



My Mum the Pirate

Author Jackie French / Illustrations Stephen Michael King / 120 pages / Book Series Wacky Families

Objectives

- To enjoy reading and understanding the main ideas of a story in English.
- To demonstrate understanding of a variety of topic-specific vocabulary used throughout the story and use it in related activities.
- To comprehend parts of the story at both word and sentence level.
- To appreciate social references in the context of a humorous story.
- To be able to use imagination and creativity to demonstrate deeper understanding of the story.

Word bank

Key vocabulary

Nouns: parts of the ship (e.g. sail, mast, galley)

Verbs: pirate activities (e.g. fight with swords, walk the plank, sing pirate songs)

Adjectives: words to describe horrible things (e.g. stinky, filthy, slimy)

Key structures

Talking about likes and dislikes: e.g. what Cecil likes doing at school and what he doesn't like about being a pirate.

Making plans: e.g. how to thwart *The Black Ship*.

Appreciation of different styles and registers of speech: pirates vs. teachers

Tips and ideas

Before reading

- Encourage higher level thinking by getting students to predict the theme of the book from the cover picture and blurb.
- Elicit what the class knows about pirates – from history, films and books.

During reading

- Quick and frequent concept checking questions.
- Lower order thinking skill activity – draw up a timeline of episodes as the story unfolds on a series of A4 pieces of paper stuck around the classroom walls. Students add to it, chapter by chapter.

After reading

- Higher order thinking skill activity: evaluation. What would they prefer: life on dry land or life on board ship? Why? Small groups present their preferences and their reasons to the class.
- Apply the knowledge of new vocabulary and structures by re-telling the story in small groups (using the timeline to help them remember).

Teacher support activities

Great Games: Pirate Ship Board Game

- Give students grids marked from 1 to 10 across the top of the page, and A to J down the side.
 - In pairs, they draw seascapes onto their sheets and "hide" 5 pirate ships around the maps (covering 1 square each). 1 ship is *The Mermaid* and the other 4 are slaver ships.
 - Pairs write a list of 4 or 5 forfeits in case players land on the slaver ships (e.g. "Sing a sea shanty", "Walk the plank", "Eat a sea monster sandwich").
 - Pairs join up and play the game – like playing "Battleships" – taking turns to choose a square on the other pair's board. The winners are the first to land on *The Mermaid*.
- Ss a) "A-4."
Ss b) "Water!"
Ss b) "D-6."
Ss a) "Slaver ship! You have to do a forfeit!"

CLIL LINK: Ethics – Bullying

Cecil is different, and he doesn't like it.

- Why does he feel different?
- What does he do to try to fit in?
- How does the school (the teachers / the principal / the students) help him?

Hold a whole-class discussion to talk about what behaviours make people stick out or fit in, and how their surroundings – their school, their town, their neighbourhood – can make them feel more comfortable.

Don't make this into a competition or a debate with a Right and a Wrong side – this should lead to consensus and possibly a statement of intent, shared by all

English Theatre: Sea Shanties

- Pick out some of the shanties (pirate songs) that appear in the book.
- Look at the lyrics and the rhyme scheme.
- Substitute some of your own words for Filthy Frederick's lyrics.
- Have a sing-along!
- Research into the three types of traditional Sea Shanty: short haul, halyard, capstan. What was the difference between them? How were the lyrics and the rhythms different?
- Look for some Sea Shanties your class might like (e.g. "What shall we do with the drunken sailor?", "Blow the man down", or "Black Flag" from *Assassin's Creed*). Get your students to choose their favourite, learn the words and sing the song.

