

Schedule of activities carried out with children

- visits to schools to present the project including the project's main objectives, activities and outputs
- initial meetings with interested teachers, to discuss what we would like to do with the children in the framework of the Weaving Webs of Stories project and how we are going to work with the children – rules observed when communicating with the children.
- school's safeguarding policy and documentation required to work with children

Session 1

Getting to know each other

What's in a book?

This session introduces the children to the Weaving Webs of Stories project, its objectives, activities and products. The children will get to know each other and their tutor. One of the main aims is to create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere where children feel confident to share their ideas and experiences, work together and learn from each other. They are encouraged to express their ideas and be as creative as possible. In this session the children are given the opportunity to talk about the role that reading books can play in our lives. They will analyse how much the cover and the title of books count when we choose what to read. They will also examine what the introduction/the first lines reveal about a book.

Ask them to share with you their first experience with books (first in groups and then with the class): How they learned to read/ who taught them/ what they feel when they read a book / what interesting books they have read so far / what books they would like to read or discuss during the WWS sessions - let each group come up with suggestions and then negotiate them in class.

Ask children to bring their favourite book next session and share with their peers what made them read it and why they like it so much. Encourage them to make comments on the role of the title and cover of the book in their choice. Give them alternatives: they can either create a poster, make a short video or draw their own cover of the book to motivate other children to read their favourite book.

Session 2 Dottie

Getting to Know Stories

Diversity

The role of the cover, title and pictures of books

This session introduces the children to the first story, Dottie. The book will help children understand that we live in a world full of diversity where each individual has their place. The teacher uses prediction strategies to stimulate children's imagination and natural curiosity and encourages children's reflection on the values or lessons of the story. The teacher's questions ask children to predict what is going to happen, relate events to their personal experience or express their opinions. They are encouraged to express their ideas and be as creative as possible. They analyse how much the cover and the title of books count when we choose what to read. They also examine what the introduction and the first lines reveal about a book.

Help children get the main idea of the story from the questions Dottie asks: Where am I? Who am I? What is this book about? What am I doing here? The theme of Identity and Belonging is about children developing a positive sense of who they are, and feeling that they are valued and respected a diverse community.

Trailing Diversity We live in a diverse world where we find clues to the presence of different cultures. There are relationships between different cultures and we have to recognize that their mutual influences on each other enrich these cultures. Get the children into groups with a maximum of six people per group. Tell each group that they are to explore their local environment (village, city district, town) and look for "footprints" from other countries and cultures and to make a list of their findings (if possible pictures, sound recordings, video, etc). Ask each group to present the findings of their research; prepare an exhibition with the documentation they made of the "footprints".

Discuss the findings: Did you find anything surprising?/What is the significance of the fact that there are so many "footprints" from other countries and cultures around us?/ What does this knowledge bring us?

Session 3 Stereotypes

Stereotypes

This session introduces children to stereotypes relying on Dottie's encounter with the beast, which looks frightening but which, in fact, is a very sensitive and kind creature. In this session the children are given the opportunity to analyse and reflect on several types of stereotypes. Different beliefs about what is expected and appropriate behaviour from girls and boys are reinforced by gender stereotyping. These gender norms can be extremely damaging, imposing arbitrary boundaries on kids and fostering prejudice and discrimination. Through the materials children use, the activities they engage in, the visual environment they are exposed to every day, and the conversations they have with teachers and peers, stereotypes can be contested.

Children identify women in all sorts of professions. Prior to the lesson, choose between three and five jobs related to STEM subjects and the transport sector:

- Aircraft pilot
- Train driver
- Train conductor
- Ticket booth clerk
- Lorry driver
- Seagoing ship and inland waterway vessel captain and crew
- Mechanical engineer (locomotive, automotive, aircraft, ships)
- Bus or tram driver
- Air traffic controller
- Maintenance technician

Present the list of jobs to children and tell them that most people think they are not suitable for women. Invite women professionals having these jobs to visit the classroom, children ask them about their duties, training and other questions they prepared. Interactions with real-life professionals are extremely valuable for children. They help to raise their aspirations, see more opportunities and choices, challenge gender stereotypes attached to specific jobs and get a better grasp of the purpose and relevance of learning in later life.

Session 4 The Guardian Angel

The introduction of a story

Symbols

This session introduces the children to the second story, The Guardian Angel. In this session the children are given the opportunity to talk about the role that the first paragraph can play in the book. They analyse the main elements of an introduction and writers' strategies to make memorable introductions. They also examine what the first lines (the introduction) reveal about a book. The session raises children's awareness of the strategies writers use to make introductions memorable.

Ask children if writers use other strategies to make introductions memorable. Invite them to give examples (from the previous activities or from their experience as readers) and explain why these strategies help.

Ideas:

1. The reader finds himself/herself in the middle of a dramatic action.
2. The writer uses rhetorical questions, addressing the reader.
3. The writer starts the book with a surprising/shocking statement
4. Circular introductions and endings (the introduction asks a question the answer of which comes at the end of the book)

Give children Hand2 and ask children to match the beginnings of the books to the strategies used by writers. What is their favourite beginning? Why?

Children can use the link <https://www.stylist.co.uk/books/100-best-opening-lines-from-childrens-books/125320> to find and then discuss other famous opening lines to favourite books.

Would you change the opening lines of the Guardian Angel? How?

Session 5

Friendship

The main elements of the plot of the story

This session focuses on the story, *The Guardian Angel*. The teacher uses prediction strategies to stimulate children's imagination and natural curiosity and encourages children's reflection on the values or lessons of the story. The teacher's questions ask children to predict what is going to happen, relate events to their personal experience or express their opinions. They are encouraged to express their ideas and be as creative as possible. The children identify the key elements of a story. Understanding how a story is organized is necessary for students to access the highest levels of comprehension of that story. Understanding how a story is organized also provides students with a frame of reference that greatly assists with recall. Being familiar with the various elements that are combined together in good storytelling also helps students in their own writing. It helps students to organize their thoughts and to competently weave together the various threads of their own stories.

Session 6 Isata

Equality & equity

Education

This session introduces the children to Isata's story. In this session the children are given the opportunity to talk about the role that education and school play in our lives. They will analyse how poverty affects education through Isata's story.

Have a talk with children about the relations between education and poverty. Poverty and education are linked, because people living in poverty may stop going to school so they can work, which leaves them without literacy and numeracy skills they need for their careers.

Possible strands of discussion:

How does poverty affect education?

How does poverty affect children's lives?

How can education reduce poverty? What are the benefits of education?

Session 7 How to create a character

What's in a story?

Characters

This session introduces the children to characters in stories and how to develop them. They are encouraged to express their ideas and be as creative as possible. The children are given the opportunity to talk about their favourite characters and analyse who the character is, what they value, what their problems are or where they live. They also examine what techniques writers use when creating their characters.

Discuss with children how important a character is in the story. A story unfolds around a character interacting with other characters and events over time. As writers we have to define who the character is, what they value, what they're afraid of and what their problems are. They are like real people, with hobbies, pets, past experiences, thoughts, and dreams. These characteristics inform how a character reacts to and feels about the things that happen to them. Your job is to establish what's important to your character (ideally, it's something that your audience can relate to), and help the reader imagine what might happen if they lose that important thing. Stories have different kinds of characters. Every story has a main character, called the hero or protagonist. Many stories have a bad guy: the villain or antagonist. There are also secondary characters round out the story. These characters may help the main characters, oppose them, or be completely neutral, so long as they help the reader understand the protagonist or antagonist in deeper ways. You can use the first person, or third person. Show their thoughts, but also show the world around them and how they interact with that world.

Tell them they will create their own character in a story. Ask them in pairs to think of a possible character. If they don't like this idea, use a photo of a scene with lots of people or go to a public place where they can observe other people, choose one person and imagine a few details about them.

Pair work: Encourage them to think of the questions they would ask to develop their character and then negotiate them in class. Have a class list of possible questions (You can use Handout 1 and have children select the questions).

Pair work: Ask them in pairs to think of a possible character whose story they would like to write and imagine a dialogue between the character and the writer. Ask them to record that dialogue and present it to class.

Character description – invite children to reflect on the questions below (they can select what they think it is suitable and essential for their story) and write down the ideas they want to use to develop their character. Invite them to draw their character (Handout 3):



- What is your character's name? What is the story behind that name? Does your character have a nickname? Which is? Who nicknamed him/her that? Why? Does s/he feel comfortable with the nickname?
- Think about a happy or problematic moment/ experience in your character's past life and present it with its consequences. What did the character learn from that event?
- Choose one of your character's traits and think about how you express them in words. What techniques do you use?
- A character's thoughts

Where does the character live? Are there any other places s/he likes to visit? Why? Describe the character in that space. Why is he there? What is s/he thinking? It introduces the person together with the environment in which s/he is and how s/he relates to that environment (How does s/he feel there? Does s/he like it? What memories does s/he have about that place?).

Session 8 Teratex/ Setting

Fears and how we can overcome them

Setting

This session introduces the children to another story, Teratex. Children are encouraged to express their ideas and be as creative as possible. In this session the children are given the opportunity to talk about the role that setting plays in the development of a story. They will examine words and how they can use them to recreate the reality of the story they write.

Elicit from children where they think Florin, the character of Teratex is, when and where the action in Teratex takes place.

Ask children how important their knowledge about the time and place is for the development of the story they are going to listen to. Tell them that this place and time of the story is called setting. A story's setting refers not only to the physical location, but also the time the action takes place. It is the where and the when of a story.

Talk with children about types of setting: a story setting can be drawn from imagination or based on historic events, as well as geographical locations in the real world. Setting serves as the backdrop to everything that happens in a story, and often contributes significantly to its atmosphere. Elicit examples of types of setting.

A story's setting refers not only to the physical location, but also the time the action takes place. It is the where and the when of a story. While rich setting descriptions will captivate your readers, it's important not to bore them with paragraphs upon paragraphs of pure description.

Tell children that when describing a place a writer shows the reader what the place is like by appealing to senses. When children are asked to describe a place they tend to present what it is like. To make the place more vivid children should add details about sounds, smells, tastes, etc. Use the table to raise children's awareness about the use of sense words in their stories.

Sight	What can you see?
Sound	What can you hear?
Smell	Does the place smell? What is it like?
Taste	Does the place leave a taste in your mouth? What is it like?
Touch	How does the place make you feel? What is it like?

Session 9 Teratex story/endings

Perceptions and stereotypes

The ending of a book and its significance

This session continues the story, Teratex. The children are encouraged to express their ideas and be as creative as possible. In this session the children are given the opportunity to find that issues can be interpreted in different ways, depending on our experience, knowledge or perceptions. They also talk about the role that the endings of books can play in our reading experience. They learn about several types of endings and find out what the ending lines reveal about a book.

Ask them if they liked the ending of the story. Elicit from them what makes a good ending. Good endings bring the hero—and, more importantly, the reader—to some kind of destination (even if it's a trap). Good endings highlight for us how the protagonist has changed from the beginning of the book.

Discuss with children some types of endings and ask them to give you some examples (see teacher's tips). In groups children have to resort to their reading experience and provide examples for each type of ending.

Ask children in pairs to write another type of ending for the story, Teratex and then present it to their peers.

Session 10 Apsara, the girl from Nepal

Inclusion

Improving style

This session introduces the children to Apsara, a girl from Nepal, who in spite of difficulties managed to go to school and thus achieve her potential. The children are encouraged to express their ideas and be as creative as possible. In this session the children are given the opportunity to talk about the language they use and how to improve their writing style. They look into use of synonyms to avoid repetitions. They also experience what inclusion and exclusion mean.

The session raises children's awareness about inclusion and the difficulties experienced by people who are excluded or marginalized.

Tell children they are going to read a short story about a girl from Nepal. Make sure children know where Nepal is on the map; use the map and the information provided by the booklet. Tell children that people in Nepal can't complete their education because of poverty. Many girls in Nepal are married before they are 18: their parents prefer to send boys to school while girls are married. Ask them if this is also a form of exclusion.

Invite them to analyze the title of the story and tell you what they think happened to Apsara, the girl in the story.

Read the story and invite children to discuss how Apsara might have felt when she realized that she wouldn't be able to go to school. Ask them to tell you how Apsara succeeded in being included in the society. What other ways can they suggest?

Session 11 Modernizing fairy tales: Little Red Riding Hood

The session focuses on modernizing fairy tales. Children are guided how to rewrite the story with the same characters and basic story concept but add modern twists to their modern version in order to convey a message. They discuss the key elements of a fairy tale, brainstorm a list of objects or things specific to the past and reflect on how things are different now. They also discuss problematic issues in the fairy tale and question whether there are any stereotypes that can be dealt with in their new version.

Tell students that they are going to modernize a fairy tale. Select one classic fairy tale (e.g. Little Red Riding Hood). Ask them to retell it to you or read it to brush up on their memory. Discuss the key elements of a fairy tale such as setting, characters, problems, and resolution as well as themes like magic, threes and sevens, fairies, forests, royalty, and castles as they retell and recreate a fairy tale in modern times.

State that fairy tales happened in the distant past and brainstorm a list of objects or things specific to the past in the story (location, homes, food, clothing, and other objects) and add them to the past circle. Also, ask them questions like:

- Would you want to live in this time period? Why or why not?
- How are the character's clothes different from clothes today?
- Do the characters have similar toys? Do they play the way you do?

As a class, discuss how things are different now. To prepare students to modernize their own story, ask them questions like:

- How is this time period different from modern times?
- How would the story be different if it were written today?

Discuss problematic issues in the fairy tale. Are there any stereotypes? Isn't the wolf discriminated against? Has Little Red ever met the Wolf? What does she know about him? Isn't she behaving towards him according to the label she got from her family? We live in a diverse society: we are different but our difference shouldn't be viewed negatively or form major justification for discrimination. We should live together, maintain open relations of interaction, exchange and mutual recognition of our values and ways of life.

Have students rewrite the story with the same characters and basic story concept but add modern twists to their modern version. Have them share their ideas with a peer and make changes and additions. Present their versions to class.

Session 12 An interview with a favourite writer

This session focuses on how to organize a writer's visit to school. In this session the children are given the opportunity to speak with their favourite writer about book reading and writing. One of the main aims is to create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere where children feel confident to share their ideas and experiences. They are encouraged to express their ideas and be as creative as possible.

- Choose an author with the children. Contact the writer to see his/her availability and schedule a date for the event.
- Prepare the children:
 - Before their physical/virtual visit, help students learn more about the writer.
 - With your students, research the author's background (visit the writer's website) so that children are more familiar with them before the big day.
- Encourage children to read as many books by the author that they can.
- Discuss with children the writer's books.
- Have students create their own books or stories that connect to the author who will be coming to speak.
- Create a schedule of how the day will go.
- Discuss the questions the children might ask the author. Prepare questions ahead of time.

Check with the author to see if they are willing to take questions from your students. Then, have students come up with questions to ask. As a class, choose 3-5 of the top questions (or however many the author is okay with). The author may want the questions before the presentation in order to prepare. If not, nominate a few different students to speak to the author during the presentation.

- Let students read! After listening to the author speak, your students will definitely be excited! Allow them time to read their own stories.
- Memorialize the writer's visit
 - Have the author leave their mark on your school for instance by signing a framed photo to hang in the school or offering a signed copy of their book to the school library.