others do they know? Alternatively, take the first letter of each of the seven colours and try your own acrostic poems.

Build Your Own Fairy

Character descriptions of pupils' own fairy, goblin or magical creature provide opportunities to develop vocabulary and think about key elements of character, both of appearance and personality. Create a description of Ruby together from what pupils discover from the first book, capturing all those small details; a silky dress the colour of ripe strawberries, crimson slippers, red crystal earrings...not forgetting what kind of personality she has; brave, determined, persuasive!

Shadow puppets

Fairyland turns into a world devoid of colour. The traditional black and white of shadow puppets would be a lovely way to retell Ruby and the other fairies' stories and provide opportunities to invent and practise new stories and scenes.

Rainbow facts

What of rainbows – such an amazing natural phenomenon?

- Research and write **explanation texts** about how rainbows work and link to opportunities for science experiments across the curriculum.
- Explore the history and legends behind rainbows and create a **Rainbow Fact File**. Did you know that in myths and legends rainbows were commonly believed to be a bridge for the gods between heaven and earth? That rainbows are in fact circular and not arcs? What other fascinating facts can pupils discover? They could turn their findings into a short true/false trivia quiz for another class.

Rainbows arching across the curriculum

With colour, rainbows and universal legends at our finger tips, opportunities to explore science, art and history abound.

Science

Science provides fun and engaging activities to explore the nature of light, refraction and dispersion before writing those explanation texts on “How to make a Rainbow”. Research and explore the science – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0043dq1> is a good starting point, or better still get out those prisms and bend light for yourself in the classroom.

Explore the density of different liquids and create a ‘rainbow in a jar’ using a range of liquids and food colouring for effect. For a simple version using different sugar solutions visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdKVMPoO5QE or go one better with a variety of liquids, which is much more fun (and messier!) [here](#).

Art

Art is a clear winner where colour and rainbows are concerned. You can carry out some great experiments around the primary colours and how the other colours are formed using physical colour wheels. Take a shallow dish and add cream or milk, then carefully drop food colouring drops of blue, red and yellow in a triangle shape. Add a drop of washing up liquid and see the colours chase into each other to create the colours of the rainbow, or use cocktail sticks to create colour mixes. Even better, use shaving foam as a base, which creates a kind of multi-coloured foam mountain!

Colour collages are excellent ways of collecting and reflecting on the abundance of colour in our lives. This activity is great as a pre-cursor to poetry activities but superb in itself for wonderful displays. Take A3 card and divide it into a grid of squares of about 10cm. Encourage pupils to find materials – both man-made such as buttons or beads and natural such as leaves or petals – in their chosen colour and collage each square in a different way. This works particularly well for just black and white and makes a stunning display whilst exploring tone, texture and colour at the same time.

Explore artists who excel in their use of colour and use their work as model styles. Marion Baars, Sue Holman and Leonid Afremov are a few wonderful artists to explore.

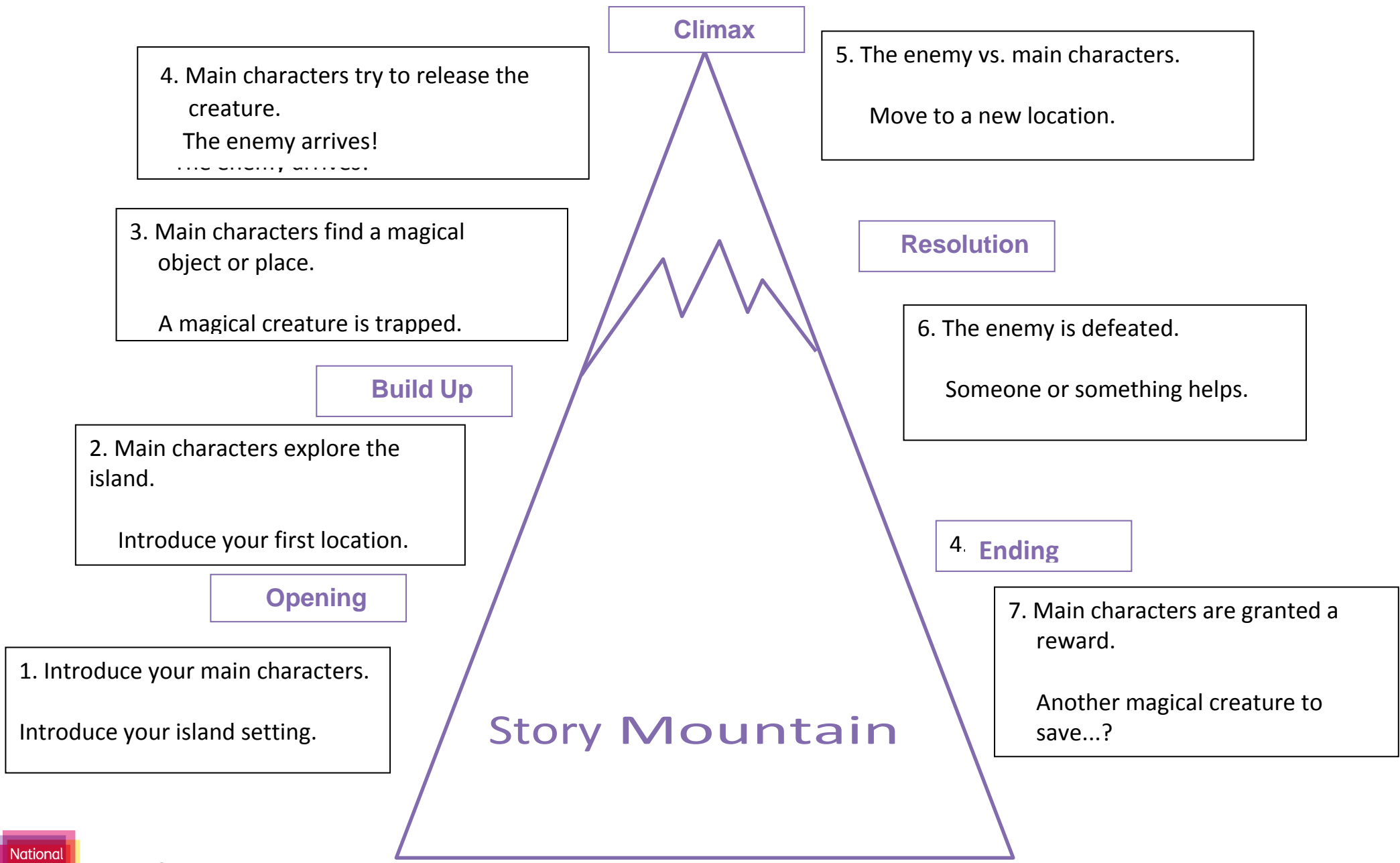
Food technology

Instructions for recipes might include fairy cakes (clearly a delicacy for fairies of all origins) or making rainbow jelly. Food colouring will feature in many of these activities and, with one of our Rainbow Fairies named Saffron, it would be a shame not to explore the origins and properties of the most expensive spice in the world.

History

If Ancient Greece is an area in your curriculum then an exploration into gods and goddesses will reveal the Goddess Iris, known as the Rainbow Goddess of the sea and sky and charged as a messenger between the gods and our world. Here lies potential for writing a new myth with Iris as the focus, and from here jumping into the world of Zeus and his minions is all too tempting.

With their trip to Rainspell Island complete, pupils should be bursting with ideas, racing through the books and developing as readers and writers with every step. Their own rainbow adventures and island maps will hopefully be something they remember with pride and excitement, and there are many other fairies and adventures awaiting them in the world of Rainbow Magic.



Rainbow Magic Ideas Guide

Story Structure	Ideas	My Chosen Ideas
<p>1. Introduce your main characters.</p> <p>Introduce your island setting.</p>	<p>Who are your characters?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a brother and sister? • two best friends? • grandparent and child? <p>What kind of island?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tropical jungle • traditional fishing • holiday destination 	
<p>2. Main characters explore the island.</p> <p>Introduce your first location.</p>	<p>An interesting place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • graveyard • castle • wood • haunted house • woodman's cottage 	
<p>3. Main characters find a magical object or place.</p> <p>A magical creature is trapped.</p>	<p>special tree, doorway, rope, unusual stone, shell, treasure box, birdcage, golden matchbox</p> <p>fairy, leprechaun, a Borrower, sprite, pixie, a Minpin</p>	
<p>4. Main characters try to release the creature.</p> <p>The enemy arrives!</p>	<p>Only need to believe, given a magic key/object to use, given fairy dust to sprinkle...</p> <p>Jack Frost, goblins, orcs, beast...</p>	
<p>5. The enemy vs. the main characters.</p> <p>Move to a new location.</p>	<p>A chase develops, they fight, they must overcome a riddle or task...</p> <p>Choose a new island location from box 1.</p>	

<p>6. The enemy is defeated. Someone (or something) helps.</p>	<p>An animal, an insect, another friend, granted a special wish, magic power, new magical creature...</p>	
<p>7. The main characters are granted a reward.</p> <p>Another magical creature to save...?</p>	<p>Granted a wish, given a power, a feast in their honour, a celebration...</p>	

Rainbow Magic colour poem

_____ is the colour of _____

It tastes like _____

It smells like _____

It sounds like _____

It feels like _____

It reminds me of _____

It makes me _____

_____ is _____