



Sports and literacy learning activities

Ideas to bring physical education and literacy together

Age 9-14

CFE Second, Third and Fourth Levels

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About this resource

These resources have been created to support Scottish Book Trust's [Authors Live event with Chris Hoy and Joanna Nadin](#), but you can use them at any time and in any context to bring together sports and literacy. The activities are designed to be flexible, so adapt as you see fit!

Design your own flag SOC 2-03a

At the beginning of each Olympic Games, each country's athletes appear in the opening ceremony flying their national flag.

Hold a class or upper school competition to design a flag to represent your country today. Your pupils may wish to think about some of the major events and changes that have taken place in your country, whether these are political changes, advances in technology, famous examples of architecture, or any other prominent feature of society, politics or culture. Once your pupils have sketched a plan of your flag, they can create a large version on A3 paper and display these on sticks or attached to bunting.

Design your own mascot EXA 2-05a

The [mascot for Scottish football club Partick Thistle](#) divided supporters and the general public alike in 2015. Share the photos of the mascot and ask what they think.

You could also share the story of a 12 year old girl from Cumbernauld who won a [competition to design the Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014 mascot](#), before asking them to design their own sports mascot.

This could be to represent their favourite team or represent their country at a particular sport. Get them to think carefully about the qualities they want their mascot to represent, and how these will be reflected in the mascot's design and behaviour. What clothes (if any) will it wear? Will it use any props? What message would they like their mascot to convey about their team?

Create a news broadcast about sports and exercise LIT 3-14a, LIT 3-03a, LIT 3-09a, TCH 3-04a

Your pupils can create a sports broadcast with a variety of features and stories.

First, split them into groups, and assign each group a different news feature. Some could be given the task of reporting on a sports match, some could be tasked with researching and writing a feature on an aspect of the country's sporting life (for example, a feature which looks at the opportunities young people have to take up new sports), some could arrange interviews with community sports figures, and others could be asked to present a breaking news story.

The BBC have some great [guidance on creating a news broadcast](#).

Physical activity and mental health HWB 3-25a, LIT 3-14a, LIT 3-28a

Set up some fitness sessions with your pupils. This could take the form of circuit training, running or any other activity which involves a reasonable amount of physical exertion.

After the activity, ask pupils how they feel after taking part in it. Do they think that it's possible for exercise to lift a person's mood?

Back in the classroom, you can introduce pupils to the link between physical activity and mental health by showing them these videos:

- [Physical Activity is Miracle Gro for Your Brain](#)
- [How playing sports benefits your body ... and your brain](#)
- [Morning Exercise = Mental Health](#)

Ask pupils to research the links between exercise and mental health and produce an informative text for others. This could be a report, leaflet, article, news broadcast, infographic or any other suitable format. Websites like [Mind](#) and [Royal College of Psychiatrists](#) have information on exercise for young people which can help with this task.

Discussion: changing perceptions about physical activity LIT 3-02a, LIT 3-09a

Many children are put off physical education by the impressions they've formed about it. It can often seem as if physical activity is only for those who are good at it. With the dominance of mainstream sports such as football and rugby, it can also often seem as if the choice of sports is limited.

To give your pupils fuel for discussion, ask them to answer these survey-style questions individually:

- Do you enjoy PE? Why/why not?
- Do you enjoy being competitive with others?
- Would you prefer playing team sports or individual sports? Why?

Then, show pupils this [video about the wide range of sports and activities at the 2016 Olympic Games](#) to illustrate how many different types of sport and exercise there are.

This is also a good opportunity to discuss taking part in sports when you have a disability. Talk to your class about the Paralympics, for example you could show them the [trailer for the 2016 Paralympic Games](#) and this explanation of [Paralympic sport by the Australian Paralympic Team](#).

Now, bring pupils together into groups and ask them to discuss the following questions:

- Do you think sports can be off putting for some people? Why?
- What do you think are the good things and bad things about team sports and individual sports?
- What do you think the benefits are to being physically active?

- What advice would you give to someone who hasn't enjoyed mainstream sports such as football and rugby?

There are a variety of tasks you can do to follow up this discussion:

- Pupils could design a leaflet encouraging people to take up a sport or activity.
- Ask pupils to design a marketing campaign conveying the message that sports can be for everyone – you can get them to come up with slogans and design a logo for their campaign.
- Design a website to get the message out. You can do this in different ways: one would be to use [Padlet](#) to create a page of curated videos and images from around the web of different sports. Padlet allows you to accompany your videos and images with text, so pupils could write persuasive paragraphs. Alternatively, you can use [Wix](#) to create a free website.
- Organise an event to promote a wide range of sports. Your pupils could collaborate with the PE department to do this, making sure the event is promoted widely throughout the school and making sure that plenty of information about the various sports is made available to anyone interested in finding out more.
- Write an informative text about an alternative sport that captures their interest, explaining the rules and the appeal of the sport. This could form a part of the above task.

Write a picture book to inspire young children ENG 3-31a

Footballers like Frank Lampard and Theo Walcott write books for young children. Why not ask your pupils to create a picture book with an inspirational sports story for younger pupils to read?

This could be done as a follow up to the previous task, where pupils have found out about alternative sports: these could feature in their picture book.

For tips creating illustrated characters, take a look our [video with Martin Brown](#), the illustrator of Horrible Histories. Additionally, our [video with Phil Earle on plotting](#) can help pupils with creating a story.

Invent a new sport LIT 2-28a, HWB 2-25a, HWB 2-26a

Quidditch is the most famous example of a writer inventing an entirely new sport. Why not get your pupils to make up their own? This presents great opportunities for literacy – pupils could write sets of instructions and rules, make a presentation about their sport, write a match report or write persuasive pieces to get people to start playing their sport.

Ask the pupils to think about the following questions when they are making up their sport:

- Will it be a team sport, or played individually?
- Is it an athletics-based sport, or a game?
- What will the scoring system be?
- Will it be a timed game? Or is the winner the first to reach a certain number of points?
- What do players have to wear? What kit will they need?
- What are the rules?

You could go even further by playing some of the pupils' made up sports in PE!

Growth mindset HWB 3-11a, HWB 3-22a, HWB 3-25a

Carol Dweck's growth mindset theory is really taking a foothold in education. The theory states that people have different beliefs about the nature of success. Some believe that success is achieved through innate ability, and that this ability is fixed – this is described as a “fixed mindset”. Others believe that ability can be improved through hard work and learning – this is described as a “growth mindset”.

You can introduce your pupils to these ideas by working with your PE department. Ask the department when pupils are likely to have a block of at least three weeks doing the same activity. Ask the pupils to keep a diary after each time they take part in the activity, recording their thoughts about the following things:

- What their preconceptions about the activity were;
- What they have learned each week about how to do the activity;
- The mistakes they have made and how they can learn from these;
- Whether their ability improved.

Other topics for debate and discussion LIT 3-02a, LIT 3-09a

If pupils are looking for topics for discursive pieces, sport is full of contentious issues ripe for exploration. Here are a few suggestions:

- Can cycling ever be a clean sport?
- Should football referees wear microphones, as rugby referees do?
- Should women be allowed to compete against men in certain sports?
- Should certain performance-enhancing drugs be legal if they are proved to be safe?

- Should we base our judgements about athletes' standing solely on how many accolades they have won?
- Should Formula 1 cars be fitted with closed cockpits?
- Should Qatar lose the right to host the 2022 World Cup?
- Is it really possible to compare the performance of athletes now with the performance of athletes decades ago?
- Should Russia's athletics team have been banned from the 2016 Olympics?
- Are women's sports being given enough prominence in the media?
- Should skateboarding become an Olympic sport?
- Is it ethical for animals to be involved in sports (for example, polo and horse racing)?
- In light of the debate around tennis player Johanna Konta's decision to represent Britain, how much freedom should athletes have to decide which countries they play for?