

Do you believe in dragons?

Primary: (ages 7 – 11)

Language and Literacy

Students will apply research, critical thinking and writing skills to undertake an imaginative approach to belief, persuasion and opinion. Pupils will draw from international and local mythology to appreciate how literacies can help people share stories, manipulate fact and distort the truth. First students will consider the world myths that seem impossible but are rooted in local culture and folklore such as The Loch Ness Monster, Yeti/Bigfoot, dragons and fairies. The students will look at different forms of evidence that either foster a sense of belief or cast doubt on the story. They then investigate their local mythology to examine the evidence that allows people to believe. The inquiry will culminate with a finished piece of writing that asks the student to imagine their own myth and create a body of evidence to foster belief in it.

Time allocation About 5 lesson periods (but could last longer)

Subject content Distinguish fact from opinion and appreciate how information can be used to manipulate
Analytical skills using different literacy sources
Create persuasive text to suit needs of audience

Creativity and critical thinking This unit has a **critical thinking** and **creativity** focus:

- Challenge assumptions, pose questions, check accuracy
- Review alternative theories and explain strengths and weaknesses of evidence
- Acknowledge uncertainty and reflect on own position
- Generate and play with unusual ideas to produce meaningful and novel outputs

Other skills Collaboration, Communication

Key words fact; opinion; belief; myths; fake; media; persuasion;

Products and processes to assess

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This approach to literacy situates learning in storytelling, folklore, and mythology. It invites students to challenge their understanding of the world and ask critical questions of well-known stories as they have been presented to them. Students develop an informed view; they distinguish fact from opinion, and learn to recognise when sources try to influence and how useful and believable these are. Students create texts of their choice and select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of their audience. They aim to persuade, argue, explore issues or express an opinion using relevant supporting detail and/or evidence. The activity calls for curiosity, imagination, discipline, and collaboration and is fun, playful, and rooted in the world that students inhabit.

Teaching and Learning plan

This plan suggests potential steps for implementing the activity. Teachers can introduce as many modifications as they see fit to adapt the activity to their teaching context.

Step	Duration	Teacher and student roles	Subject content	Creativity and critical thinking
1	Lesson period 1	<p>Gather the pupils in a large group. Ask the pupils what stories they know from around the world that seem impossible? If they need a prompt ask them who has heard of: The Loch Ness Monster, Big foot, dragons etc. Allow them to discuss the different stories – expect them to disclose some that you don't know. This conversation allows the pupils to take a lead and establish how the lesson moves forward.</p> <p>After the group has shared their stories ask them to work in small groups (4 or 5). In the groups ask them to pick one of the impossible stories and mind-map/brainstorm all the information they know about it – ask them to write everything down on a piece of paper.</p> <p>After 20 minutes ask the group if they know the difference between fact and opinion. Allow the group to share what they know. You may need to prompt them, potentially look at the dictionary definition. Once the group feels confident with the difference ask them to go back over the information they have recorded and label each piece with either a F for fact or an O for opinion. Their sheets of paper should now have lots of F's and O's (even mythology has facts, i.e. Loch Ness is in Scotland, there are places in the world with hotspot Yeti sightings, etc.).</p> <p>Each group must present their sheet to the rest of the class discussing why they decided on F's or O's. Encourage the rest of class to ask questions if they are unsure of the accuracy of the information. When all groups have presented, clarify the difference between fact and opinion.</p> <p>Have a discussion about mythology and folklore. Ask questions such as: why do these stories exist? Where did they come from? Are they still relevant in our world? Who invented them? Are they real?</p>	<p>Exploring myths</p> <p>Learning about the difference between fact and opinion</p> <p>Distinguishing between fact and opinion</p> <p>Participating in class discussions and presenting information about mythology and folklore</p>	<p>Challenging assumptions and checking accuracy (e.g. what is fact and what is opinion)</p> <p>Questioning the world around them to understand context</p>
2	Lesson period 2	<p>Ask the class to reflect on the previous lesson. What do they remember? Can they distinguish fact from opinion?</p> <p>Show the class the video clips identified below (see Resources). After each clip invite the pupils to individually write down 3 questions about the accuracy of the information in the films – they are only allowed to write questions, not give statements. You could encourage them to ask questions that start with: I wonder... What if... How could...?</p>	<p>Developing enquiry skills with depth and accuracy of questions</p> <p>Developing awareness of forms of</p>	<p>Reflecting on previous steps taken</p> <p>Posing relevant and probing questions</p> <p>Reviewing alternative theories and</p>

		<p>Now ask the class to work in small groups and share their questions. Each group should use their collective questions to devise 3 ‘killer’ questions per group that would determine how truthful the story is (a ‘killer’ question is one that gets to the heart of the subject matter, it should have real depth and complexity to it). Each group should present their questions to the rest of the class.</p> <p>Have a conversation about the power of a good question in determining fact and opinion. Ask them to reflect on the films and how information and evidence was used to manipulate the story to help us believe. Within this conversation ask them to identify different forms of evidence, i.e. photos, eye witness account, historical documents, etc.</p> <p>Ask each pupil to write down three pieces of evidence or information that persuaded you to believe or not believe the story. Ask them to share these in small groups and then have a whole class conversation.</p> <p>Home learning – ask the pupils to speak to grandparents or parents about local mythology. Encourage the class to note down the key points of the story and even gather some basic evidence to bring back to the next lesson.</p>	<p>evidence</p> <p>Communicating and justifying opinion when small groups present to class</p>	<p>opinions to find their own perspective</p> <p>Identifying strengths and weaknesses of evidence, arguments, claims and beliefs</p>
3	<p>Lesson period 3</p> <p>Reflect on lesson 1 and 2 paying attention to: fact and opinion, the power of questions and how evidence can be manipulated.</p> <p>Ask the class to share the stories they discovered about their local area. Make sure you capture all their work and visualize any similarities, i.e. were there common stories?</p> <p>Working in small groups ask them to pick one of the local folklore stories. In their groups they must create a script for short news broadcast that claims to have found new evidence to prove the story. Within the broadcast they can have different forms of evidence i.e. eye witness, expert/specialist, photo/film, etc. Ask them to consider the language they would use in their script to persuade others to believe the story. Depending on the ability of the group you could encourage them to improvise first before writing their script.</p> <p>This lesson should culminate with the groups presenting their news stories and a discussion about how well they used language to persuade the rest of the class. Within the conversation ask them to consider: what words were used, accuracy of information, variety of sources, and use of fact/opinion.</p>	<p>Using technical language in a script</p> <p>Using persuasive words</p> <p>Presentation skills</p> <p>Justifying and sharing decisions about their stories</p>	<p>Producing a meaningful output that is personally novel</p> <p>Reflecting on steps taken to persuade and convince</p>	
6	<p>Lesson period 4</p> <p>Ask the class to reflect on lessons 1 – 3. Ensure they are fully aware of how language is used to present opinion/fact, argue and persuade, and finally how evidence is used when</p>	<p>Developing technical ability when writing final piece</p>		

and 5

forming a story.

The project can finish by offering pupils a challenge to create a new myth for their local area. They will be given 2 lessons to explore, devise, create evidence and finally write a piece of text that persuades others to believe their new myth. They must decide on the format that would appeal to their audience, i.e. imaginative story, newspaper, blog, eye witness police interview, etc.

Depending on the needs and capabilities of the group they could simply be given the challenge and a deadline of two sessions. However if they require more support there are some techniques that you could employ:

- After they have devised the story they can be 'hot seated' by the rest of the class. To do this: bring a chair to the front of the class and invite a pupil to sit in it. They are now the expert of the story they have just created. The class can ask them any question about the story which the pupil must answer fully. This exercise is helpful as it demonstrates the gaps in the story whilst allowing them to find new elements within an improvised frame.
- Timeline – the pupil could create a fictional timeline that tells the story of their myth in chronological order. This helps them plot key moments within a known structure, i.e. first sighting, best evidence recorded, recent activity, etc.
- Ask them to create 3 different types of evidence to prove the story. These can be anything but if they need support tell them it could be: a photo, a statement from eye witness, an article from an old newspaper, a map, a tweet from someone in the area, etc.

At the end of the 2 lessons the pupils can read their piece of text and present the evidence they have generated. Ideally they could do this in front of another class to test out how believable they were.

Developing independence skills to complete writing task without prompts

Generating and playing with unusual ideas to create a novel myth of their own

Presentation skills in front of a new audience

Posing and responding to questions to understand and explain strengths and weaknesses of evidence

Using fact and opinion within a final piece of writing

Use of persuasive terminology

Resources and examples for inspiration

Web and print

- Not essential but access to Google Images would be beneficial to carry out pupil led searches in lesson one
- Youtube clip of mythology/folklore that presents both fact and opinion. Suggested clips include:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZnAo_2cpYY Yeti
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SU-yq_IJhtU Tree Octopus
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Wa319OXRNs> Loch Ness Monster
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_FpqlxZet3A Fairies

Other

- Paper and pens for research and writing tasks

Opportunities to adapt, extend, and enrich

- Further links could be made with local history and geography, for example, by asking students to create an exhibition or resource on a local myth
- The activity could be extended by asking students to create a second myth story that is extraordinary and completely imaginary and that they do not have to justify with reference to evidence and facts. Students could then be asked to compare and contrast their two myths.

**Creativity and
critical thinking rubric**

- Mapping of the different steps of the lesson plan against the OECD rubric to identify the creative and/or critical thinking skills the different parts of the lesson aim to develop

	CREATIVITY Coming up with new ideas and solutions	Steps	CRITICAL THINKING Questioning and evaluating ideas and solutions	Steps
INQUIRING	Make connections to other concepts and knowledge from the same or from other disciplines	1-3	Identify and question assumptions and generally accepted ideas or practices	1-2
IMAGINING	Generate and play with unusual and radical ideas	1-4	Consider several perspectives on a problem based on different assumptions	1-2
DOING	Produce, perform or envision a meaningful output that is personally novel	3-4	Explain both strengths and limitations of a product, a solution or a theory justified on logical, ethical or aesthetic criteria	1-3
REFLECTING	Reflect on the novelty of solution and of its possible consequences	1	Reflect on the chosen solution/position relative to possible alternatives	1-2