



The Shortlist – Resources for Teachers of Key Stage 2

The Red House Children's Book Award is the only national children's book award voted for entirely by children. This year's shortlist is bursting with entertaining and thought-provoking reads that are perfect for the classroom. If your pupils want to take part in voting for the Award, head over to the **Red House Children's Book Award** site www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk before 24th January 2014. Children can vote for their preferences individually, or you can vote as a class.

Younger Readers' Category (KS2)

1. Jennifer Gray, 'Atticus Claw Breaks the Law', Faber and Faber
2. Norman Messenger, 'The Land of Neverbelieve', Walker Books
3. Alex T. Smith, 'Claude in the Country', Hachette

The **Books for Younger Readers** category also features animals galore in three humorous reads. Jennifer Gray's 'Atticus Claw Breaks the Law' is a beautifully crafted tale about the world's greatest cat burglar, the unlikely hero in a caper reminiscent of 'Wallace and Gromit'. Claude is the quirky canine who lends a paw on the farm in the light-hearted romp, 'Claude in the Country' by Alex T. Smith. Norman Messenger's exquisite illustrations of flora and fauna document his time in 'The Land of Neverbelieve', and will set fire to your pupils' imaginations. However, beware what awaits you in the Spooky Dark Mountains...

Resources

Battle of the books This activity is a great follow-on from the **Choose mine!** activity for OLDER READERS. Adapt the classic debate set-up, by asking pupils to argue for their chosen book to be the Award winner. Then have a class vote, by asking pupils to rank the books in order of preference to choose a favourite from the Red House Children's Book Award 2014 – Younger Readers Category. Total up the number of first-place votes, second-place votes and so on. Then go online to the Red House Children's Book Award site to record your class votes www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk/vote/groupvote. Alternatively, pupils can vote individually by awarding virtual rosettes in order of preference www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk/vote/individualvote. You can also download the certificate of achievement to present to the children that took part: www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk/resources/index

Blurb rewrite Challenge the pupils to write their own blurb for one of the books. They should sum up the story in a paragraph or two and use popular blurb-writing features such as: alliteration, dramatic adjectives and adverbs, repetition for effect, quoting the novel and critics, and rhetorical questions. Model this by



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annotating the three book covers on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils can prepare for their blurb writing by summarising each of the three stories in just a sentence and then expand on these sentences for their own blurb copy.

Chapter headings There are just chapter numbers for '**Atticus Claw Breaks the Law**'. What titles would pupils give to the chapters?

Expand it Pupils can practise expanding noun phrases to add information to the noun and make them more interesting. Use the example for Claude on page 5 of '**Claude in the Country**':

Claude is a dog

Claude is a small dog

Claude is a small, plump dog who wears a beret and a very dashing jumper.

Pupils can then try the same approach for characters 'Sir Bobblysock' and 'Mrs Cowpat'.

Figuratively speaking '**Atticus Claw Breaks the Law**' is full of expressive similes:

Page 85 'Atticus purred like a tractor'

Page 142 'Inspector Cheddar's face had gone from green to red, like a traffic light'

Page 88 Inspector Cheddar describes himself as '... rotten, like a mouldy bit of mouse-trap'

Ask pupils to describe and sketch the pictures they conjure up. Can they spot any other similes in the story?

Fact or fiction? Can pupils find out five interesting facts about the writer and discover what inspired her/him to write the book? This is an opportunity to discuss trustworthy sources. For example, the author's own website, or biography on their publisher's site, is likely to be more accurate than a Wikipedia entry. Just for fun, pupils could add to their list one thing that is made-up about the author and see if other pupils can sort the fiction from the facts!

Hot off the press Show the pupils the headline, 'BUNGLING BOBBIES BAFFLED BY BURGLARS', on page 78 of '**Atticus Claw Breaks the Law**'. Here's how the article might have looked:

BUNGLING BOBBIES BAFFLED BY BURGLARS

Police are struggling to cope with a recent spate of house burglaries in Littleton-on-Sea.

Elsbeth and Stanley Pearson lost precious jewellery, including a stunning pair of diamond earrings, from their seafront bungalow.

"We didn't see anyone – just a cat. Ugly-looking brute it was." said Mrs Pearson.

Flower-seller Aisha Rana, from Sea Shell Drive, was the next victim. She woke up to find her safe emptied.

With an appalling total of seven burglaries in just one week, locals are concerned that police are not doing enough to protect the normally crime-free town.

"There were no signs of forced entry and no fingerprints, so we have nothing to go on." maintained Inspector Cheddar.

Police are appealing to anyone who might know of the whereabouts of the stolen items to contact them.



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red house children's book award!



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To go over the main features of a newspaper story, download the resource 'What's In A Newspaper Report?' from First News' school website www.firstnews.co.uk/forschools/poster-whats-newspaper-report. Analyse how the article, 'BUNGLING BOBBIES BAFFLED BY BURGLARS', uses the key features. Notice how it also uses emotive language, such as 'bungling', 'struggling', 'victim' and 'appalling'.

Now ask the pupils to write the story for 'PURR-FECT POLICE CAT PUTS BIRD BURGLARS BEHIND BARS' on page 209. They can come up with their own headline if they wish. Don't forget alliteration and puns!

Humour me There is humour in all three of the books. As an example, read the extract from '**Claude in the Country**' where the judge lands in the cowpat. Describe the visual comedy in the picture of the judge falling face first in cow poo and also how the alliteration, of all those words beginning with the letter 's', creates a wonderful onomatopoeic sound of the event. Can pupils think of other onomatopoeic words? What funny bits did pupils enjoy in the books and why?

I know how you're feeling Re-read pages 111-112 of '**Atticus Claw Breaks the Law**' and discuss how Mrs Tucker is feeling – just from her actions. Pupils can then have a go at writing her thoughts down as a scripted monologue. Don't forget the stage instructions!

Mr Messenger missed me! Ask pupils to invent their own creature or plant to add to the '**The Land of Neverbelieve**', one that Norman Messenger overlooked during his stay on this weird and wonderful island. They should draw a picture of their creation and then use adjectives to describe it.

Explore more

Go to the Book People website www.thebookpeople.co.uk/redhouse for great Top 10 lists.

Hodder Children's Books are on the Hachette website www.hachettechildrens.co.uk where you will find a Review Crew section your class might be interested in.

Library corner Create a book display for the school library to promote the books in the Younger Readers' category of the Red House Children's Book Award 2014, and to encourage everyone to get involved.

Download the shortlist and past winners' poster:

www.redhousechildrensbookaward.co.uk/resources/index

If you've enjoyed this resource, you might like to get involved with the Federation of Children's Book Groups, who coordinate the Award throughout the year and have many other book-related activities you can take advantage of: www.fcbg.org.uk.



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