

COLLECTIBLE STORIES
WITH COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

Speedy Monkey

TEACHING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

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

Based on: The experiences of an energetic monkey who can't keep still much to the annoyance of the other animals

Ideal for: Emerging readers, and especially reluctant readers

Includes: Four lessons that build towards children practising mindfulness and being true to themselves

Themes: Being Yourself; Speed; Slowing Down; Friendship; Rainforests; Individuality; Self-Expression



ABOUT SPEEDY MONKEY

Deep in the rainforest all is peaceful, all is calm... Until Speedy Monkey comes along! Speedy can't keep still – all day long he whoops and swoops, prances and dances.

The other animals are tired of Speedy's crazy capers and long for some peace and quiet. Then danger strikes and the animals have to act fast. But where is Speedy when they need him?

Speedy Monkey is an energetic story about being yourself from award-winning author Jeanne Willis, with colour illustrations on every page.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – JEANNE WILLIS

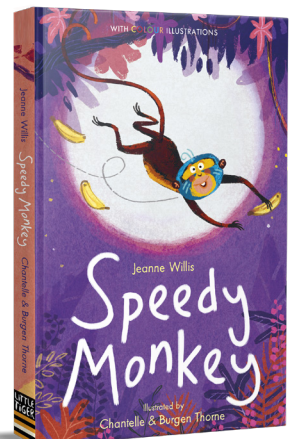
Jeanne is an internationally acclaimed children's author. She has written over 150 books including picture books, novelty, teen novels and poetry. Her work has been awarded numerous prizes, including the Red House Children's Book Award and the Nestlé Children's Book Prize. She was also shortlisted for the Whitbread Award in 2004. She lives in London with her husband and two children. Born in St Albans in 1959, Jeanne Willis always loved writing and creating adventures through comic strips and books. She originally trained as an advertising copywriter at Watford College before going on to work for numerous advertising agencies. Her first novel was published when she was 21 years old and she juggled writing and her advertising copywriter career for many years before becoming a children's author full time.

Find out more about Jeanne by visiting her website jeannewillis.com.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATORS – CHANTELLE AND BURGEN THORNE

Chantelle and Burgen Thorne are internationally published illustrators with over 25 years experience in educational publishing. They are now focusing on picture books, taking great delight in the visual storytelling, art and text working together, every word and every image adding to the reader's experience. They live in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Find out more about Chantelle and Burgen by following them on social media @chantelle_burgen or visiting their website chantelleandburgen.com.



NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

English: Spoken language

Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates.

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).

PSHE

Think about themselves, to learn from their experiences, to recognise and celebrate their strengths and set simple but challenging goals.

Communicate their feelings to others, to recognise how others show feelings and how to respond.

Learn about the environment.

Mathematics

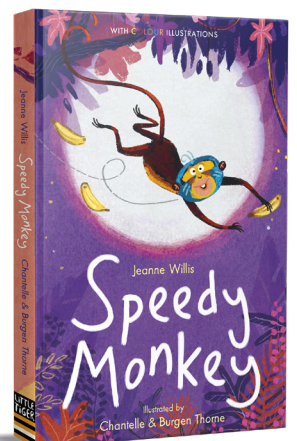
Be introduced to compound units for speed, such as miles per hour, and apply their knowledge in science or other subjects as appropriate.



Geography

Locate the world's countries, using maps to focus on Europe and North and South America, concentrating on their environmental regions, key physical and human characteristics, countries and major cities.

Identify the position and significance of latitude, longitude, Equator, Northern Hemisphere, Southern Hemisphere, the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, Arctic and Antarctic Circle, the Prime/Greenwich Meridian and time zones (including day and night).



LESSON OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Lesson One: Top Speed

Objectives:

- To reflect on the need not to jump to conclusions or judge others too quickly
- To consider the benefits of a 'slow and steady' attitude and why sometimes fast is not always best

Outcomes:

A class discussion about speed and the advantages and disadvantages of working quickly; a short description about themselves, associating them with an animal character from the book; and the calculation of their own speed using a mathematical formula.

Lesson Two: Peace and Quiet

Objectives:

- To respect the power of quietness in a noisy world
- To reflect on the benefits of silence and stillness

Outcomes:

An opportunity to reflect on what quiet means to them and the design of a quiet space; the writing of their own reflection, poem, mantra, affirmation or mediation; and the practising of mindfulness.

Lesson Three: Rescuing the Rainforest

Objectives:

- To show care and appreciation for our natural world
- To consider the effects of deforestation, and encourage children to speak up for the rainforest



Outcomes:

A class conversation about rainforests and locating them on a world map; a completed brainstorm and table about the effects of deforestation; and a class collaborative report.

Lesson Four: Be True to You

Objectives:

- To show that we should not try to copy others but learn to be ourselves
- To recognise that being yourself is important and that it allows other people to be themselves too

Outcomes:

A speaking and listening activity to celebrate the individual strengths of children; a fun mimicking roleplay activity to demonstrate the concept of copying; and an illustration to show them in different situations.



LESSON ONE: TOP SPEED

Questions:

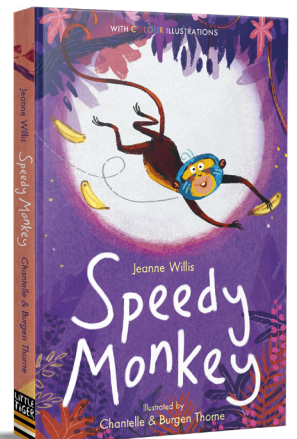
- What does it mean to be doing something at 'top speed'?
- When should we do things quickly? When should we do things slowly?
- Which animals are fast and which are slow?

Task One:

To get children thinking about speed, ask them if they know the name of the fastest human alive. Listen to a range of responses, and then show a picture of the answer: Usain Bolt. Explain how during the 2009 Berlin World Championships, the Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt broke the world record for the 100 metres with a record time of 9.58 seconds. Ask them if they know which land animal is the fastest in the world. Listen to their suggestions, and then show a picture of the answer: the cheetah. Explain how over short distances, cheetahs can sprint at a top speed of 68-75 mph, and they can accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in three seconds, which is faster than most standard road cars. Point out that today in our rapidly changing world, there are lots of situations where speed matters such as completing a task by the deadline is important. For example, what would happen if you didn't hand in your homework on time, or if you only did half of your work before you ran out of time? As a class, create a table where you can list the situations where speed matters in one column and where speed doesn't matter in the other. Think about things such as how, today, there are many fast-food outlets, because many of us like our food at speed, expecting it to be prepared and served quickly, without a wait. How many situations can you list altogether? What is similar about them? What is different?

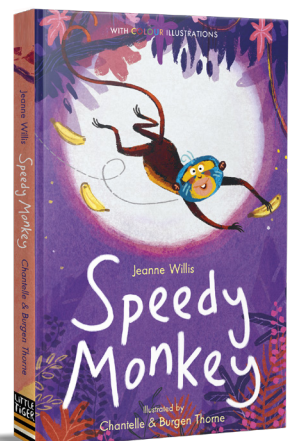
Task Two:

Following Task One, identify some of the situations from the column where speed doesn't matter. Refer to the fact that sometimes going too fast is not helpful and can be counterproductive. Help children to recognise that some things require time and patience, and the process can't be rushed. For example, if we rush when we eat, we can suffer afterwards by having indigestion which I'm sure is relatable for the children. The same could apply to something like spending quality time with friends or family. To rush quickly through a conversation or an activity with them will not help the relationships to grow, and children may have experienced this with more quality time with their families over lockdown. Link this to the animal characters found within the book and ask children to compare themselves to one of the characters. Are they more like Monkey, Sloth, Tortoise, Toucan or any of the other animals? Why? Ask children to write a short description about themselves, associating them with an animal character from the book. Reinforce that all characteristics of the animals are valued and welcomed as all of the different animals in the rainforest are like all of the different children in the classroom.



Task Three:

Discuss with children about how they think they can measure their own speed. Describe how we have different speeds such as walking, jogging and sprinting. Explain that speed tells us how fast something or someone is travelling. Share how you can find the average speed of an object if you know the distance travelled and the time it took. Introduce the formula for calculating speed which is $\text{speed} = \text{distance} \div \text{time}$. Measure out a running track suitable for the age of the children on the playground or school field. Model to children how to work out their speed using the formula. Working in pairs and small groups using stopwatches and calculators, ask children to travel at different speeds and to calculate their speed using $\text{distance} \div \text{time}$ to find out their speed. Think carefully about how best to record the results in a table or graph and about the units of measurement required in your results such as m/s (metres per second).



LESSON TWO: PEACE AND QUIET

Questions:

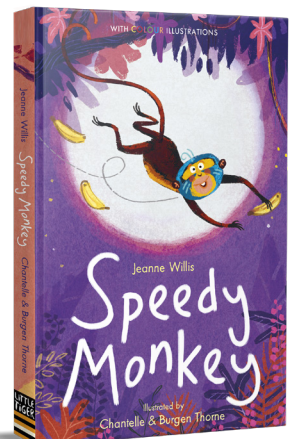
- What is 'quiet'?
- Do you like it when it's quiet? Why?
- Can you be powerful and quiet?

Task One:

Talk to children about how our world has changed since you were a child and because of the fast pace to life that we now have, in part due to the technological advances we have made. Describe how we live in a noisy world and that it is rare to find time, even for thirty seconds, to stop and listen to the sounds around us. Much of the background noise we hear is unavoidable – traffic noise, the sounds of others chatting, shouting and laughing, the school bell ringing to mark the start and end of lessons. But is there also a place for silence and stillness in our noisy world? Explain how sometimes we can rush through life too quickly, without taking time to stop and pause. To take time and slow down gives us a chance to appreciate the sights, sounds and sensations all around us. How could we find spaces and opportunities for silence and quietness here in school, at home or even in our towns? Do you think such times are important? Ask children to design their own quiet space, thinking about the size, furniture and objects they would have. If possible, you may want to consider costings to extend children's understanding of setting up the space, and send the designs to the headteacher to request if the plans of the quiet spaces can be turned into reality for the children.

Task Two:

Have any of the children heard of the idea of mindfulness? Explain how it is originally a Buddhist practice whereby we slow down and notice what is happening in the present moment. It encourages us to pause and be fully aware of what we are doing, or looking at or listening to. Nowadays, many people – from various religions or none – find that mindfulness helps them to find calmness and peace in a busy world. Look at how peace is used as part of worship, e.g. stillness and personal prayer in Christianity and meditation in Buddhism. Watch some video clips showing people meditating or practising mindfulness, and talking about its effects. Discuss the ways in which meditation can be a good everyday practice. Ask children to create a presentation about the power of quietness in life based on their understanding of the part it plays in religion. Present them to the class. After this, children could write their own reflection, poem, mantra, affirmation or mediation about peace, based on their own feelings about peace.



Task Three:

Following Task Two, introduce the concept of mindfulness to the children. Recap the messages behind why mindfulness is an effective practice for people. To begin, start with some simple breathing exercises. Teach focus breathing as a quick and easy technique for teaching mindfulness in the classroom as it helps to calm the mind, relax, and focus one's attention more effectively. This involves sitting comfortably and focusing on taking deep slow breaths, focusing on the air as it goes in and out. You may want to talk to children as they are doing this, such as 'Let's become aware of our own breath. See if you can feel the breath coming into your body as you breathe in. Then, slowly and gently become aware of the breath leaving your body as you gently exhale.' Encourage them to notice how their chest and stomach move as they inhale and exhale. At the end, ask them to consider what that experience of stopping, of slowing down, felt like. Once your class has mastered focus breathing, you might be interested in some other techniques for creating a calm classroom environment such as yoga. Plan with the children how you can make time for mindfulness during your day.



LESSON THREE: RESCUING THE RAINFOREST

Questions:

- What are rainforests?
- Where do we find them?
- Why are people destroying parts of the rainforest?

Task One:

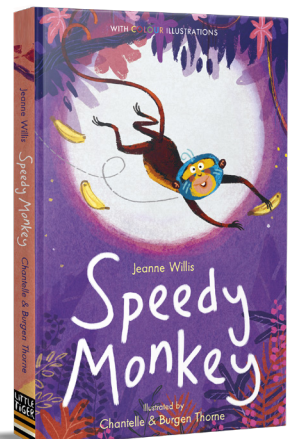
To start, ask children to close their eyes and play the recording of the sounds of the rainforest. Listen to these wonderful sounds together. Where do they think we are? Tell them these are the sounds of the rainforest. Ask them if they know anything about rainforests? What are they like? Where in the world are they? What grows there? Have any children seen a real rainforest or seen one on TV? Encourage children to share information and express what they already know. Show children a globe or a world map and identify the equator. Explain that it is a line on the map/globe which runs through the centre of the world. Look at some countries that lie on or are crossed by the equator. Ask children to name them. What is the weather like here? It is hot – a tropical climate. Then as a class, look at the globe and identify the lines above and below the equator – the tropic of Cancer and the tropic of Capricorn. Explain that these lines are like the equator – they are not really there, they are on maps to identify areas and climatic zones. The area between these lines – point it out on the globe – is known as the tropics. Use the world map and ask some children to come out and point out countries that lie within or cross the tropics. These are countries that may have tropical rainforests as the tropical rainforest areas of the world lie between the tropics – hence the name! Give children a blank world map and ask them to shade in the areas of tropical rainforest. They should also label the equator and the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn.

Extension:

Children could also label countries that cross the tropics and/or equator, the seven continents and the five oceans – colouring them in blue.

Task Two:

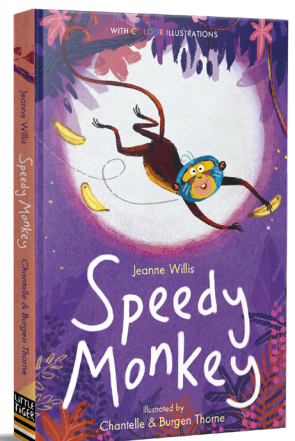
Following on from Task One, explain how a long time ago most of this land between the tropics was covered in tropical rainforest but now the areas are much smaller. Discuss how this is linked to an act called deforestation. Explain to children what it is, writing the term on the board. Look at a range of information texts using websites and books to research. Discuss why children think it matters if we destroy the rainforest. Brainstorm some suggestions – plants will become extinct, animals will die, tribal peoples living in the rainforest will no longer have a home and will not be able to continue their way of life, the amount of



forest in the world will be less and this affects global warming . Show a map of the tropical rainforest across the world and discuss how different parts of this are under threat from different causes. Discuss some causes such as farming, fires, homes, timber, mining/oil and roads. Talk to children about how the plants and animals that live there cannot survive outside this environment. In pairs, children work together using the internet to research their chosen cause for deforestation. Encourage children to find out as much as possible about the cause – provide headings to record their results in a table: (1) why the cause of the deforestation is happening, (2) who or what is mainly to blame, (3) what the effects are on the forest, and (4) what could be done to stop it (including what we can do ourselves).

Task Three:

Revisit with children the work they did last session. Talk about what deforestation means and ask them to try to recall the main causes – prompting where necessary. Using their research, ask them to write a report about their chosen cause, highlighting why it is such a problem. Once complete, join all the reports together to make a collaborative class report about the damage of deforestation.



LESSON FOUR: BE TRUE TO YOU

Questions:

- What does it mean to be yourself?
- When are you most yourself?
- Are you ever not yourself in a situation?

Task One:

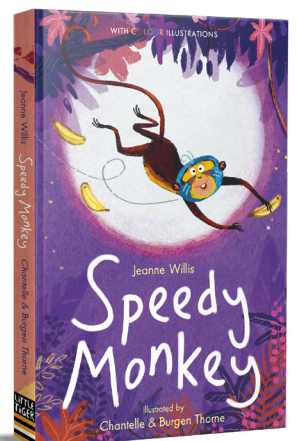
Begin this task by writing 'I am proud to be me!' on the board and explain to the class that we are going to be focusing on all the great things that make everyone different, special and unique. Ask the children if they can explain what the word 'proud' means and what kind of things they feel proud of. Introduce an object like a star to the class and pass it around the circle. When each child has a hold of the star, invite them to say "I am proud to be me because ..." completing the sentence with something that refers to themselves. This could include a skill or talent they have, such as "I am proud to be me because I am good at sport" or highlighting a positive element of their personality, such as "I am proud to be me because I am funny". Continue passing the star around the circle giving every child an opportunity to speak.

Extension:

Children could then write a short paragraph giving further reasons why they are 'proud to be me', thinking of an example within their skills and talents, interests and personality. Conclude the lesson highlighting the great range of qualities we have within the class, celebrating all the children characteristics you have shared together.

Task Two:

Following on from Task One, explain to the children how when we are young we learn how to speak and how to behave by copying many of those around us. As we grow older we learn to develop our own personalities and ideas. Some people try to copy their idols, such as famous footballers or pop stars, trends in fashion and behaviour they see on TV. Encourage children to think about how it is not advisable just to copy others and that it's better to try to think and work things out for ourselves. Suggest to them how if we copy others, whether it is copying their work, the way they act or how they dress, like Monkey tries to do with Sloth on pages 36 and 37, that it does not make us better people and can actually make us feel uncomfortable. So it's best to learn to be ourselves and to be true to you. To demonstrate this in the classroom, ask children to copy you doing a range of activities. Can they do them as well as you? Better or



worse? Now, reverse this and ask them to give you a series of activities to copy. Can you do them exactly like them? Reiterate the differences between you and how these differences are positive because we all have different skills, talents, interests and personalities.

Task Three:

Ask children to think about the following questions: Who would you say you really are? Do people know the real you or do you put up barriers to keep yourself from others? Do you change how you behave around people? Explain how sometimes our teachers might say that we're very quiet in class, yet when we're at home, we're the noisy ones. Or it could be the other way round: we might be the clown at school or in lessons, but when we get home, we're very quiet. Ask children to think about the many different people you are: such as what you are like in school, at home, when you're out with your friends or family. Who are we really and how do we show this? How do we change as people to fit into these social situations? Ask children to draw a picture of themselves in a range of these different situations such as at home with parents or on their own, in school, and out with their friends to depict what their personalities are like. You could use the pages 'Lots of Places to Go' from the book *Can I Build Another Me?* by Shinsuke Yoshitake as inspiration for the children to design their own scenes and dioramas like those shown in the book.



FURTHER IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

Read more books that explore the subject of being yourself together such as *Can I Build Another Me?* by Shinsuke Yoshitake; *Incredible You* by Rhys Brisenden and Nathan Reed and *Super Duper You* by Sophy Henn.

Distribute a hand-held mirror to each child (ask children to bring these in from home if you do not have access to them). Ask the children to view themselves in the mirror. Talk with them about what they see, encouraging them to look closely at the shape of their face and their distinguishable features in order to become body confident.

Write a short autobiography about yourself, encouraging children to think about how the achievements they have accomplished makes them feel about themselves.

There are many different layers of the rainforest mentioned in the book like canopy and understorey. To learn more about these, create a shoebox habitat diorama to show the animals that live in each layer.

Imagine you have been on a trip to the rainforest (you could create this within the classroom). Write a recount based on your rainforest trip writing about what you saw and how you felt.

