

You Can... **Rewrite nursery rhyme history**

Nursery Rhymes are ideal places to start a career in journalism. The stories are easy and accessible so none of your budding journalists can complain that they can't think of any ideas. If you have children from many cultures in your classroom, ask them to share nursery rhymes and household rhymes from their own cultures. They can share them in their own language or in English.

Thinking points

- Use music lessons to explore rhythms and ensure that children know the lyrics of common nursery rhymes.
- Use nursery rhymes as the basis for clapping games. Children can recite the rhymes while clapping the beat: individually first and then with a partner.
- Explore the implications of rewriting nursery rhymes in other poetry styles such as rap. How would this impact on the rhythm and lyrics?
- Explore the history of nursery rhymes. There are a number of websites such as www.rhymes-org.uk that can be used to provide some background information.

Framework links

- Year 3: adventure and mystery stories – adapt the headline as a chapter heading and write the story as suggested.
- Year 4: explanations – explore the chronology of the events leading up to, or starting from, the fall. (Build on the Newspaper topic in Non-fiction Unit 1)
- Year 5: persuasive writing – write the same story from different perspectives. Introduce the idea of bias in newspaper reports.
- Year 6: journalistic writing.

Tips, ideas and activities

- Agree a nursery rhyme as the basis for a shared writing session. 'Jack and Jill' is probably the easiest.
- Write the words for the children to read. Encourage them to ask questions about the events in the rhyme. As far as possible, let the children ask the questions. Younger ones may need a little prompting, for example:
 - Why did Jack and Jill have to go *up* a hill to find water?
 - Is it sensible to build a well on top of a hill?
 - Where or when did they live?
 - Why didn't an adult take them up the hill?
 - Why did Jill fall? Did she trip up? Were Jack and Jill seen to be arguing? Might Jack have pushed Jill?
- Working in groups, children should choose the most interesting question to discuss. Within their groups, ask the children to suggest answers to the questions. They should revisit the text as often as necessary to find any additional clues.
- Use role-play to further expand on the activities. Hot seat one child as Jill another as Jack. Another child could be a casual bystander. The other children in the groups should take on the role of investigative reporter. The reporter's role is to find out as much information about the event as possible.
- Let children in the group suggest as many different headlines as possible. Remind them that the job of the headline is to attract a reader's attention and make them want to read on.
- Once the headline is written, ask children to write the newspaper stories. If possible, use computers and teach children how to create and use columns in word processing software.
- Let groups of children select their own nursery rhymes and revisit the same progression of activities.
- Publish the stories in a newspaper titled 'Nursery Rhyme World'.