BEFORE YOU START

Prepare a group journal to help you record group discussions and responses to the text as you work through the book.

Prepare outlines of the characters Perkin and Cindy, ready to complete using the Role on the Wall technique.
Focus: Summarising, Thinking Aloud, Questioning and Predicting

Read the title of the book and share the illustration on the front cover. Ask the children to predict what the story could be about. Ask them to justify their responses, drawing out any connections they make to other stories. Record the children’s responses in the journal. You can return to these as you read the book, comparing the children’s initial thoughts to how the story actually unfolds.

Support the children in making connections between this text and other stories they might know, especially traditional tales, by encouraging them to look in detail at the illustration.

- Who do you think these two people could be? What clues do you have? (Children might notice the girl’s tiara or the pumpkin.)
- Why do you think they are holding a large pumpkin? Do you know any stories in which pumpkins play a role?
- Look at the mice and the fairy dust scattered on the page. What might this mean?
- Can you think of any other stories you know with magical vegetables? (Children might mention Jack and the Beanstalk.)
Read the blurb and invite the children to speculate further on the story they are about to read. Ask them to summarise the story of Cinderella (or recap it for them if necessary), including the details of the mice and the pumpkin.

- Does the blurb give you any more insight into the characters on the front cover?
- How do you think these elements might combine in the story you are about to read?

Read Chapter One. Begin to explore the children’s responses to the start of the book with the help of the four basic questions. These questions can be used as a basis for discussion throughout the sessions.

- Tell me… was there anything you liked about this text?
- Was there anything that you particularly disliked…?
- Was there anything that puzzled you?
- Were there any patterns… any connections that you noticed…?

As children respond it can be useful to write down what they say under the headings ‘likes’, ‘dislikes’, ‘puzzles’ and ‘patterns’. Record the children’s responses in the journal and return to any queries as the sessions continue.

Ask the children to predict what they think will happen next.

- How does the first chapter compare to your predictions?
- How do you think Perkin fits into the story of Cinderella?
- What details stand out for you from the pictures?
- How do the illustrations support your understanding of the story? Do they make you feel more interested in the story?
- What does the opening of the story – ‘Once upon a time’ – tell you about the story? How do you predict it will end, given that this is how it starts?

Read Chapter Two and invite the children to continue their reflections.

- Who do you think the ‘strange woman’ might be? What role might she play?
- Why do you think the woman is described as ‘strange’?
- Why do you think she starts a conversation with Perkin?
- Do you notice anything interesting about the contents of her handbag?
- What do you think will happen with the seven seeds she has given Perkin?
Focus: Empathising, Re-reading, Clarifying and Summarising

Read Chapter Three, then discuss the developments.

- How does Perkin feel to see these seven seeds grow?
- What do you think he expected from the ‘strange woman’ who gave them to him?
- Do you know other stories in which seeds grow into something unexpected? (Children may mention Jack and the Beanstalk.)
- Have you ever planted seeds? How did you feel when they started to grow?
Read Chapter Four, in which Perkin meets Cindy.

- Does the character of Cindy remind you of a character you have met before? What are the similarities?
- Perkin and Cindy have to work hard without getting much thanks, food or money. How does that make you feel towards them?
- Look at the illustration on page 14. What does Cindy have to do? Do you ever have chores to do?
- How does being friends help Perkin and Cindy cope with their problems?
- Do you have a good friend? How do you support each other?

Introduce the outline of Perkin to be added to using the Role on the Wall technique. Ask the children to come up with words or phrases to describe Perkin's feelings and personality or his outward appearance and behaviour. For example, they might comment on how he is fed up, tired and hungry but that he also has a good friendship with Cindy.

Do the same using the Role on the Wall for Cindy, in order to compare and contrast the two characters and also to explore their friendship.

Revisit the Role on the Wall outlines at key points in the story.
SESSION 3: CHAPTER FIVE

Focus: Clarifying, Thinking Aloud and Empathising

Read Chapter Five, stopping at different points to clarify the children’s understanding and allow for discussion around the four basic questions.

Revisit the different events in the chapter: Cindy explaining about missing the party – pages 18-19; her godmother appearing and preparing her to attend the party – pages 20-24; and then Perkin and the godmother reading their pumpkin catalogues when she has left – page 25. Divide the children into groups and ask them create to freeze frames to represent these three parts of the story.

Thought-track each of the groups and note their thoughts in the journal to keep a record of how the characters feel during these events. Consider photographing each of the freeze frames and allowing children to access these on a computer. They could add speech and thought bubbles to capture the voices from the freeze-framing and thought-tracking.
SESSION 4: CHAPTER SIX

**Focus: Questioning, Re-reading and Close Reading**

Read Chapter Six, stopping at different points to clarify the children’s understanding and allow for discussion around the four basic questions.

Reflect on the way in which the story twists the traditional ending – although it still ends ‘happily ever after’. Discuss the children’s responses to this.

- Were you surprised by the events of the final chapter?
- Did you like the twist in the tale with the addition of the swindling ugly sisters, the unemployed Prince Charming and Perkin’s pumpkin empire? Why / why not?

Revisit the Role on the Wall to explore how the characters have developed during the story.
SESSION 5: WHOLE BOOK

Focus: Re-reading, Summarising and Empathising

Re-read the whole text from the beginning. Engage the children in book talk, discussing how the book made them feel and allowing them time and space to tell you their likes and dislikes, with reference to different parts of the text or particular illustrations.

Through modelling, ask the children to describe their favourite part of the story. Provide the children with an oral scaffold, for example: the most memorable part of the story was... because...; my top moment in the story was... because... and ask them to discuss their favourite parts of the story in pairs. Encourage children to give reasons for their choices and invite some children to share these.

Discuss how the children felt about the book compared to their original expectations.

- When you first saw this book, what kind of book did you think it was going to be? What made you think this?
- Now you’ve read it, is it as you expected?
- Have you read other books like it? How is this one the same? How is it different?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend?
These are areas you could further develop depending on your professional judgement of the children’s learning needs and their interests.

**Developing wider reading experiences**

- This resource offers a list of versions of the popular story Little Red Riding Hood: [https://clpe.org.uk/clpe/library/booklists/rash-red-riding-hoods](https://clpe.org.uk/clpe/library/booklists/rash-red-riding-hoods)
- Other Bloomsbury Young Readers featuring traditional tales with a twist include:
  - *I Am Not A Frog* by Maggie Pearson, illustrated by Natalia Moore
  - *The Good Little Wolf* by A.H. Benjamin, illustrated by Sarah Aspinall
  - *The Ugly Little Swan* by James Riordan, illustrated by Brendan Kearney
- Children may also enjoy these other books which retell traditional tales with a twist:
  - *The Wolf’s Story* by Toby Forward, illustrated by Izhar Cohen – Walker Books
  - *Snow White in New York* by Fiona French – Oxford University Press
  - *Goldilocks and Just the One Bear* by Leigh Hodgkinson – Nosy Crow
  - *Mixed Up Fairy Tales* by Hilary Robinson, illustrated by Nick Sharratt – Hodder
  - *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* – by Jon Scieszka, illustrated by Lane Smith – Puffin
  - *Good Little Wolf* by Nadia Shireen – Jonathan Cape
  - *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivizas, illustrated by Helen Oxenbury – Egmont
  - *Hansel and Gretel* by Bethan Woollvin – Two Hoots
Supporting reading fluency

- While reading with the group, model skills and strategies such as predicting, sampling, confirming, self-monitoring, self-correcting, ‘thinking aloud’, interpreting things which are only implied, and the full range of cueing systems (semantic, syntactic and graphophonic).

- Occasionally, you could hide some words with a post-it note, asking the children to refer to the illustration for ideas. You could give another clue by revealing the first syllable or letter.

- You could make a pairs game to develop visual memory and book language, creating cards using laminated images from the book. Make pairs of cards, one card for an illustrated location or character and one for matching words from the story. Spread these out face down. Children take turns to turn over two cards. If they match, they can keep them. If not, they have to turn them back over again. The game proceeds until all the pairs have been found.

- You could create a simple jigsaw by writing questions with corresponding answers directly underneath on one side of a piece of paper, then printing an illustration on the reverse and cutting the sheet of paper up to separate the questions and answers. The children lay out the questions and answers in order. They can check their layout by turning them over to see if they have created the illustration correctly.

Vocabulary building

- Children could make word collections which describe a particular character and their feelings or a place, event or situation.

- Chapter Five features some interesting adjectives, such as super-fast, tatty and marvellous. Ask the children to find all the adjectives in the chapter, then discuss their definitions as a group.
Opportunities to revisit the text independently

- With the children, make a set of magnetic or stick story props to use in a retelling of the story and to support children in their own independent retellings. If possible, provide extra copies of the book to support this.

- If the children have a good memory of the text through repeated readings, they can be given copies of the story to read to partners. This helps children to see themselves as readers.

- Allow the children to re-enact the story through play. Revisiting stories through a range of play-based experiences helps children to step into the world of the book and to explore it more completely.

- Use **hot-seating** to explore the characters further. One member of the group role-plays a character and is interviewed by the other children. This activity involves children closely examining a character’s motivation and responses.

- Make a **story map** as a way of retelling the story. This breaks the story down into episodes and sequences its events. This kind of graphic representation helps children to hold on to the shape of the story more confidently.

- Encourage the children to take the book home to read alongside a parent or carer and suggest that they use the ‘Tips for grown-ups’ pages to support their discussions.

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Experiences linked to the text

- Encourage children to talk about their own favourite fairy tales and then invent twists and retellings for them. This could include setting them in a different time period or continuing the story after the traditional ending.

- Encourage the children to practise oral retellings of their favourite traditional tales, or of twists on these tales.

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These resources were created by Bloomsbury and The Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE). For more teaching resources, visit:

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