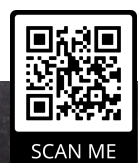


Teaching Notes & Resources

Key Stages 2 and 3

Themes: Stories and storytelling | Myths and legends | Medieval Britain | The British landscape

[Purchase Storyland](#)



SCAN ME

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Contents

Subject Checklist: Literacy | History | Geography | Art and design | Citizenship
The activities included here are suitable for the classroom or library sessions.

Introductory activities – Stories and Storytelling

Story 1: The Thirty Sisters

Activities: Re-tell the story of The Thirty Sisters for an audience.

Objectives: Sequence the story and understand its narrative structure; use a range of oral storytelling and performance techniques to bring a story to life for an audience.

Story 2: The Goddess Speaks

Activities: Compose a story in the style of the stories in the text.

Objectives: Explore common tropes in traditional stories; plan and draft a story with a clear beginning, middle and end.

Further activity ideas

About the book

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN MIST AND MAGIC AND DISCOVER HEROES AND MONSTERS
RIGHT ON YOUR DOORSTEP . . .

You will have heard of Thor, Medusa and Hercules. But what about the myths of the British landscape? The Trojan heroes who wrestled giants. The Syrian sisters who found refuge on our lands. The dragons who slept in hollow hills. And the kings who communed with the dead . . .

In this vivid and beautifully illustrated mythology of Britain, children will discover enchanting tales of magic and adventure, giants and demons, princesses and prophecies.

Travelling across the wildest of landscapes – as far north as Orkney and south as Cornwall – young readers will build Stonehenge with the young Merlin, chase hounds up the mountains of Wales, ride stags into the forests of Scotland and sail with Trojans along the rivers of Britain, discovering a land steeped in myth, monsters and heroes.

Adapted from Amy Jeff's beautiful and bestselling *Storyland*, this is a definitive and dynamic children's introduction to Britain's lost myths and legends.

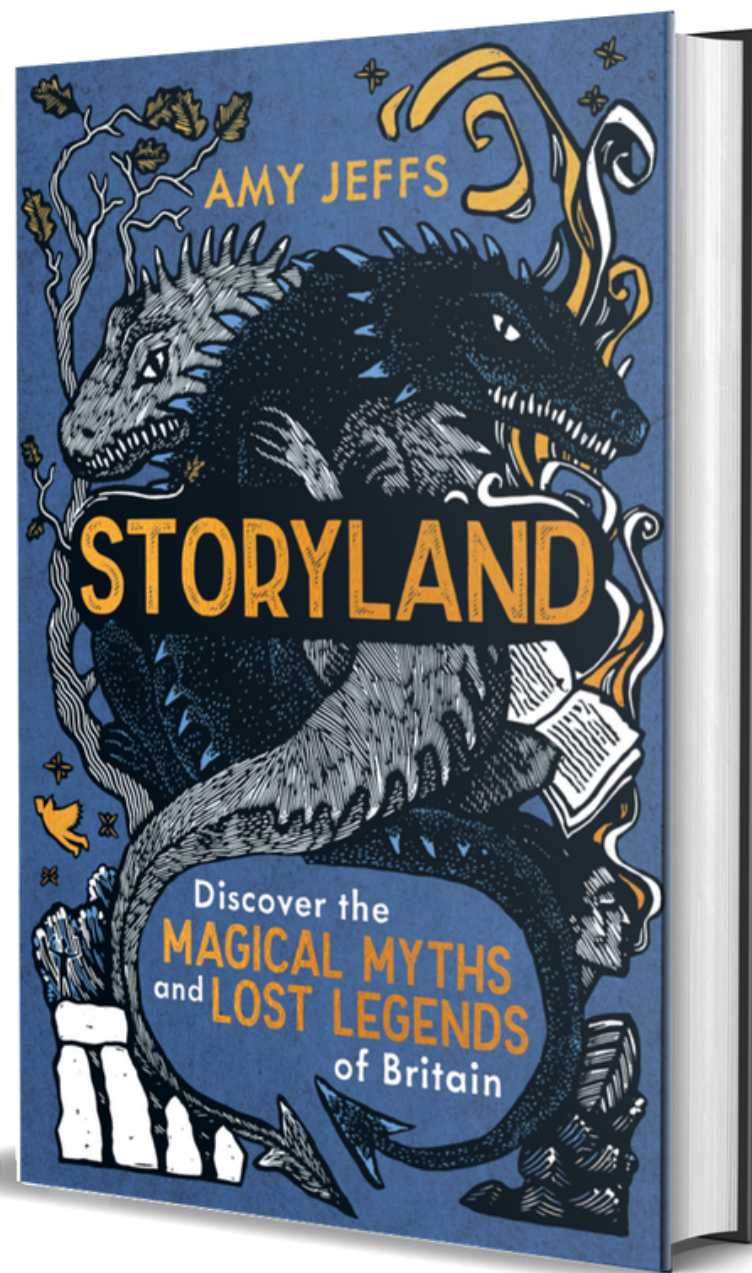


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- What genre do you think this book might fit within?
- How many faces can you see on the front cover?
- Can you see any landmarks you recognise?
- What are myths and legends?
- Do you know of any myths and legends set in Britain?



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Introductory activities: Stories and storytelling

Storyland is a book of enchanting and magical stories from the Middle Ages. Before you start reading the book, use the prompts below to discuss the theme of 'stories and storytelling' with your class.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- What is a story?
- How do we tell stories? (Think about all the different forms of storytelling that exist today and the different types of media we use to tell stories.)
- Why do we tell stories? (List as many reasons as possible that you think people tell stories today.)
- When do we tell stories?

ACTIVITIES

1. With a partner, use these discussion cards to help you think about the role stories play in your own life.

What kind of stories do you enjoy?	Can you tell me about your favourite story?	Can you tell me about a story that has changed or influenced you in some way?
What is your favourite form of storytelling?	What stories do you remember from when you were younger?	What different stories have you heard, read or seen so far this week?



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ACTIVITIES continued . . .

2. The stories in *Storyland* were told in the Middle Ages, or medieval period, in Britain. Read the introduction, Stories on Walls, on pages 7 to 11. Where and when might children in the Middle Ages have encountered stories? What role might stories have played in their lives and how is that similar or different to the role of stories in your life today?

3. Using books or online sources, find pictures of medieval story books, tapestries or paintings. How do they compare to the mediums we use to tell stories today?

Now it's time to jump into the stories themselves! Get ready to go on some exciting adventures and discover giants and demons, princesses and prophecies, heroes and goddesses! As you read the stories, try to imagine people in the Middle Ages sharing these stories and think about why they might have told them.

Story 1: The Thirty Sisters – Why Britain was once called Albion

The stories in this book were told during the Middle Ages but they are set long before that. The Thirty Sisters is a story set in the distant past. Read the story on pages 15 to 23.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Why were the sisters unhappy in Syria?
- Can you think of three words to describe the sisters?
- What is your impression of Albina?
- What was special about the sisters' children?
- Do you think a child in medieval Britain would have enjoyed listening to this story? Why?
- Read about the historical context of this story on page 24. You might like to use books or online sources to find pictures of Iron Age hill forts including those of Maiden Castle and South Cadbury. Why do you think people in medieval Britain may have created the story of The Thirty Sisters?



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ACTIVITY: Tell the story of The Thirty Sisters

Imagine that you are a child in the Middle Ages. You and the other children in your foster family have been reading the story of The Thirty Sisters. Now your teacher (the cleric) has asked you to learn the story and perform it to your household. You are excited to put on your performance and share this exciting story!

1. Working with a partner or small group, re-read the story of The Thirty Sisters.
2. Now take six blank pieces of card. These will be your prompt cards. What do you think are the six most important parts of the story? Write these down on your prompt cards in under ten words. These are the 'bare bones' of the story and will help you remember the main events. You can add more details later.
3. Practise using your prompt cards to help you re-tell the story. Does it make sense? If not, go back and add in any parts that are needed.
4. Now that you have got the basics of the story in place, you are going to focus on making it interesting and exciting to listen to. Go back to the written story in Storyland. For each part of the story that you've summarised on a prompt card, pick out any details that you think add interest and drama to the story. There might be some noun phrases or strong verbs that you think will make your story sound exciting and dramatic. Write these words or phrases on your prompt cards. You might like to use a thesaurus to generate some new descriptive words to use in your storytelling.
5. Practise telling the story as a group. Who will tell which part? What tone and volume will you use in different parts of the story? How could you use gesture or movement to grab your audience's attention and keep them on the edge of their seats?
6. When you have rehearsed your story, you are going to perform it to another pair or group. You might like to put a video of a warm, blazing fire on your interactive whiteboard and turn the lights down to create a medieval atmosphere (or even tell your stories around a real fire)! Try to make your story entertaining and engaging. How do you think medieval Britons felt when they heard this story being told?



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Story 2: The Goddess Speaks – How Britain got its name and the origin of the Welsh

This story explains how and why Gogmagog was taken prisoner by the Trojans at the end of The Thirty Sisters. Read the story The Goddess Speaks on pages 27 to 37.

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- What do we learn about the character of Brutus in the first two pages of the story? What kind of person do you think he is?
- What does the word 'prophecy' mean? Who makes a prophecy in the story?
- Can you name three characters from Greek or Roman mythology who feature in the story?
- How many different locations feature in this story? Have a look at a modern-day map of Europe. Can you work out roughly where some of the events in the story are said to have taken place? See if you can trace the journey that Brutus might have taken to get to Britain.
- Can you spot any similarities between this story and the story of The Thirty Sisters?
- Read pages 38 to 39 to learn more about the historical context of this story. Why do you think people in Medieval Britain might have created this story?

ACTIVITY: Write an origin story

The Goddess Speaks is an origin story that explains how Britain got its name. The story contains links to classical literature and places in Europe. It is likely that these links were included to make Britain sound important and exciting.

Make up a story to explain how your hometown or a town near you got its name! Your story should make your town sound important and exciting! You might like to use some of the following features, which are common in the stories in *Storyland*:

- A character who has been exiled
- A journey
- A prophecy
- A mythological creature such as a giant or dragon

Your story can be as imaginative and fantastical as you like. Perhaps your town was first discovered by a brave warrior princess who was banished from a magical kingdom? Or perhaps a Roman goddess made a prophecy about your town thousands of years ago? Make sure your story has a clear beginning, middle and end, just like The Goddess Speaks.

When you have finished your story, share it with a partner. Does your story change the way you feel about your town?



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Further activity ideas

Arrange a medieval storytelling festival! As a class, get into small groups and each choose a story from the book. You are going to practise re-telling this story. When everyone has rehearsed, get together and share your stories with the group. Which ones are your favourites?

Experiment with using different mediums to tell stories. In the Middle Ages, stories were often told through tapestries, paintings or in illustrated books. Today, we tell stories through many different mediums including film, animation and theatre. Are there any particular forms of storytelling that you are particularly drawn to? Choose one story from the book to re-tell (The Fairies, the Scream and the Thief on pages 81 to 88 is a story that lends itself particularly well to retelling). Now, decide which medium you would like to use to retell this story. You could choose to retell your story through a theatre performance, audio play, mural painting, shadow puppet performance, animation, picture book or whatever form of storytelling appeals to you. Share your story with your class!

Learn some print making skills. The author of *Storyland* has created beautiful linocut prints to illustrate the stories in the book. Linocut printing is a form of relief printing. Research and experiment with different forms of relief printing (you might like to use cardboard or polystyrene to create your printing plate). Now, use your printing skills to create an illustration for one of the stories in the book!

Write a story in the style of the stories in *Storyland*. People in the Middle Ages used their imaginations to create stories about the past, telling magical tales to explain the things that they saw around them. Make up a story to explain how a natural or man-made landmark in your local area came into being. Perhaps there's a large hill, mountain, ruin, hill fort, lake or river near your home? How might it have formed or why might it be the shape that it is?

Compare with stories from around the world. Do you know any traditional stories from other countries? Share stories from around the world. Do any similar themes emerge?

Write a story for today. On page 221, the author Amy Jeffs writes, 'stories shape how we think and what we do [...] what new tales would you have us tell?' As we have seen in this book, stories have the power to change how people think, feel and act. Stories can create real change in the world. So, what stories would you like to tell? Think about the changes that you would like to see in the world around you. Is there a message you would like to spread or a change you'd like to make? Write a story to help inspire the kind of world you want to see!



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