



Great activities to do with any book at primary

Fun, creative activities for the classroom and library

Age 5-11

CFE Levels Early, First and Second

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About this resource

The activities in this resource have been designed so that they can be used with almost any fiction text. They are designed to further children's understanding of aspects such as setting, plot and character and to provide readers with opportunities to discuss, compare and share opinions about different texts. The resource is not a linear progression of activities but rather a range of ideas from which teachers can pick and choose.

Early level activities

Picture this

LIT 0-09b / LIT 0-31a

Give children images of settings, characters and events from their reading book. Ask them to create their own stories using the images. They can do this in pairs and then pairs can join together to share their own creations. The activity could be repeated, this time giving children 1 new image, not found in the text. Ask them to incorporate this into their story.

Invitation to play

LIT 0-09b / LIT 0-31a

Ask children to choose a character from a text they have read and to design a simple invitation, inviting him/her to their house. The invite should include a picture or sentence about what they will do during the visit (using information about likes/dislikes from the text).

First level

Who am I? Hot-seating

LIT 1-07a

Imagine you are a character from the text you have read (ensure a range of characters has been chosen). Write a short text or draw sketches to describe how you are feeling, your relationships with other characters and what has happened to you, but do not give your name!

Work in groups. Take it in turns to read aloud your short script. After each group member has read his/her script, others should try to guess who s/he is. Others should then ask questions to the character, who is now in the Hot Seat. Question starters could include ...

- How did you feel when ... happened?
- Why did you decide to ...?
- What are you going to do next?

Repeat the activity until all group members have had a turn in the Hot Seat.

Through the keyhole

LIT 1-14a

Choose a scene from the chapter or text you have read. Imagine you are peeping through a keyhole to catch a glimpse of the scene. Draw a sketch using worksheet 1 to show what you would see. Include the setting and characters. Could you convey atmosphere through your use of colours or by including telling objects or details? Add labels to your sketch using post-its, taking phrases or words from the text as evidence. This evidence will show from where you have taken your ideas and justify the different aspects you have included in your sketch.

Story cube

LIT 1-14a

Choose a story or chapter from a book you have read. Use the template found in worksheet 2 (blown up to A3) to create a story cube about it. Use drawings, sentences and thought bubbles to show the information on each side, as follows:

- 1 – Setting
- 2 – Main characters
- 3 – Main event
- 4 – Prediction of what could happen next
- 5 – New words and their meanings
- 6 – Favourite part

Work with a partner and choose 1 person to start. Roll the cube to see which side lands face up. Explain what can be seen on the side to your partner. Repeat a few times and then swap over.

Comic strip

LIT 1-26a

Work in pairs to identify 6 key events in the text. Create a comic strip of these main events. Insert text and dialogue to show how the story moves on and what the characters might say. The *Comic Life* software has excellent templates and formats which can be used. Alternatively, the grid (blown up to A3) and callouts (to be cut and pasted onto comic strip) in worksheet 3 and 4 could be used.

Sharing opinions

LIT 1-11a

This activity enables children to share and back up their opinions about a chosen aspect of a text they have read. It also encourages them to compare an aspect of a text to another book they have read. Ask children to choose either a character, an event or a setting from the text. Give them the following sentence starters:

I think that (insert character, event or a setting) is

Reason #1:

Reason #2:

This (character, event, or setting) is similar to one in (name of text with similarity) because

These opinions could be written onto pieces of coloured paper and made into a class book to be placed in the library. Children could refer to the class book when choosing a new text to read.

Second level

Conflict!

LIT 2-14a

Every non-fiction text we read contains a conflict, dilemma or problem of some kind. These conflicts can broadly be divided into 4 types:

Character v. Man (arguments, disagreements, friendships ...)

Character v. Nature (storms, avalanches, volcanoes, the environment ...)

Character v. Society (bullying, peer pressure)

Character v. Self (worries, new experiences, dilemmas ...)

Think about the text you have read. Can you spot an example of each from the storyline? Hang 4 pieces of chart paper around the room, each with one of the above headings written at the top. Work in pairs and give each pair a marker pen. Explain that children should try to write down examples from as many books as they can, putting examples onto the correct piece of chart paper.

Now create a book blurb to briefly describe the conflict in a made-up story. For example,

“Dan is about to embark on his first day at a new school. Terrified about making new friends and meeting new teachers, he heaves open the heavy front door to the building and his adventure at Salisbury High begins...”

Each pair should read aloud its blurb and peers should try to work out which conflict is being described (Character v. Self in the above example). As an extension, children could create their own Character v. Nature story.

Who said what?

LIT 2-07a

Working in pairs, create a series of statements which could have been said by different characters in the text. Think about the characters' actions, behaviours and relationships that you have learnt about as you read the text. Also think about *how* the character would have spoken (muttered, screamed, whispered, huffed...). Swap your list of statements with another pair and try to work out who said what.

Alternatively, read aloud your statements to another pair, putting in expression, and ask them to state whom they think is talking.

Chat show

LIT 2-09a

Look at examples of theatre, restaurant or book reviews from magazines and newspapers to explore the style and language used. Write your own column about the text which has been read, giving opinions about the book and justifying these. 2 pupils can then sit together and 1 can interview the other, who reads aloud his/her critique, as if on a chat show. A third child could video the interview. The video could be played on a school TV screen, in the library or to another class.

Roll the dice

LIT 2-13a

When you come across a new and unfamiliar word, roll a dice 3 times and complete the corresponding activities to help you understand and be able to use it for yourself:

- 1 – Write a synonym for your word
- 2 – Write an antonym for your word
- 3 – Illustrate your word
- 4 – Use the word in a sentence of your own
- 5 – Act out your word to a friend
- 6 – Create an alliteration containing your word and 2 others

When time is of the essence...

Early level

Freeze frames

Ask all children to choose 1 character from the book and to act out something that s/he does in the story. Call 'Freeze!' and children should stand still as statues. Tap one child on the shoulder and ask him/her to continue acting, talking about what s/he is doing. Other children should guess which character is being shown. Repeat the activity several times to show different characters from the text.

First level

Character ranking

List all the characters from a text you have read and rank them according to different criteria. These could include most to least powerful, kindest to meanest or bravest to most scared, for example.

Thought bubbles

Write a thought bubble for a character at a chosen point in the text when s/he is not actually speaking. Describe feelings relating to events and other characters at that point in the story.

Second level

Postcards

Look at examples of postcards and identify key aspects of the genre (careful choice of words as limited space, highly descriptive, inclusion of feelings). Choose a character and a setting from the text and write a postcard to a friend, describing the setting, the character's feelings and key events in that setting. Illustrate the other side to show a pictorial representation of the setting.

Even better if ...

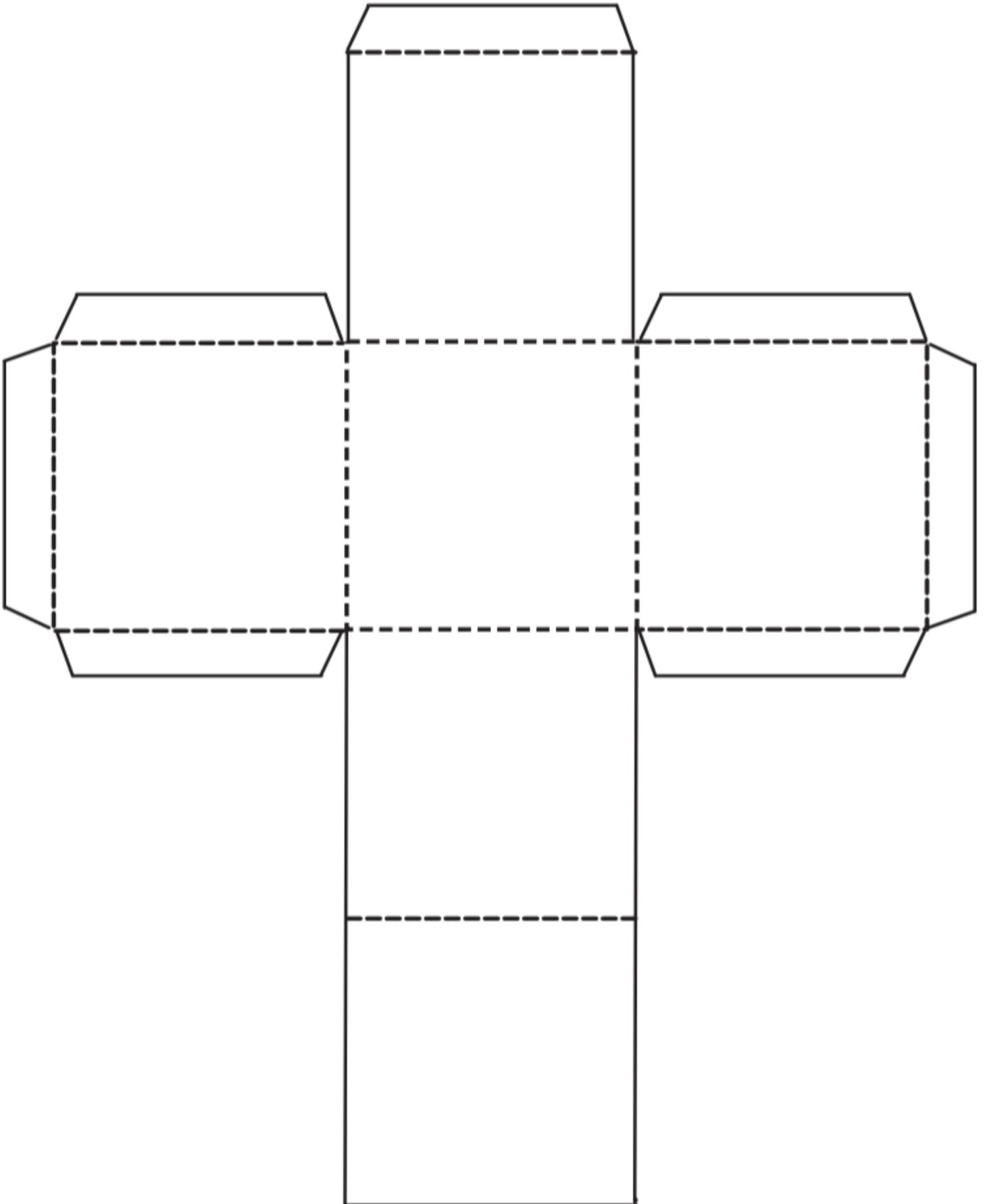
Ask children to work in pairs or trios. Give each a sentence from the text and ask them to improve it. This could be through using more interesting openers, adding adjectives or adverbs or extending the sentence through use of a connective and further detail. Challenge them to keep the original meaning and tone of the text. Children can swap and try this for different sentences.

Worksheet 1



Worksheet 2

Cut on solid lines - Fold on dashed lines



Worksheet 3

Worksheet 4

