

Stories about fantasy worlds



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Captivate your class' imagination with the first article in a new series of film-based literacy ideas

If a book is a text, the same is true of a film. A moving image can be 'read' in similar ways to a printed text. Responding to and analysing film enables children to develop comprehension skills and an understanding of story structure. It also helps them extend their vocabulary through the language of image, music and sound.

There are now several units in the Renewed Primary Framework for Literacy that call for the study of film or include filmmaking activities. In this and subsequent articles I will show you how easy it is to source free, relevant digital content, and use filmmaking to support your literacy teaching.

In Unit 4 Stories about fantasy worlds, Year 1 pupils are encouraged to explore a range of fantasy settings, such as outer space, underwater and in the jungle, to provide stimuli for the production of their own digital picture books.

Outer space

Space Trees

Available to watch at Vimeo – www.vimeo.com/2308234

Vimeo is a site where filmmakers and video creators can share their work. There are some wonderful short films on this site, exploring almost every theme you can think of. *Space Trees* is a minute-long animation, and is colourful, full of movement and has great sound effects, all of which conjure up the mystery of space.

Watch the film once and then play it again, asking the children whether they think the space trees are real or not. Then watch the film with the sound turned off and encourage the children to think of words that describe the colours and movements that they see. It might be helpful to pause the film on different shots. Next, ask the children to close their eyes to generate descriptions of what the setting sounds like. Working on your interactive whiteboard, these descriptions can be added to still images taken from the film.

This text provides a great stimulus for a visualisation exercise. Take the children for a walk across the surface of the planet while it is raining space trees. What do they see, hear, smell and feel? How does the sky and the ground beneath their feet change?

