

Draw a story!

Topic

Stories, picture books

Aims

- To encourage learners to use English in a creative way
- To develop learners' listening skills and visual skills
- To enjoy listening to a story
- To create a picture book
- To retell a story using visual prompts

Age/level

Primary
CEFR level A1 and above

Time

50–60 minutes

Materials

1. Story – either access the online story in class or download the transcript beforehand from here: <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories/ali-and-the-magic-carpet>
2. Paper, pencils and coloured crayons, hole punch, coloured string or ribbon

Introduction

Every two years a 'Children's Laureate' is appointed in the UK. The position is awarded to an author or a writer of children's books in recognition of their outstanding work. In June 2015 the laureateship was awarded to illustrator Chris Riddell. Besides being a prolific illustrator, Chris actively encourages others – children and adults – to believe in their own talent and to be creative too. Chris Riddell plans to use his laureateship to promote visual literacy. In a recent interview with the press he said, 'I want to show how much fun you can have drawing' and 'I want to bring drawing back to the basics, make it about the pleasure that it can afford and remove the notion that it's some kind of precious or difficult activity. It's another way of telling a story.'

This lesson uses Chris Riddell's wonderful idea of turning children into illustrators. Learners will listen to a story and imagine each scene. Then they will work in groups, making colourful illustrations of key points from the story. When they finish they will put their pictures together to form a picture book version of the story. Finally they will use the picture book to retell the story in groups.

This activity works with most stories and can be adapted to use with other ages and levels. If you have a mobile device, you could also film the groups retelling the story, then send the recording to parents – but make sure you have parental permission to do this first.

Procedure

1. Warmer (5–8 minutes)	<p>Draw a picture of a storybook on the board and ask <i>What's this?</i> Have a class discussion about stories. Use a few of these questions to generate ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your favourite story? • What kinds of stories do you like? • What kinds of characters appear in stories? • Do you like (fairy) stories? • Do you like looking at pictures in storybooks?
2. Vocabulary (5–8 minutes)	<p>If necessary pre-teach or revise some key vocabulary from the story using flashcards, simple drawings, miming, etc., such as:</p> <p><i>carpet, shop, magic, jungle, desert, ice, snow, mountains, foggy, forest, windy, island, thunder, lightning, storm</i></p>
3. Listening to the story (5 minutes)	<p>Tell learners that they are going to listen to a story and they should try to imagine everything they hear. If they want to close their eyes to help concentrate, they can.</p> <p>Either play the audio of the story (without showing the video) at: https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories/ali-and-the-magic-carpet or read the story aloud from the transcript downloadable below the video, pausing after each section for learners to assimilate the information.</p>
4. Sequencing the story (5–10 minutes)	<p>Elicit the main sections of the story and write them on the board with numbers, for example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ali finds a carpet in his uncle's shop. 2. The carpet starts moving and speaks. 3. Ali flies to the jungle on the carpet. 4. Ali flies to the desert on the carpet. 5. Ali flies to the South Pole on the carpet. 6. Ali flies to the mountains on the carpet. 7. Ali flies to a forest on the carpet. 8. Ali flies to an island on the carpet. 9. Ali flies back to the shop.

5. Preparation for task (10 minutes)	<p>Put learners into groups of five and randomly appoint numbers 1 to 10, giving each child two numbers. Explain that the numbers correspond to the key moments in the story and that they are going to illustrate these scenes to make a picture book. Number 10 will be the book cover.</p> <p>Play or read the story again for pupils to remind themselves of the details in their scenes, especially the weather conditions. Pupils can take a few notes if they wish.</p>
6. Producing the picture book (20 minutes)	<p>Learners draw and colour their illustrations. Don't worry if they aren't using much English at this stage. The main point is for learners to have an opportunity to be creative and to transfer the information from the story they have listened to (and imagined) onto paper. There shouldn't be any 'rules' and it isn't important if Ali and the magic carpet look different in different illustrations. This is only to be expected.</p> <p>When learners have finished, use a hole punch and string or ribbon to turn the pages into a picture book.</p>
7. Retelling the story (5 minutes)	<p>In groups, learners use their picture book to retell the story of Ali and the magic carpet, with each child telling the part of the story that he or she has illustrated.</p>

Contributed by

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