

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight



Question Book:
Year 3, pages 30-31

Author / Source:
Michael Morpurgo

Genre:
Legend

Cross-curricular links:

- History (oral history; King Arthur)
- Art (drawing)

Introduction

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight is a legend written in verse which dates from the 14th century. There have been numerous different versions of the story, and this interpretation was written by Michael Morpurgo in 2004. Although Morpurgo's version is written in prose, the plot is faithful to the original story and uses engaging language to capture the reader's imagination. Before they begin, children might benefit from learning a little about King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.



Answers

1. E.g. That no one can eat until someone tells a new story.
2. E.g. Stories that aren't true.
3. roaring OR rattle OR clatter
4. E.g. They are thick and strong.
5. E.g. To show how strange it is that the giant is green and to create a strong picture in the reader's head.
6. a. E.g. A stranger entering the hall and challenging him.
b. E.g. Because the Green Knight appears straight after Arthur stops speaking. The timing is spooky.
7. E.g. Scared, because his appearance is very frightening, and the expression on his face "struck terror into every heart".

Extra Activities

- Discuss with the class how Morpurgo creates tension in the extract. Highlight his use of onomatopoeia at the start of the second paragraph and in the fearsome description of the giant. Ask pupils to write their own short paragraph about a monster using similar techniques.
- This legend was originally written in verse. As a class, summarise the key events in the text. Get pupils to use this summary to write a poem which tells the same story as the extract. Make it clear that pupils don't have to make their poems rhyme, but they can use rhymes if they wish.
- Ask pupils to write a diary entry from the perspective of one of the knights. They should explore what the knight thought when he heard the noises outside and how he felt when he saw the creature.
- Legends are traditionally passed down orally. Split the class into pairs and ask pupils to retell the story of the extract without looking at the text. In their pairs, ask students to discuss how similar the version they told was to the original. As a class, discuss what their findings suggest about stories passed down orally.
- Get pupils to use the extract to draw an illustration of *The Green Knight*. Ask pupils to compare their drawings and discuss the similarities and differences between them. Are they surprised that the same text can inspire different artistic interpretations?
- Make sure pupils understand that no one is sure if King Arthur really existed. Ask pupils to research the legend of Arthur and make a storyboard of the main events of his life and how he became King.

The Diary of a Killer Cat



Question Book:
Year 4, pages 2-3

Author / Source:
Anne Fine

Genre:
Fiction — novel extract

Cross-curricular links:

- D&T (product design)

Introduction

Anne Fine is a former Children's Laureate and a prolific writer for children and young adults. She has won several prestigious awards, including the Carnegie Medal. Pupils may be familiar with some of her other works, such as *Bill's New Frock*. This extract from *The Diary of a Killer Cat* is written from the perspective of a cat called Tuffy and offers an amusing take on the relationship between a pet and its owners. Tuffy's dry and witty first-person narrative gives a clear insight into his personality. Before pupils read the text, show them the title and ask what they think it is going to be about.

Answers

1. E.g. It has subheadings which split the text up into different days of the week.
2. E.g. Very sad. She cried a lot when she found out.
3. E.g. To clean up the stains that the bird left on the carpet.
4. E.g. They held a funeral in the garden for the bird.
5. E.g. To show that the family complains about Tuffy all the time.
6. E.g. So that they stand out from the rest of the text and are said with more stress when you read them.
7. Any appropriate answer. E.g. No, because he's a cat and it's natural for cats to kill birds. They can't help it. OR E.g. Yes, because Tuffy can obviously think for himself and knows what he did was wrong. For example, he says, "So maybe I shouldn't have dragged it in and left it on the carpet".



Extra Activities

- As a class, discuss whether the predictions pupils made before reading the text were correct. Are they surprised by Tuffy's character? Do they think it's appropriate to call him a 'killer cat'? Why do they think Fine used this phrase in the book's title?
- Explain what exaggeration is and get pupils to find examples of it in the extract. Ask pupils to write their own diary entry which starts in a similar way to the extract, e.g. 'OKAY, OKAY. So hang me. I ate the roast chicken. For pity's sake, I'm a dog.' Encourage pupils to use exaggeration in their writing.
- In the extract, Tuffy describes birds as "feathery little flutterballs". Explain that "flutterballs" is a nonsense word and discuss how the word reminds the reader of birds. Challenge pupils to come up with their own nonsense words to describe animals, e.g. a 'wagbottom' for a dog.
- Get pupils to write a letter of apology from Tuffy to the bird's family, explaining what happened. Make sure they include the layout features of a formal letter (e.g. addresses and the date).
- Ask pupils to design a garden bird feeder. Encourage them to think about how they can protect the feeder from cats, e.g. it could be enclosed in a cage or suspended from a tall metal pole. Pupils should draw an annotated diagram of their design and explain it to the class.