

Creative Teaching and Learning Literacy Lesson Plans

World Environments

These lessons have been specifically written to support the teaching of literacy through the theme of World Environments.

Literacy Lesson 1: Mountain poetry

Aims of the lesson: To invent calligrams and a range of shape poems, selecting appropriate words and careful presentation.

Activity: Begin by asking the children to describe mountains in terms of their shapes. Then look at a range of photographs and/or illustrations of mountains for the pupils to get a better idea of the usual shape of mountains. Explain to the children that calligrams are words or poems



that look like what they mean, and that they are going to start by writing the word mountain in the shape of a mountain. (See example given here.) Once the children have completed their calligram, they can then go on to write a poem about mountains. Both Wordsworth and Tennyson both wrote beautiful poems about mountains. Read some of these poems with the children and then let their imagination flow into their own poems.

Plenary: This type of visual poetry lends itself to any sort of stimulus or context. The word 'rainforest' could be written like a rainforest, with some of the letters tall like trees and some short like shrubs.

Differentiation: More able pupils could use a word processing program to complete this task on a computer. Less able pupils could write the word on a piece of paper and then colour or shade the word to look like a mountain.

Literacy Lesson 2: Travel writing

Aims of the lesson: To explore a range of non-fiction writing through a geographical theme.

Activity: The six main types of non-fiction writing that geographers use are: Recount (narrative) – retelling events; Report (describe) – description of a place or landscape; Explanation – why things happen the way they do; Procedure (method) – how something is done in a series of steps; Persuasion – put forward a point of view with the aim of persuading others; Discussion – look at different points of view about the same thing.

Begin by distributing a range of travel brochures. Then ask the pupils either individually or in groups to make a list of any words they do not understand (with a maximum of six words). Then ask the class to complete the travel writing task sheet on the opposite page and look up the meaning of the words they did not understand.

Plenary: Selected pupils or a spokesperson from each group of pupils could tell the other children about the extract. The whole class could then discuss whether or not they agree with the pupil speaking. Alternatively, the class could create a word mat. Individual pupils or groups could take an A3 sheet. They begin by affixing a photo of a particular place or environment in the middle of the sheet and then list:

- ❖ adjectives they would use to describe the picture;
- ❖ key geographical words they would use in connection with the image; and
- ❖ names of cities close to the place or environment.

These sheets can then be used as the basis for a classroom display.

Differentiation: Different extracts can be distributed according to the mix of abilities in the class.

Literacy Lesson 2 – Travel writing

Name:

Date:

After reading the extract of text given to you by your teacher, complete the questions below.

Where is your extract about? Include detail: locality, region and country

In which type of publication might you expect to find your extract?

Who is the audience (who is the extract written for)?

What words (adjectives) or phrases are used to describe your place?

List five facts about the place.

List some opinions about the place.

Does your extract make you want to visit this place?

If so, why? If not, why not?

Literacy Lesson 3: Biographies

Aims of the lesson: To develop the skills of biographical and autobiographical writing and composing a biographical account based on research.

Activity: Some of the world's remotest and wildest environments have been explored and 'conquered' by famous people. For example, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay were the first to conquer Mount Everest. Give the pupils an opportunity to read an account written by someone who has conquered a mountain. Ask them to research information about the mountain and the person who conquered it and then write a short biographical account of that person. Some brief biographical details for Edmund Hillary are given below for your ease of reference.

Sir Edmund Hillary is remembered for being the first man to climb Everest. Born in 1919, he joined Shipton's 1951 Everest Reconnaissance and the expedition to Cho Oyu in 1952, before making the first successful ascent to the summit of Everest, with Tenzing Norgay, as part of the 1953 Expedition.

He was educated at Auckland Grammar School and spent two years at Auckland University before joining his father as a professional beekeeper. Introduced to the Southern Alps of New Zealand at age 16, he later spent every spare day exploring and climbing them. In 1951 he ventured with three others to make six first ascents of peaks of over 20,000 feet (6100 m) in the Garhwal Himalayas.

For four years Hillary served as New Zealand High Commissioner to India. However, his main objective became, and remains to this day, the welfare of the Sherpa people. Through his charitable foundation, the Sir Edmund Hillary Himalayan Trust, he has constructed 27 schools, two hospitals, many bridges, freshwater pipelines, and supported and rebuilt many Buddhist monasteries. He has also constructed several airfields in the Solu Khumbu area.

Plenary: As an extension to this activity, the pupils could imagine that they have conquered a mountain, explored a rainforest or trekked across a desert. They could then write a short account of their journey, including details of the plants and animals they saw, the weather conditions and the landscape.

Differentiation: This activity should be suitable for children of all abilities.

Literacy Lesson 4: Come and visit

Aims of the lesson: To design an advertisement, such as a poster.

Activity: Ask the pupils to think of reasons as to why people would visit a mountain, a desert or a rainforest. The task sheet opposite could be used to help the class generate ideas. This can be photocopied for distribution. Then explain to the children that in many areas tourism is vitally important to the survival of the people that live in the area and helps to fund the environmental protection and upkeep of the area. Advertising is an excellent way to tell people about a place and encourage them to visit. The class will have first-hand experience of a range of advertisements and may have been asked to produce an advertisement before. However, explain that they are going to design a poster advertisement for a mountain, desert or rainforest of their choice. The class could design the advertisement for a real place and would need to do some research about the place before they begin; or they could create their own imaginary mountain, desert or rainforest and write about that instead. Try to raise awareness of the type of language used in advertising such as:

- ❖ extreme adjectives;
- ❖ superlative phrases;
- ❖ 'glowing' idioms; and
- ❖ travel vocabulary.

Plenary: As an extension activity, the class could find real advertisements for holidays in deserts, rainforests or mountains and compare their own advertisements to professionally produced ones.

Differentiation: More able children could produce a leaflet instead of a poster and could even produce a finished leaflet using a desktop publishing program on a computer.



Literacy Lesson 4 – Come and visit

Name:

Date:

Name of place

Location

Size

Climate

Interesting facts

Wildlife

How to get there

Facilities available

Activities available

Literacy Lesson 5: Cracking cactii

Aims of the lesson: To develop literacy skills through research.

Activity: Begin by spending about 45 minutes looking through as many different books about deserts you can find. Then ask the pupils to create a list of five questions that they have relating to the information they have found. As a group discuss these questions and collate them to produce a class list of questions. Once the list is complete, then as a class look at a map of the world and ask the pupils to predict where deserts might be found, giving reasons for their predictions. Then begin a class fact file on deserts, answering the questions they posed after their research and categorising their facts.

Plenary: As an extension activity, tell the class that one of the most common plants in a desert is the cactus. Ask the pupils as a class to draw a huge cactus and then research other plants and desert animals to adorn the cactus.

Differentiation: This activity should be suitable for children of all abilities.

Literacy Lesson 6: An adventure diary

Aims of the lesson: To write a diary detailing a week's adventure in the Amazon Rainforest.

Activity: Explain to the children that they are going to find out about the Amazon Rainforest. Using the information gathered they are then going to plan a weekly diary deciding what they would like to see, where they would like to go, what sort of food they would like to try and what sort of people they might meet. The task sheet opposite gives a template for the finished diary, which can be completed once all the research has been done. The information given below on the Amazon Rainforest is for your own ease of reference.

Amazing Amazon

The Amazon Rainforest is the largest in the world, covering most of the Amazon basin, chiefly in Brazil, but extending into neighbouring countries. Its total area is approximately 4 million km². The rainforest climate is hot, wet and sticky. It rains every day and the rain comes down suddenly and stops just as suddenly. This is called



convectional rainfall, meaning that the sun heats the ground, which heats the air nearest the ground causing it to expand and rise. When the air gets to a certain height it condenses to dew point and forms clouds, then it rains. Storms are common with convectional rainfall. The plants in the rainforest have had to adapt to the unusual weather conditions. There are many different ways they have done this:

- ❖ Trees grow tall, up to 40m through the emergent layer, in order to get sunlight.
- ❖ Leaves have downward-curving tips so that rain drips off.
- ❖ The trees are straight and only have branches at the top. They are supported by buttress roots.
- ❖ Rivers flood for a few months every year, so the plants are adapted to handle the extra water without drowning.
- ❖ Fallen leaves and plant matter rot swiftly to provide nutrients for the rest of the plants.

The native Amazonians live by a process called 'shifting cultivation': they live in one area and farm it, moving on when the land is no longer cultivable. The Indians build huge houses from wood and foliage. They cut down trees to extend the clearing and feed their fires. The ash provides nutrients for the soil. Then the women plant the crops (manioc, yams, beans and pumpkins). They do not just farm, they also fish and hunt.

Plenary: This activity could easily be adapted to cover a week's adventure diary in the Sahara Desert or trekking through the Alps.

Differentiation: This activity should be suitable for children of all abilities.

Literacy Lesson 6 – An adventure diary

Name: _____

Date: _____

After you have found out more about the Amazon Rainforest, plan a weekly diary. Think about:

- ❖ What you want to see;
- ❖ What you want to eat;
- ❖ What you want to do;
- ❖ What plants and animals you want to see; and
- ❖ People you would like to meet.

MARCH 2005	MARCH 2005
<p>Monday _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Thursday</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Tuesday _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Friday</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Wednesday _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Saturday</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>NOTES _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Sunday</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

MARCH 2005	
M	7 14 21 28
T	1 8 15 22 29
W	2 9 16 23 30
T	3 10 17 24 31
F	4 11 18 25
S	5 12 19 26
S	6 13 20 27