

WORKING WITH THE STORY

Jack and the Beanstalk

The plot

Jack lives with his Mum. They are very poor. One day, Mum sends Jack to the market to sell their old cow, Daisy. On the way, Jack meets a stranger. The stranger gives Jack 5 beans for Daisy and tells him that the beans are magic. When Jack returns home, his Mum is so angry with him that she sends him to bed and throws the beans out of the window.

The following morning, when Jack wakes up, he sees a giant beanstalk outside the window. He climbs the beanstalk, through the clouds and up to the sky. At the top he sees a castle and enters. Inside the castle Jack sees a sack full of gold coins, a hen that lays golden eggs and a harp that plays music. Suddenly, a giant appears, smells the boy and cries, "Fee Fi Fo Fum!" Jack quickly hides inside a cupboard.

The giant eats his dinner and falls asleep to the sound of the harp playing. Jack jumps out of the cupboard, grabs the coins, the hen and the harp. The harp cries out to its master, the giant wakes up and chases after Jack. Jack climbs down the beanstalk and shouts to Mum to chop down the beanstalk. Mum takes an axe and chops it down. The giant falls down, too! Jack and his Mum live happily ever after with the coins, the hen and the harp.

Alternative ingredients

- ☆ Who lives in the castle? Is there an old woman or a giantess in your version?
- ☆ How many times does Jack go up and down the beanstalk? In some versions, he takes the coins, the hen and the harp all at the same time; in others he climbs the beanstalk on three separate occasions. How many times does Jack go up and down the beanstalk in your version?

- ☆ What does the giant say when he smells Jack? In traditional versions he often says,

"Fee! Fie! Foe! Fum!

I smell the blood of an Englishman.

Be he 'live, or be he dead,

I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

- ☆ In some versions Mum chops down the beanstalk before the giant can climb down the beanstalk, in others he falls from the beanstalk to the ground. Another version catapults the giant into space! What happens to the giant in your version?

The rights and wrongs of the story

The story of Jack and the beanstalk addresses several significant issues which you may like to explore further with your children in their first or second language. Taking care of your family, the value of goods, taking other people's possessions are all worthy discussion points. Did Jack ever get told off for stealing? Did the giant deserve his fall?

Pre-storytelling activities

Resources: Jack and the Beanstalk story book, **A4 Character cards**, **Colour the characters**, any realia relevant to the story such as play money, a toy hen, a cardboard harp, cardboard axe and so on.

- ☆ Before reading **Jack and the Beanstalk**, you could introduce the fairytale by eliciting your children's prior knowledge of the story. Show your children the book cover to arouse their interest and trigger their memories. Who can they see on the cover? (Jack) Where is he? What's he doing? Where's he going? Is he a good boy? Why/not?
- ☆ Introduce each 'character' with the flashcards in turn (Jack, Mum, Daisy, the stranger, the beanstalk, the giant). First of all, ask your children to respond non-verbally to the character flashcards through actions, gestures and/or noises. Invent an action, gesture and/or noise to correspond to each character, for example, Jack might climb, Mum might be looking very angry, Daisy might 'moo', the stranger might be looking very strange, the beanstalk might stand on tiptoe, the giant might stomp about. Can they mime those actions?
- ☆ Choral drill the characters, as a whole class, teams or small groups in turn. As you show your children the cards say the words like a silly boy, an angry Mum, a strange stranger, a huge giant!
- ☆ The children could now colour the characters and produce a character collage for reference throughout the story.

Storytelling

- ☆ In order for your children to get the most out of the storytelling, change the classroom dynamics by organising them in a circle around you wherever possible, either on chairs, cushions, mats or the floor.
- ☆ Make sure that they can all see the book and that you can make eye-contact with them all. This will help to engage their interest and to confirm they are following the gist of the story.

- ☆ When all your children are sitting comfortably, tell your chosen version of Jack and the Beanstalk for pleasure. Allow your children time to anticipate actions and to really digest and enjoy the story. Acknowledge and recast in English any contributions they make about the pictures, characters or events as you go along.
- ☆ Adjust the text of your version of the story to meet your children's level, and focus on the illustrations to contextualise events. Support your storytelling with actions, too, using gestures and mime.
- ☆ As you introduce the characters, try to use a different voice for each one, and ensure that you convey the appropriate feelings of pleasure or politeness, fear or happiness, through your tone of voice, pitch, volume and facial expressions.
- ☆ Add further drama to the story through pauses and silence.

Storytelling activities

Resources: A4 Jack and the Beanstalk flashcards, Character flashcards, Story cards

- ☆ Involve your children in further retellings of the story by encouraging them to act out the main events as you tell the story. In this way, the children connect the language with the actions. Remind them of the actions and/or noises associated with each character- whenever they hear 'Jack, for example, they climb; the giant, they stomp about.
- ☆ Alternatively, place the **A4 Jack and the Beanstalk flashcards** around the room. Ask your children to point to (or move to) the correct flashcard for each part of the story they hear.
- ☆ Give each of your children a **Character flashcard** and ask them to hold up the flashcard whenever they hear the correct name.
- ☆ Divide your class into groups and give them a set of **Story cards**. Again, ask them to hold up the correct card for each part of the story they hear.
- ☆ Retell the story and ask your children about the characters and pictures on the pages. Personalise the questions as appropriate. For example, What's the stranger giving Jack? Would you exchange Daisy for the beans? Do you like beans? Can you climb a beanstalk? What's the castle like? Where would you hide in the castle?
- ☆ Ask your children to finish some of your sentences as you retell the story, for example, "Jack climbed up and up the beanstalk. At the top he saw a big _____ (castle)"

☆ Retell the story and make deliberate mistakes. Ask your children to clap their hands together when they hear a mistake. For example, "One day Jack's Dad..." CLAP! Continue telling the story with the correct word. Alternatively, ask your children to say 'Stop!' and to correct any mistakes they hear. For example,

Teacher: "One day Jack's Dad..."

Children: "Stop! 'Mum!'"

Teacher: "One day Jack's Mum sent him to the market to sell their old dog, Daisy..."

Children: "Stop! 'cow!'"

☆ Invite your children to join in with the retelling. Begin by asking them to repeat the simpler elements of the story, such as the greetings or the "Fee Fi Fo Fum" refrain.

☆ Retell the story pointing to the words in the book as you say them. This will encourage your children to make the connection between the spoken and the written words and develop their sight recognition skills.

Post-storytelling activities

There are many different ways to extend the story of Jack and the Beanstalk depending on your children's skills, interests and needs in the BritLit Primary Kit: **Story**, **Activities**, **Chants** and **Plays**. Here are just a few ideas:

☆ Play 'I-spy' with the different pages of the book. For example, 'I spy with my little eye, something beginning with 'b!'" This activity may be used as a warmer to any of the vocabulary-related activities in the BritLit Kit, such as the **Wordsearch** or **Story Rebus**, **Gapfill**, **Comprehension** activity sheets.

☆ Play pelmanism or snap with the **Jack and the Beanstalk cards (in Activities)**.

☆ After the story you may like to use the **Action charade** activity for your children to mime the main events from the story. Alternatively play the game **The giant says...:**

☆ Alternatively, give each group a set of **Story cards**. Now ask the groups to show you different scenes, for example, 'Jack's going into the castle', "The giant's sleeping". Award points to the group that shows you the correct card first. As a follow-up activity, ask them to put the cards in order. They can then complete the **Put the story pictures in order** activity sheet.

- ☆ Put the **A4 Jack and the Beanstalk flashcards** around the room. Ask for volunteers to stick the **Story sentences** next to the correct cards. Now give your children a copy of the **Storyboard pictures** and **Storyboard sentences** to complete.
- ☆ Alternatively, introduce one or more of the **Chants** and then re-read the story together and invite your children to repeat the chant(s) at the appropriate moment(s).
- ☆ As a class you could recreate the story using the masks distributed amongst the children, or act out the **Play**.