

COLLECTIBLE STORIES
WITH COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

A Sea of Stories

TEACHING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Suitable for: Children aged five to eight years old in Years One to Three

Based on: The adventure of a girl and her grandfather as she helps him to reconnect with his memories

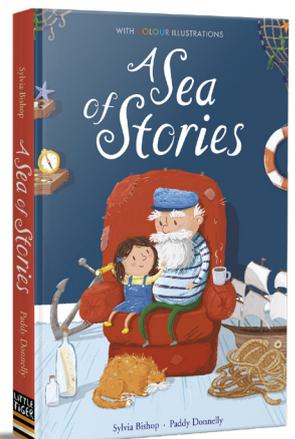
Ideal for: Emerging readers, and especially reluctant readers

Includes: Four lessons that build towards children acting on kindness in their community

Themes: Old Age; Seaside; Intergenerational Relationships; Memories; Photographs; Kindness



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ABOUT A SEA OF STORIES

Whenever Roo visits Grandpa, she loves exploring the seaside cove near his cottage. But on her latest stay, Grandpa explains that he can't go down there any more – the path is too steep and overgrown for him to manage.

Instead, Grandpa tells Roo the stories behind the many objects that fill his house. All of Grandpa's stories feature the cove and Roo realizes that now, even though they're so close to the sea, Grandpa is cut off from it. Is there anything she can do to bring Grandpa to the place he loves the most?

A Sea of Stories is an inspiring tale about the importance of sharing stories, with colour illustrations on every page.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR - SYLVIA BISHOP

Sylvia Bishop spent an entire childhood reading fiction, dreaming up stories and pretending. Now she writes her stories down, preferably by lamp-light with tea. Her first book, *Erica's Elephant*, was published in 2016. She has since written two further titles for young readers, *The Bookshop Girl* and *A Sea of Stories*, and two middle-grade mysteries, *The Secret of the Night Train* & *Trouble in New York*. Her books have been translated into sixteen languages, including French, Dutch, Russian and Japanese. 2020 saw the launch of *44 Tiny Secrets*, the first title in an exciting new series for young readers from Little Tiger. The next title, *44 Tiny Acrobats*, was released in February 2021, with *44 Tiny Chefs* publishing in July 2021.

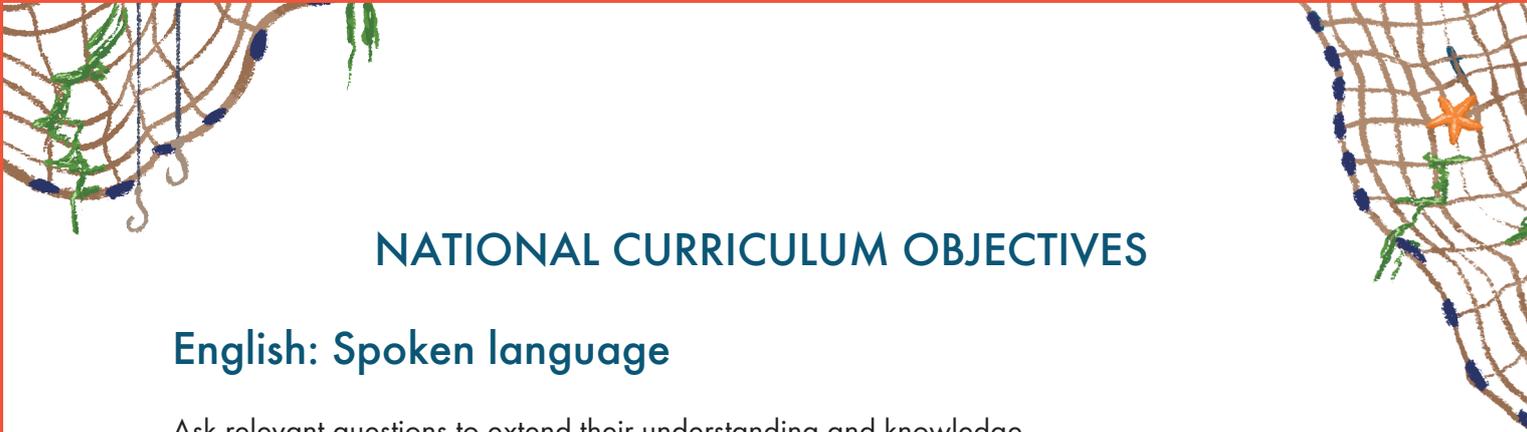
Find out more about Sylvia by following her on social media @sylviabishop or visit her website here: sylviabishopbooks.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR - PADDY DONNELLY

Paddy Donnelly is an Irish illustrator now living in Belgium. He has over 15 years experience as an illustrator and designer, and especially loves working with a textured, painterly approach.

Find out more about Paddy by following him on social media @paddydonnelly or see more of his artwork here: lefft.com.





NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

English: Spoken language

Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge

Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes including for expressing feelings

Reading: comprehension

Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination.

Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by:

- identifying how language, structure, and presentation contribute to meaning
- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

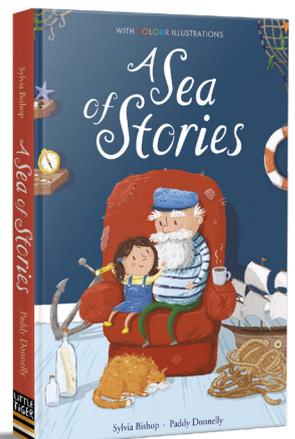
English: Writing: composition

Plan their writing by discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar.

Develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional).

History

Learn about changes within living memory and where appropriate, these should be used to reveal aspects of change in national life.





Religious education

Describe and understand links between stories and other aspects of the communities they are investigating, responding thoughtfully to a range of sources of wisdom and to beliefs and teachings of different communities.

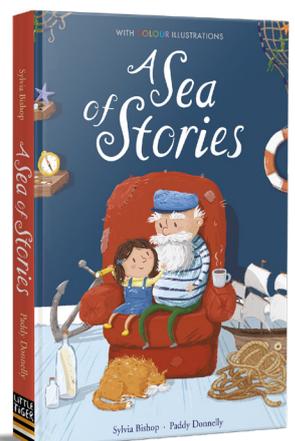
Consider and apply ideas about ways in which diverse communities live together for the wellbeing of all, taking account of values, community and respect.

Be introduced to and explore some of the key beliefs and practices of Christianity.

Art and design

Produce creative work, exploring their ideas and recording their experiences.

Learn about the work of a range of artists, craft makers and designers, describing the differences and similarities between different practices and disciplines, and making links to their own work.





LESSON OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Lesson One: The Value of Memories

Objectives:

- To consider the importance of memories
- To present a short presentation about a sentimental object

Outcomes:

An introduction to memories and their importance; the writing of a descriptive paragraph about a sentimental object; and a presentation about this item.

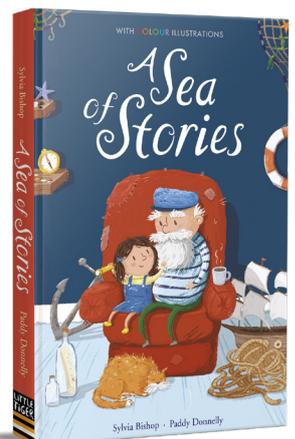
Lesson Two: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

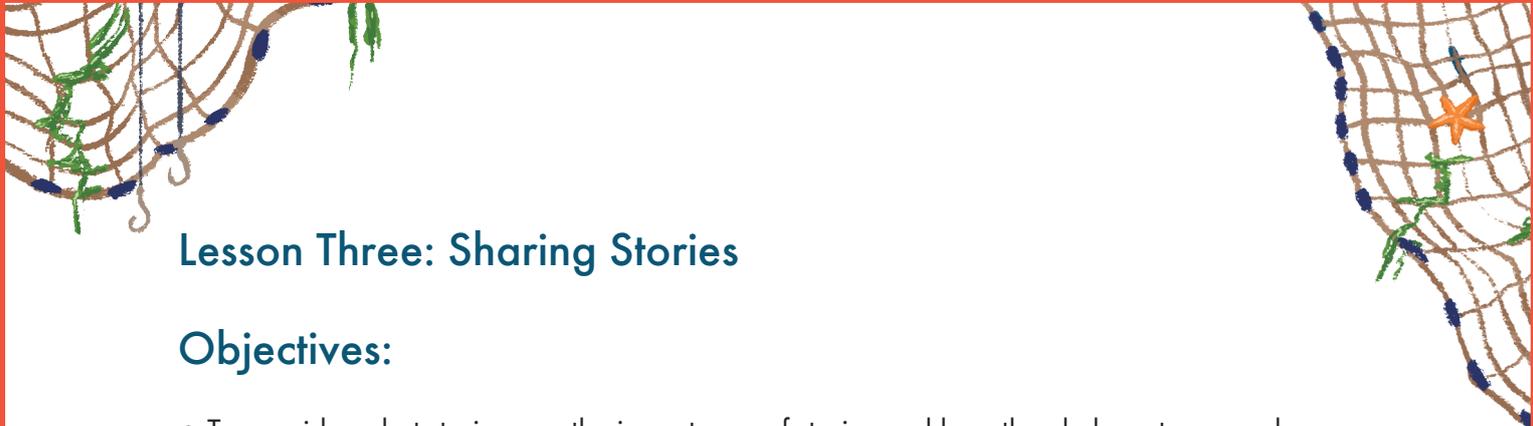
Objectives:

- To investigate the self-portraits of a variety of artists, as well as the techniques that have been used
- To experiment with a range of effects to create their own self-portrait photography

Outcomes:

A consideration about photography and the selfie culture of today; a completed timeline to track the progression of photography through the ages; and a gallery of self-portraits created by the children.





Lesson Three: Sharing Stories

Objectives:

- To consider what stories are, the importance of stories and how they help us to remember
- To reflect upon the stories of our own lives by writing an autobiography

Outcomes:

A class retelling of the story of *A Sea of Stories*; a completed Life Map to show children's lives through pictures; and the writing of a short autobiography.

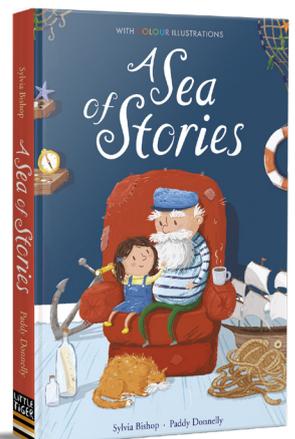
Lesson Four: Community Spirit

Objectives:

- To recognize the importance of caring for our neighbours
- To realize that there are often many people who are willing to help us

Outcomes:

A class conversation about kindness within the community using the story of the Good Samaritan; a consideration of kindness activities to use in the classroom; and the creation of a list of suggestions to practice kindness in local and international communities.





LESSON ONE: THE VALUE OF MEMORIES

Questions:

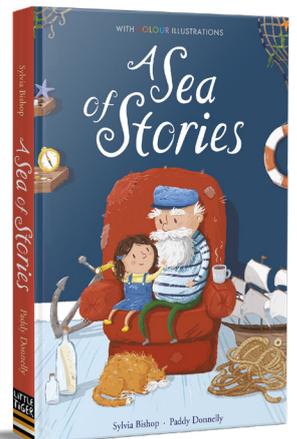
- What are memories?
- How do we find ways for us to remember our memories?
- What is special to you?

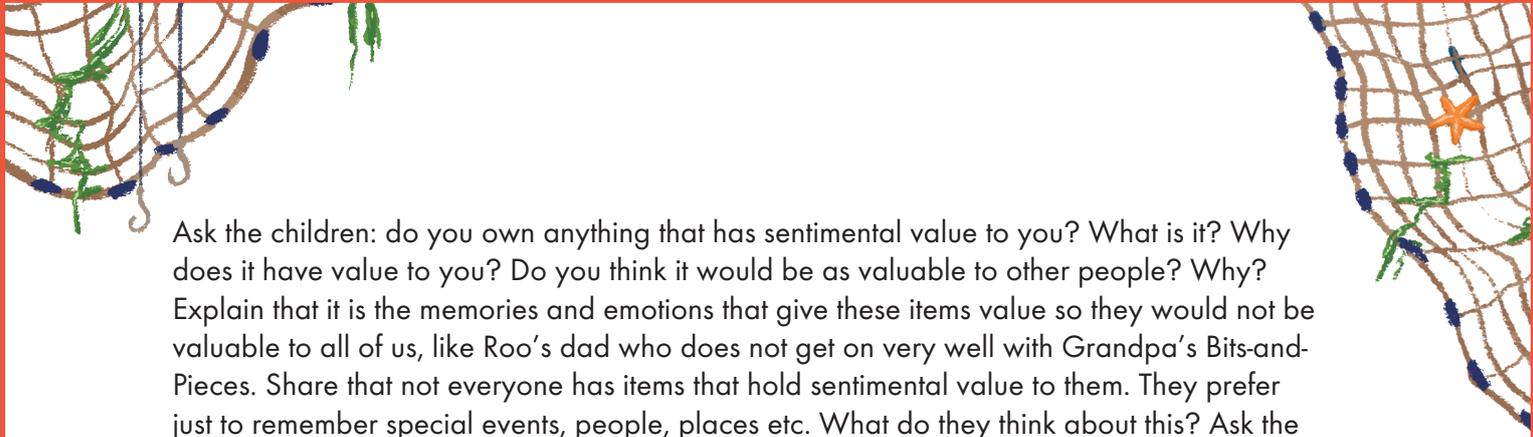
Task One:

Ask the children whether they have any favourite memories. The memories may be happy, scary, sad or exciting, such as holidays, days out, presents received and people they have met. Explain that you want the children to think of special memories, things that they have remembered for a long time or like to think about often. Encourage them to think back to something that has happened in the past, e.g., their first day at school, a birthday, losing their first tooth, a visit to hospital. Explain that these are all memories. They are something we remember from the past, something that has already happened. We can't always remember everything that has happened in the past but some things we do. Discuss that it is good to remember things that have happened, and as we get older, memories become more special. If possible, share with the children one or two special memories you have from when you were a child. Explain how some people like to find ways to help them remember. Can you think of any ways you could remember something more easily? E.g., Take photos, collect souvenirs (objects to help you remember an event or place), write a diary. Other people just prefer to enjoy the moment and do not want anything to help them remember. Which do you prefer? Why?

Task Two:

Write 'sentimental value' on the board. What do you think we mean by this? Discuss and share thoughts. Explain that if an item has sentimental value to someone it means that it is important to them because of the personal or emotional associations it has, e.g., it may connect them to a happy time in their life or remind them of someone special and give examples linked to those items that Grandpa shares in the story. Look at a selection of items with sentimental value that mean something to you as the teacher. Discuss with the children and encourage them to think about why each of these items has sentimental value to you, e.g., reminds you of a holiday, a person or a place. Talk about how often, sentimental items are connected to memories from the past so are very precious to the people they are connected to.

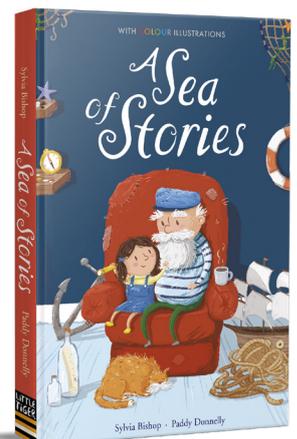


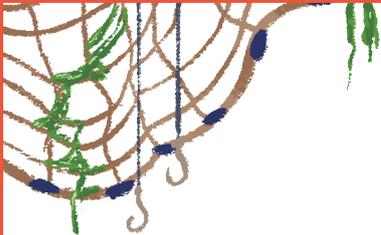


Ask the children: do you own anything that has sentimental value to you? What is it? Why does it have value to you? Do you think it would be as valuable to other people? Why? Explain that it is the memories and emotions that give these items value so they would not be valuable to all of us, like Roo's dad who does not get on very well with Grandpa's Bits-and-Pieces. Share that not everyone has items that hold sentimental value to them. They prefer just to remember special events, people, places etc. What do they think about this? Ask the children to think about an object or item they have that may have sentimental value to them, e.g., a teddy, an item of clothing, a photograph, an ornament, a piece of sports equipment. Think about: What does the item look like? How would you describe what it feels like? Does it have a smell? If so, what is it like? Why is it of value to you? Ask the children to describe their item in as much detail as possible. Encourage using advanced vocabulary, similes, metaphors and senses and write a short descriptive paragraph.

Task Three:

Following Task Two, ask children to prepare a short presentation about their item to share with the class. It could involve a slideshow if necessary, or just them talking and showing their item. If children do not want to do it in front of the class, it could be done in small groups to help promote collaboration and discussion. Take a photograph of everyone with their item to put in a class album.





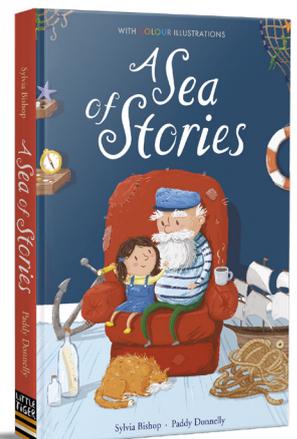
LESSON TWO: A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

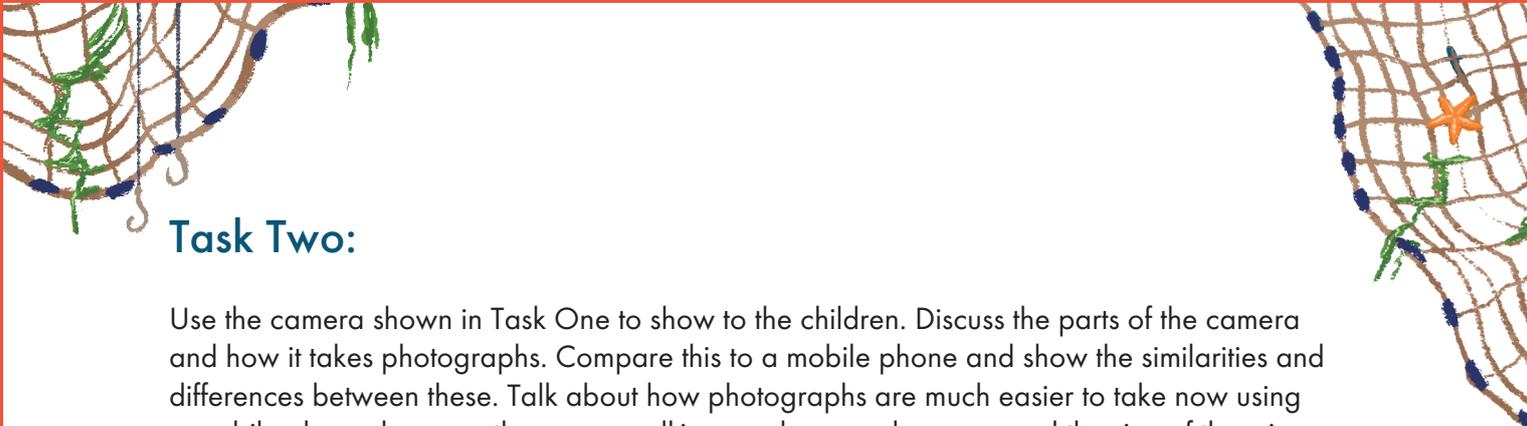
Questions:

- Do you have a camera? What can a camera look like?
- When do you use your camera?
- Why do we take photographs?

Task One:

Start this lesson by saying “I wonder how many of you enjoy taking photos” and talking a little more about what photography means to the children. Discuss how in the book there are many photographs showing different times throughout his life. Explain how we remember people and events in many different ways, such as photographs as they help us to see what people and places were like at that time. Ask the children to consider how they can tell the age and the chronology of the photographs from the black and white used to the styles of clothing worn in them. If possible, show the children a camera and ask them: If I gave you this camera for a day, what would you take photos of? Encourage them to think about it for a moment. How many of them say themselves? Others? Nature? Share how many people in our society now seem to record every minute detail of their lives on their phones and take ‘selfies’ of themselves in different places. What is a ‘selfie’? Explain how the inclusion of front facing cameras on smartphones and the popularity of social media have made the posting of selfies increasingly popular as a form of photographic self-expression. How are they similar or different to the photographs shown in Grandpa’s house? Ask children to consider why do we feel the need to take selfies at every possible opportunity? Is it that we are vain? Is it that we feel that we haven’t lived the moment unless we’ve captured it in a picture or video? Is it good for us because it keeps a record of what we do? Is it bad for us? Should we only capture special moments?



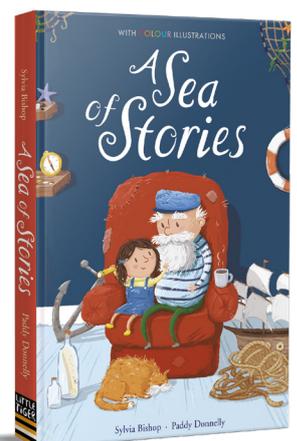


Task Two:

Use the camera shown in Task One to show to the children. Discuss the parts of the camera and how it takes photographs. Compare this to a mobile phone and show the similarities and differences between these. Talk about how photographs are much easier to take now using a mobile phone, because they are an all-in-one phone and camera and the size of them is compact and easier to carry. Share with the children how cameras have developed from their earliest beginnings with the camera obscura in 1021 and the world's first photograph taken in 1826 to the rise of the modern digital camera and the mobile phone. Look at a variety of cameras through different points in time, and the evolution of developing photographs from Daguerreotype to flexible roll film, instant images with Polaroid and digital. Consider the future of how photography will progress in the future. After researching, create a timeline of the key moments of the past, present and future of photography.

Task Three:

Tell the children that they will be creating their own portrait photography to help them to remember the time they have spent in your classroom. Discuss how a self-portrait is a work of art featuring the artist as subject and is often referred to as a 'selfie' which is modern slang for self-portrait. Share how there are examples of self-portraits stretching back to ancient times, including those by famous artists such as Frida Kahlo, Rembrandt and Vincent Van Gogh. Look at a range of examples of self-portraits in art and photography and use them to help you create your own examples in the classroom. Using devices such as iPads, experiment with lighting, positioning, perspective, angles and filters to add effects. Can they create a selfie that uses monochromatic colours, reflection, shadow, distortion and a photobooth effect? Present these as a gallery within the classroom to encourage children to use this as an opportunity to discuss creativity, expression and ingenuity.





LESSON THREE: SHARING STORIES

Questions:

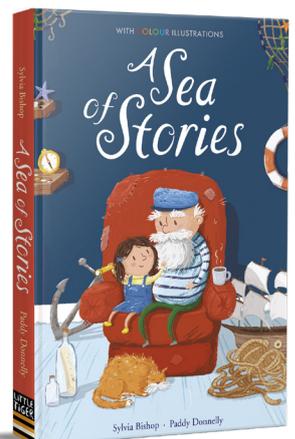
- What is a story? Do you have a favourite story?
- How can you share a story?
- Why do we like to share stories together?

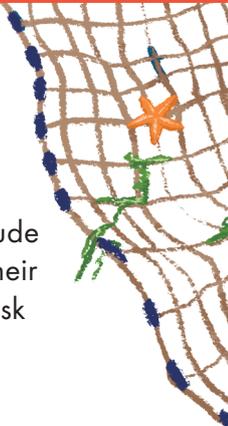
Task One:

To get the children thinking about stories, talk to the children about the story they have heard in *A Sea of Stories*. Recall the main events. Ask questions such as: Who were the main characters? Can you remember what happened at the beginning/middle/end? What was your favourite part of the story? Why? Encourage children to retell parts of the story. Work through the story from the beginning to the end using a range of connectives, images and punctuation to sequence the story in sentences. As you complete each sentence, go back and retell it so children retain the story and become increasingly familiar with the detail of the retelling. Ask the children to rewrite the story in paragraphs using the correct story structure so you can check their understanding of retelling a story.

Task Two:

After this, talk more about stories and how we share stories together in school and at home, and link them to how they help us to remember memories of things we've experienced. Ask the children what do they remember from their early lives, and how do they 'see' these memories – as frozen images, or video clips? Talk about memories, then pick one – something you can turn into a story. To model this, explore your own chosen memories and retell them as a story. Tell the children that they will be writing an autobiography later in class. Build on prior knowledge and ask if any of them have written an autobiography before and have them share their experiences. Share with them that they will first pre-write and plan an autobiography of their own life and experiences in school by creating a Life Map. Explain to the children that their Life Map will be a display of pictures showing the events of their life in icons or emojis. Remind the children to use events that actually happened and that would be interesting to a reader but that they do not have to include everything on their Life Map. Encourage them to use notations to explain the icons concisely and to help them when they write their autobiographies. Ensure that sensitivity is exercised when it comes to introducing this activity and children should be reassured that this will not involve recalling difficult or challenging events in their lives outside of school.

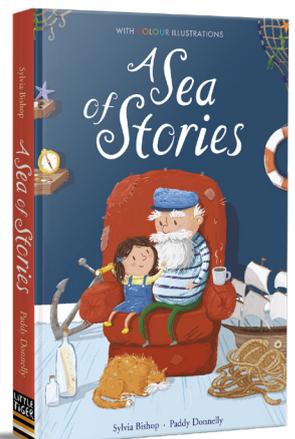




Ask the children: What might interest the readers in their autobiography? Should they include humorous events, and why? Should they include sad or challenging events? What are their biggest achievements that they could include? Once they have created their Life Map, ask the children to make sure their memories and events are in chronological order.

Task Three:

Recap the meaning of an 'autobiography', and that it contains information about one's own life written by that one person. Share examples of autobiographies from authors which recollect moments of their life such as *The Great Mouse Plot* in Roald Dahl's *Boy*. Highlight why it is so memorable and the humorous effect it has on readers. Ask children which memory-story that you've told so far on your Life Map would make the most interesting part of your autobiography, and why? Encourage children to structure their autobiography so that each icon they drew on their Life Map represents a paragraph in their autobiography. Using their Life Maps from Task Two, children are to write their autobiographies in the first person; in chronological order with time connectives including memories, influences and achievements; using names of individuals, places and dates for specific events and if possible, including hopes and plans for the future. Children may want to share these with the class.





LESSON FOUR: COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Questions:

- What is a community?
- Why do people belong to communities?
- How can our community come together to help others? How can they show kindness?

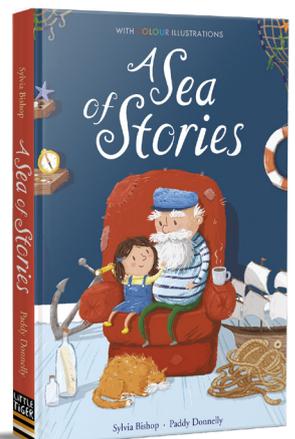
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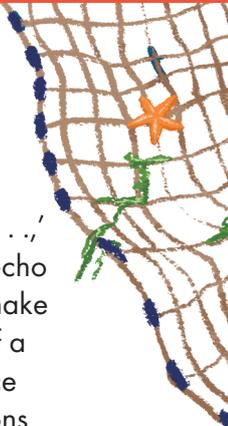
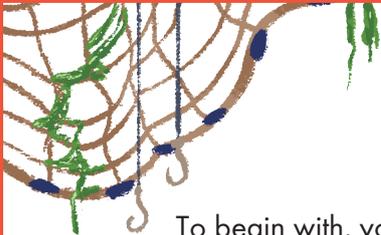
Explain that you want the children to guess the word that you are thinking of. Give clues that will give the answer 'kind'. For example, 'I like it when people are like this in the classroom,' and 'When people behave like this, it makes others feel good,' and so on. After the children have guessed the word, discuss the meaning of being kind. Link it to the final part in *A Sea of Stories* where the residents in the community come together to clear up the rambly-scrambly path to the cove and help Grandpa to rediscover his memories. Introduce the story about the Good Samaritan that you are going to show the children, and explain how the story shows kindness, compassion and generosity.

Tell the children the story, explaining the meaning of the word 'neighbours' and then ask them to consider who their neighbours are: such as at school with children within our class and in other year groups; our neighbours who live in the surrounding local community; people who live in the UK and people around the world living in other countries.

Task Two:

To kick-start kindness and a classroom community spirit, discuss activities that you can do such as sharing good things, shout-outs or an appreciation box. Sharing good things about each other is a sure-fire way to set a positive and caring tone for the day. Ask children to respond to their neighbour using one of these talking stems: 'One good thing in my life is. . .' or 'Something good that happened is. . .' Tell the students that their thing can be big or small; for example, last night they had pizza for dinner, or someone received a certificate. Once they have shared with a partner, ask for volunteers to share their own or their neighbour's good thing. This is an opportunity for children to share their lives and also be celebrated by their classmates. Encourage children in the classroom to identify kindness through sharing a shout-out for another child, member of staff or member of the school community.

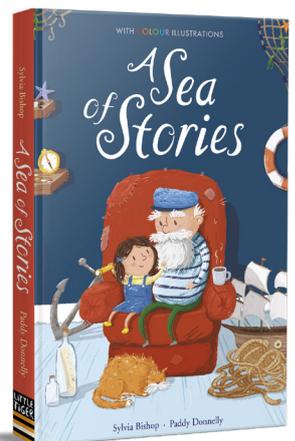




To begin with, you may need to model this one for children, such as saying 'I noticed that ...,' or 'I'd like to give a shout-out to ... for ...' Eventually, in their own ways, they will begin to echo your sentiments to each other, and this will become a rewarding class routine. Be sure to make time for it. You can fit a lot of shout-outs in the last three to five minutes at the start or end of a week. For children who may be less inclined to share with the class, create a box and place it in the classroom with small slips of paper or sticky notes. Everyone can leave appreciations for classmates in the box and they could either be read out or given to individuals for them to read themselves.

Task Three:

Following on from Task One and Two, ask the children to come up with a list of suggestions of how we can be kind to our neighbours in different contexts. Listen to a range of responses which may include: at school by including others when we play, sharing our things and helping others; on our streets by saying hello to them, picking litter up or smiling at them; in the UK by making connections with schools in a different parts of the country and working together; and in other countries by fundraising if they have experienced problems due to natural events such as earthquakes or forest fires. As a class or even as a whole school, generate a list of ways in which you can come together to help people in your different communities and act on them. You may want to record them in a scrapbook, by video or online to document what you do and share them with your wider community.





FURTHER IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

Read more books that explore the subject of memories, stories and grandparent relationships together such as *Grandpa Green* by Lane Smith; *The Matchbox Diary* by Paul Fleischman and Bagram Ibatoulline; and for older readers, *The Storm Keeper's Island* by Catherine Doyle.

If the children have enjoyed turning their own memories into stories, why not collect other people's? Older relatives might be willing to be interviewed, or you could make links with an old-people's home whose residents might enjoy talking about their childhood memories.

Use a blank postcard to create a message of kindness for someone you know. Maybe it can be a thank you for something kind they did for you, or for something they often do that helps you or others. You could post them to members of your school or local community.

Bring old photographs that you have at home to discuss as a class or discuss them at home with members of your family to learn more about your family history and ancestry.

Create a time capsule and put it in things that can be remembered about your school. Set a date in the future for it to be dug up and predict what people in the future will think about what they will find from your school.

