The Caravan at the Edge of Doom

by

JIM BECKETT

This resource pack provides activities suitable for pupils in Years 5 and 6 based on the action-packed, magical book ***The Caravan at the Edge of Doom*** by Jim Beckett. *Caravan at the Edge of Doom* is the first book in a series that features Harley Lenton, a twelve-year-old whose grandparents have exploded, leading her to an epic adventure in the Land of the Dead.

The resource pack will guide teachers when reading this book to the class, providing question to prompt class discussions about characters and events as the narrative unfolds. Activities will explore characters and events, with opportunities for role play and short writing tasks linked to what has been read.

What pupils will learn

By reading ***The Caravan at the Edge of Doom*** and taking part in the planned, engaging activities, children will develop reading and writing skills from Years 5 and 6 of the National Curriculum for English. Questions about each section are included to prompt discussion and develop a range of comprehension skills.

National Curriculum objectives are highlighted on each activity throughout the resource pack. The following objectives are covered throughout.

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza

READING

Develop positive attitudes to reading and understanding what they read by:

- listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction ...
- increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books, including myths and legends ...

Participate in discussions about books that are read to them and those they can read for themselves, building on their own and others' ideas and challenging views courteously.

This resource pack includes:

PPT vocabulary lesson: *doom*

Activity sheet 1:
Cover annotation

Activity sheet 2:
Role on the wall

Activity sheet 3:
Harley's regrets

Features of a legend sheet

Activity sheet 4:
The twelve tasks

Activity sheet 5:
A Legendary Hero

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza

1. Introduce the book

READING

Predicting what might happen from details stated and implied.

Share with the class that they will be reading a book called *The Caravan at the Edge of Doom*.

Q – What does the word 'doom' mean?

Explore the meaning of the word using the **PPT exploring vocabulary** as follows:

- Display the title of the book on ***PPT slide 2*** and identify the word doom.
- Read the definition on ***PPT slide 3*** and decide whether the word 'doom' in the title is being used as a noun or a verb (answer: noun). Explore what the 'edge of doom' might refer to.
- Read the sentences that include the word 'doom' on ***PPT slide 4*** and discuss the meaning of each sentence and whether the word is used as a noun or a verb.
- Ask pupils orally to compose their own sentences using the word 'doom' as both a noun and a verb. Prompts for this are displayed on ***PPT slide 5***.

Display the cover of the book to the pupils.

Q – What could the book be about? How can we use our understanding of the word 'doom' to predict what might happen?

- Invite pupils to predict what they feel the book will be about using clues from the title and illustrations, encouraging them to explain their thinking. A PDF worksheet of the cover with room for notes is available on **activity sheet 1**.

2. Harley Lenton

READING

Understand what they read ...

- asking questions to improve their understanding
- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Remind pupils that we will be reading the book *The Caravan at the Edge of Doom* by Jim Beckett.

Read chapters 1-4 (to page 24) and discuss what we know about Harley and her family so far.

- Discuss these questions with the pupils:

  Q – What happened to Harley's grandparents?

  Q – Why did her grandparents all live in the caravan?

  Q – What did Harley's nana say was now hers?

  Q – Where has Malcolm gone?

ACTIVITY 2:
Role on the Wall

Introduce activity sheet 2: Role on the wall.

Q - What do we know about Harley so far?

Pupils should add information about Harley on the worksheet, recording information that they recall from the story and their inferences about her. Known facts should be placed around the outside of the person and her thoughts and feelings should be placed on the inside of the person. Children may also write questions that they would like to know about the character that might be answered as they continue to read the story.

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza

Continue to *read to the end of part 1 (page 44, end of chapter 7)* and ask the following questions about the events that have happened in this section of the story:

Q - Who is BK and what is his job?

Q – What did Harley have to do to help the restless souls?

Q – Why was Harley planning to go through the portal of doom?

- After reading, pupils should add further information about Harley Lenton to their Role on the wall worksheet.
- Information should be added to the Role on the wall worksheet for Harley as pupils continue to read the book, adding details that they retrieve or infer from their reading. Answers to questions that they have asked can also be added.
- Further Role on the wall sheets could also be created for other characters as we meet them in the story.

3. Regrets

READING

Understand what they read ...

- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Continue to read *The Caravan at the Edge of Doom to page 68 (end of chapter 10)*.

- Ask the following questions about the events that have happened in this section of the story:

  Q – Why was the firefighter still so upset?

  Q – (page 50) Would you go down the Flume of Infinite Terror?

  Q – How did the firefighter feel once he had gone down the flume?

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza

Discuss the regrets that Harley has at the *end of chapter 10*.

Q – What is a regret?

- Encourage pupils to look up the meaning of the word '***regret***' in a dictionary.
- Discuss the regrets that Harley has.

  Q – Why has the author shown regrets as heavy creatures that cling onto you?

Ask pupils to discuss any regrets they have ever had in small groups.

- Look at **activity sheet 3** with the class.
- Ask pupils to draw three of Harley's regrets, designing what they think they might look like from the descriptions in ***chapter 10 (page 63)***. Share with the pupils the illustrator's interpretation of what regrets look like in the Land of the Dead. They should write beside each one what Harley's regret is.

ACTIVITY 3:
Harley's Regrets

What do you think the regrets in ***chapter 10*** look like?

Draw three of Harley's regrets in the spaces below and write what the regret is beside each creature.

Illustrations © 2022 Ella Okrou

4. Oliver Polliver

READING

Understand what they read ...

- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Continue to read *The Caravan at the Edge of Doom* to the end of part 2 (*page 93, end of chapter 13*).

- Ask the following questions about the events that have happened in this section of the story:

  Q – Where has Harley seen Olly before?

Q – Why was Harley concerned about how she had to pay for her ice cream in chapter 12?

Q – How is Harley going to get 'Back to Life'?

- Explore what we know about Oliver Polliver. Pupils could record information about Olly using **activity sheet 1: Role on the wall**, noting information we know and have inferred about him. Pupils can add questions about the character to the sheet that could be answered as the story continues.

5. What makes a Legendary Hero?

READING

- **Identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing**
- **Predicting what might happen from details stated and implied.**

Continue to read *The Caravan at the Edge of Doom* to the end of part 4 (*page 145, end of chapter 19)*.

Ask the following questions about the events that have happened in this section of the story:

Chapter 12

- *Q – Why was Harley covered in so many regrets at the beginning of part 3?*
- *Q – At what point does Harley realise that she is the Legendary Hero that everyone was waiting for?*
- *Q – How did Olly convince the committee that Harley was a Legendary Hero?*

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza

Discuss with the class legends that they are familiar with and their heroes (Robin Hood, King Arthur, George and the dragon etc).

- Explore what a legend is: what must these types of stories include?
- Read the **features of a legend sheet** with the pupils.
- Compare the story ***The Caravan at the Edge of Doom*** with the features of a legend sheet.

  Q – Is this story an example of a legend? Is Harley about to go on a quest?

- Encourage pupils to explain their ideas, referring to parts of the story that they have read so far.
- Discuss the Path of Legendary Heroes and remind pupils that Harley will be completing twelve tasks.

  Q – What could these twelve tasks be?

- Using their knowledge of legends, pupils can complete **activity sheet 4**, predicting what the twelve tasks could be.

ACTIVITY 4:
The Path of Heroes

On the Path of Heroes, Harley will need to complete twelve tasks. Using your knowledge of heroes and legends, what could the twelve tasks be? *Draw or write an idea for each of the tasks below.*

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza

6. Following the Path of Heroes

READING

Understand what they read ...

- asking questions to improve their understanding
- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza

Continue to read *The Caravan at the Edge of Doom to page 249* (end of chapter 32).

- Ask the following questions about the events that have happened in this section of the story:

  *Q – How was Harley tricked in **chapter 27**?*

  *Q – What does the 'Rest Home For Failed Heroes' (**page 223**) tell us about how successful previous Legendary Heroes may have been?*

  *Q – How would have Harley have felt when she saw her name in the 'Rest Home For Failed Heroes' (**page 230**)?*

  Q – How was Malcolm rescued from Idolicles?

- Discuss Idolicles the Champion. Was he really a champion? Reread when he is first mentioned on pages 86, 88 and 110-111, and explore whether Idolicles is as Harley imagined.
- In role as Idolicles, pupils could recount what happened to him on the Path of Heroes and what happened on each of the twelve tasks.
- Pupils could write a short recount in role, retelling what happened at each task as Idolicles. What went wrong each time? And what might he have learnt along the way?

8. Exploring legends

READING

Identifying and discussing themes and conventions in and across a wide range of writing

Continue to read *The Caravan at the Edge of Doom* to the end of the story.

- Ask the following questions about the events that have happened in this section of the story:

  Q – What did we learn about the Sergeant and Olly?

  Q – Where were the monsters when they were not at their task?

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza

Q – How did Harley and Malcolm eventually leave the Land of the Dead?

Q – How do Harley's mum and dad feel about her having visited the Land of the Dead?

Q – Why has the author used a countdown of time at the beginning of each chapter throughout the book?

- Compare traditional legends to *The Caravan at the Edge of Doom*. Look back at the features of a legend sheet and compare it with this story.

  Q – Has the author used features of a legend to help him write this story?

- Discuss what makes Harley a Legendary Hero. Pupils should complete **activity sheet 5**, explaining why they think Harley is a Legendary Hero. Pupils should link this to their knowledge of legends that they are familiar with.

Other suggested activities:

Explore how the author has referenced other famous stories and poems in ***The Caravan at the Edge of Doom***, for example, the poem *'Twas the Night before Christmas* (***page 73***), *The Legend of King Arthur* (***page 139***) and *Rumpelstiltskin* (***chapter 27***, the task that Idolicles sets is very similar to the one in the story).

Introduce pupils to the second book in the series - ***The Caravan at the Edge of Doom: Foul Prophecy*** and predict what could happen in this story (they could complete **sheet 2 of activity 1**).

Pupils could write their own legends based on the twelve tasks on the Path of Heroes. They could use the tasks from the book, or create their own tasks and describe another hero's quest to complete them.

Illustrations © 2022 Olia Muza