

who vote them into their positions of authority? How do the children feel about the behaviour of the councillors of Hamelin? Were they right to cheat the Pied Piper? Was his revenge appropriate?

- Challenge the children to learn parts of the poem by heart and practise reciting it to the class.

Mischievous Tom (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 3 (page 16)

Genre: Classic fiction

Source: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

Author: Mark Twain


Introduction When *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* was first published in 1876, Mark Twain wrote in his preface:

Although my book is intended mainly for the entertainment of boys and girls, I hope it will not be shunned by men and women on that account; for part of my plan has been to try to write pleasantly, to remind adults of what they once were themselves, and of how they felt and thought and talked, and what queer enterprises they sometimes engaged in.

The universal appeal of *Tom Sawyer* proves the author's success in this ambition. Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading.

Answers 1. American 2. Tom's Aunt Polly 3. *Where's he got to? What's he up to?* 4. 'built for "style", not service' 5. the cat 6. tomato vines and jimson weeds 7. 'roundabout' 8. *a flexible whipping stick* 9. *Tom was in great danger of being hit.* 10. *he tricks her into looking away and while her back is turned he climbs over the fence and vanishes* 11. she 'broke into a gentle laugh'.

Further activities

- Check that the children understand any unfamiliar vocabulary: for example, 'state', 'perplexed', 'resurrected', 'arrest', 'closet', 'truck'.
- Encourage the children to locate the Mississippi on a map of the United States. Teach them to remember the spelling with the rhyme that uses the names of the letters as surnames: 'Mrs M, Mrs I, Mrs SSI, Mrs SSI, Mrs PPI'.
- Ask the children to note all the characters' physical movements and actions that help the reader to picture the scene very clearly (the adjusting of the useless glasses; the bending and probing with the broom; the grabbing of Tom; his antics to avoid capture and a beating).
- Tell the children to rewrite the scene as a first-person recount, allowing them to choose whether they take the part of Tom or Aunt Polly.
- Challenge the children to rewrite this scene as a film or playscript, complete with stage directions in brackets. Remind them that each piece of speech will follow the speaker's name (in capitals) and that speech marks are not needed.
-  Invite the children to find a partner and use their scripts to practise and perform a radio presentation of this episode. Remind them that this medium offers no visual clues, that their clarity and tone of voice, pace, volume and any sound effects are all they have to put across the characters and events to the audience. Listen to the results and vote on which pair performed in the most arresting way.

Sixteen steps to the ice-house (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 3 (page 18)


Genre: Shape poem

Author: Gina Douthwaite

Introduction Gina Douthwaite is renowned for her 'concrete' or 'shape' poetry and the children will find a rich variety of further examples in anthologies where her work appears. Other poetic devices commonly feature in her work, for example rhyme, near-rhyme and assonance (see below). Use the pointer in the activity book to introduce the text to the children before they start reading.

Answers 1. 16 lines to match the number of steps, stepped-inset capitals mimic 16 steps' appearance 2. down 3. (two of:) mould, slime, rats' bones, it dates from a time when people had servants, it is 'not of this century' 4a. e.g. 'mould'/'cold'; 'still'/'chill' 4b. e.g. 'holds'/'souls'; 'steps'/'depths' 5. (two of:) 'some sinewy shape not of this century', 'the dead who guard', 'ghostly' 6. servants (the petrifying cold 'holds the souls of servants') 7. *it makes the reader retrace the steps with the speaker; it reinforces images.*

Further activities

- The children will be used to identifying rhymes, especially at the ends of lines. However, this poem offers wonderful examples of near-rhyme and assonance (which is a correspondence of vowel sounds, even though the consonant sounds are different). Draw the children's attention to further internal near-rhymes: for example, 'scattered'/'shatter'/'stagnant'; 'sinewy'/'century'.
- Ask the children to brainstorm other places that steps might lead – the deep end of a swimming pool, a dusty attic or loft, a roof, an apple tree, the crow's nest of an old sailing ship, the inside of a chimney ... Challenge them to create an atmospheric poem of their own, drafting it before shaping the lines in steps formation. Encourage the children to use near-rhyme if possible.
- Invite the children to gather together various anthologies and look for more Gina Douthwaite poems. What common features can they identify?
- Ask the children to research old houses and stately homes in your area and to find out whether any of them once had an ice-house.
-  Divide the children into groups of six and ask them to plan a choral performance of the poem. They can choose how to divide up the lines among themselves, and/or which, if any, lines to read together. Make sure that the children understand the significance of the italicised *from* in lines 13 and 15 (ghosts may be coming up the steps and/or the speaker is hurriedly retreating). Encourage them to reflect this in their performance. They can also plan sound effects, using percussion instruments or recording 16 footsteps, or other sound effects, such as dripping water or a clattering stone. Allow each group to perform their recitation and invite the audience to discuss areas of success or for improvement.

Sea fever (Level 4 text)

Contained in: Book 3 (page 20)

Genre: Classic poem

Author: John Masefield