

Lesson Plan: 'The Lost Letters of Christmas' by Lisa Renée Ruggeri.

2 week lesson plan- Year3/4 (This can be made longer/shorter depending on your class.)

This teaching sequence offers rich opportunities for authentic writing across a range of purposes and audiences. It allows for contextual grammar teaching and helps children understand how precise language choices shape meaning. Teachers can guide pupils in exploring authorial intent and its impact on the reader through a variety of approaches, including reader response and writing conferences, helping them develop their use of meta-language.

The book supports cross-curricular learning as well as focused English sessions, encouraging deeper engagement with its themes. Pupils can:

- Explore, interpret, and respond to a chapter book
- Examine how powerful vocabulary enhances meaning and reader experience
- Study the author's language and style to build vocabulary and grammar knowledge, and understand how this shapes a high-quality text
- Develop creative responses through drama, storytelling, and art
- Write in role to build empathy with characters
- Discuss and debate to explore interpretations of themes, plot developments, and characters' motivations

For the sequence to be most effective, **the text should be introduced gradually**. Keep the full story from the children at the start and reveal it slowly throughout the sessions, saving the ending for the final stages of teaching (The plan outlines which parts of the story to read and when). **Don't show the book to the class until lesson 2.**



Teaching Approaches:

- Reading aloud
- Book Talk
- Visualisation
- Response to illustration
- Role on the Wall
- Hot-seating
- Debate and Discussion
- Readers' Theatre
- Modelling

Key Learning Outcomes

- **Writing in role:** Understanding character perspective (e.g. Sadie or Evelyn)
- **Descriptive writing:** Using sensory details and powerful vocabulary
- **Letter/Persuasive writing:** Structuring and writing persuasive, heartfelt letters
- **Character analysis:** Comparing experiences, motivations, and emotions
- **Reading comprehension:** Making inferences, predictions, and exploring vocabulary
- **Narrative:** Descriptive, story-based passage inspired by scenes, setting, and character experiences.

Lesson	Focus & Objectives	Detailed Activities	Resources
Lesson 1 Responding to Illustration & Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and respond to the front cover illustration• Develop vocabulary and descriptive language• Use visualisation to support imaginative writing 	<p>Lesson 1: Show just the front cover of the book- without the title (See PowerPoint image).- Invite children to share initial impressions and responses. <i>What is the first word, phrase or association that comes to mind when you look at this image? What does the image remind you of?</i> -Also ask the children what they like and dislike about the images, any connections that they make with other images or stories and any questions the images provoke. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine they are there. You could find an audio of forest noises and cold winds howling to help them to build up a picture in their minds. What can we see? How does this image make us feel? What do you think you would hear if you were there? Give the children time to discuss in pairs/groups and feedback to class. Then have a whole class discussion where children feedback their group talk. Hand out post-it notes. Children to write adjectives/noun phrases to describe the image using prompts from the PowerPoint and what they have just discussed. Children to share their work and ‘post-it’ notes to be displayed on the class ‘working wall’. <i>If time- children to use the ideas to write a short descriptive paragraph about the image- Teacher to model an example. What could the book be called?</i> Collect ideas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PowerPoint (cover image)• Forest/wind audio• Post-it notes• Working Wall display• Writing books

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Lesson 2 Prediction & Vocabulary Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make predictions based on the title • Identify and analyse descriptive language • Visualise setting using author's vocabulary 	<p>Lesson 2: Recap previous lesson and reveal the book title: <i>The Lost Letters of Christmas</i>.- Ask: - Who do you think lost the letters? - What kind of story might this be?- Children make predictions, drawing on other stories they know. Record predictions to revisit later.- Read Chapter 1 aloud – model expressive, fluent reading.- Children jot down words or phrases they like on whiteboards while listening.- Use Book Talk prompts to guide discussion: - What did you like/dislike? - What puzzled you? - What patterns or connections did you notice?- Photocopy pages 6–7 for children to read in pairs. - Highlight adjectives, adverbs, verbs, similes, metaphors, personification (adapt to class needs).- Share good examples and display on Working Wall.- Re-read 2 pages with eyes closed visualisation: - What images came to mind? - Which words helped create those pictures? Ask: what images does this conjure up in the children’s minds? Which choice of words or phrase helped them to see the scene in their mind’s eye? Ask the children to talk about what they imagine, clarifying, recasting and enriching their descriptions and drawing on those in the text.</p> <p>- Children share what they imagined using evidence from the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book (Chapter 1) • Whiteboards & pens • Copies of pp. 6–7 • Highlighters • Working Wall

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Lesson 3 Suspense & Character Development (Role on the Wall)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify techniques used to create suspense Read and analyse character letters Create character profiles using Role on the Wall 	<p>Lesson 3: Read up to page 26.- Discuss how suspense is created How does the author build up suspense? - Short sentences, rhetorical questions, emotive vocabulary- Who could the letters be from? Children to record a few sentences on their whiteboards using evidence from the text. Eg- 'I think the letters are from a person who used to live in the house because the house is old and the letters were hidden under the floorboards'. Etc. Once children have feedback- read the letters (Letters are in the PowerPoint) You could read the letters as a class or have them for the children to read in groups on their tables. (to create an exciting atmosphere in the classroom, the teacher could have made the letters to show the class by staining the paper with tea and writing them by hand. You could have them in a pile tied up with a ribbon). Once the letters have been read- have a class discussion. Who is Evelyn? What is she like? How does she feel? Etc. -Teacher to draw around two children in the class on a large piece of paper for characters profiles of Sadie and Evelyn to be kept as a display in the classroom. See PowerPoint. <i>Role on the wall</i> is a technique that uses a displayed outline of the character to record feelings (inside the outline) and outward appearances (outside the outline) at various stopping points across the story. Using a different</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book (to p.26) Letters (PowerPoint/handmade) Flipchart paper & markers PowerPoint slides Working Wall

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		<p><i>colour at each of the stopping points allows you to track changes in the character's emotional journey. You can include known facts such as physical appearance, age, gender, location and occupation, as well as subjective ideas such as likes/dislikes, friends/enemies, attitudes, motivations, secrets and dreams. -Model how to complete own character profile.</i> Half the class can do one on Evelyn and the other half on Sadie. Once the children have completed them- ideas can be recorded on the giant class outlines and a comparison of the two characters can be made. Here the children can see that there are some definite similarities between the two characters: both lonely, both affected by the house, but Sadie's parents are present (though distracted), while Evelyn is a mystery.</p>	
Lesson 4		<p>Lesson 4-Recap and read up to page 44 (do not go further).- Discuss: - What do we know so far? - What questions do we still have? - How might Sadie help Evelyn? - Who could she ask for help?- Introduce writing task: Sadie is going to write to Father Christmas (or another important figure of their choice if more appropriate).- Discuss possible content: - What would Sadie say? - What does she want? - Why should Father Christmas help? - What's</p>	
Planning a Persuasive Letter (Sadie to Father Christmas)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in role • Structure persuasive letter • Develop empathy and imagination 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book (to p.44) • Letter planning sheet • PowerPoint scaffolds • Writing books

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		<p>the Christmas miracle she's hoping for?- Go through persuasive letter structure: - Greeting - Explain why you are writing - Who you want to help and why - What you want to happen- Encourage emotive language and imagination.- Children plan their letters using scaffolds and prompts from the PowerPoint.- Teacher to model writing an example paragraph together with the class.</p> <p>Lesson 5: Children write their letters to Father Christmas in role as Sadie using the plans from Lesson 4.- Encourage use of emotive language, varied sentence starters, and structure.- Model the process of editing and self-assessment using a success criteria checklist.- Peer-edit or teacher support based on class needs.- Final copies can be written on Christmas-themed paper.- Optional: display in a festive class post-box or reading corner.- Celebrate writing: invite pupils to read selected letters aloud.- Reflect as a class: - How might Father Christmas respond? - What does this tell us about Sadie's character?</p>	
Lesson 5 Writing & Editing the Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write and edit a persuasive letter in role• Use emotive language and structure • Publish a polished piece 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter drafts• Success criteria checklist• Christmas-themed paper• Post-box/display board• Editing pens

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Lesson 6 Hot-Seating & Character Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen understanding of character motivations and actions • Ask and answer questions in role • Use drama to infer and explore relationships 	<p>Lesson 6: Read Chapter 7 as a class.- Discuss: What have we learned about Miss Jeffers? What new details have emerged about Evelyn?- Add to the class character profiles (Sadie & Evelyn) created in Week 1.- Introduce Hot-Seating activity: pupils write questions they'd like to ask the characters (Evelyn, Noel, Sadie). Record ideas on whiteboards or in books.- Select confident volunteers to play the roles; conduct the interview using pupil-generated questions.- Use PowerPoint prompts to support questioning and responses.- Reflect on how drama helps us understand characters more deeply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book (Chapter 7) • Whiteboards and pens • PowerPoint prompts • Class character outlines/profiles
Lesson 7 Persuasive Poster for the Winter Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply persuasive techniques to a new format • Create visual and written content with a clear purpose • Use real-world contexts to make learning meaningful 	<p>Lesson 7: Read Chapter 8 only.- Link to your school's Christmas/winter fair or classroom party.- Ask: What is the purpose of a persuasive poster? What are its key features?- Revisit persuasive writing skills used in previous letters to Father Christmas.</p> <p>1. Eye-Catching Title / Headline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big, bold, and exciting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book (Chapter 8) • PowerPoint slide with poster features • Poster paper or templates • Art materials or digital tools

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grabs the reader's attention straight away <i>E.g. "Come to the Magical Winter Fair!"</i> 	
		2. Persuasive Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use emotive, positive, and enthusiastic language <i>E.g. "You won't want to miss it!" / "The best event of the year!"</i> 	
		3. Clear Purpose <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is the poster for? Who is it aimed at? <i>E.g. Inviting families, children, or friends to an event</i> 	
		4. Reasons Why <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include 3 clear reasons someone should come <i>E.g. "Delicious treats, magical games, and a special surprise guest!"</i> 	
		5. Call to Action	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell the reader what you want them to do <i>E.g. "Join us at 3pm on Friday!" / "Bring your friends and family!"</i> 	
		6. Dates, Times, and Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important factual details must be easy to find and read 	
		7. Colourful Visuals / Images <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pictures, drawings, or graphics to make it attractive and fun <i>E.g. Snowflakes, fairy lights, Santa's sleigh, children playing</i> 	
		8. Organised Layout <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information in sections or boxes Use bullet points, bold fonts, or borders to separate ideas Rhetorical questions (<i>"Are you ready for the best day ever?"</i>) Alliteration (<i>"Fantastic Festive Fun!"</i>) Slogans or catchy phrases 	

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		<p>- Teacher models a poster for Bramblewood or school event.- Children create their own persuasive posters for either Bramblewood’s fair or their real event.- Focus on emotive language, clear layout, bold headings, persuasive phrases, and visuals.- Posters can be displayed around the school or classroom.</p>	
Lesson 8 Planning an Alternative Ending (Narrative Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predict and create a new ending to the story • Use story mapping to structure ideas • Apply key vocabulary and themes from the unit 	<p>Lesson 8: Read up to half of page 79 (STOP at "...maybe she’ll start to believe again").- Ask: What might happen next? How will Sadie bring back Miss Jeffers' (Evelyn’s) joy for Christmas?- Class discussion to generate imaginative ideas.- Children complete a story map to plan their own versions of the final two chapters.- Use Bramblewood’s fair illustration to support vocabulary and inspiration.- Emphasise magical, emotional elements. What role might Jack, Noel, the class or Father Christmas play?- Recap vocabulary from throughout the unit; refer to the Working Wall.- Encourage creative freedom—children may borrow or share ideas.- Teacher may guide a small group in a shared version for support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book (to half of p.79) • Story mapping template • Bramblewood fair image (PowerPoint) • Vocabulary list / Working Wall

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Lesson 9 Writing Chapter 10 (Own Ending – Part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin writing a narrative based on plan • Focus on pacing, vocabulary and emotional impact • Apply all previous learning to create original content 	<p>Lesson 9: Recap ideas from yesterday and review children's story maps.- Teacher models writing the beginning of Chapter 10 using one pupil's plan.- Children write their own version of Chapter 10 – using rich vocabulary, dialogue, and description.- Encourage use of figurative language and emotional depth.- Teacher supports target groups or conferencing with individuals during writing.- Remind them this is their own version – make it magical, imaginative and heartfelt as they like.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story plans • Writing books • Sentence openers or vocab mats • Visualiser (for modelling)
Lesson 10 Writing Chapter 11 + Compare Endings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue narrative writing • Edit and improve writing using success criteria • Reflect on author's message and compare interpretations 	<p>Lesson 10: Teacher models continuing Chapter 11 using same pupil's story map.- Children complete their own Chapter 11 in their books.- Mid-lesson: pause for editing and peer review using success criteria (displayed or checklist).- Share strong examples under a visualiser – highlight word choice, sentence fluency, and originality.</p> <p>END - Read the final part of the book (pages 79–end).- Compare: Was your ending the same? How did it differ?- Class discussion: What message was the author trying to convey? What themes stood out?- Reflect: How does this story relate to us, especially at Christmas?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing books • Editing pens • Success criteria checklist • Book (final pages) • Visualiser

