

Year 6 - 'HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON'

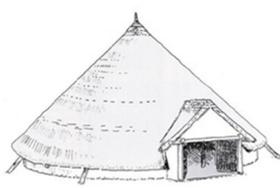


Rationale

During the Autumn term 2014, Year 6 used Cressida Cowell's *How to Train Your Dragon* story as a springboard for a variety of creative activities linking into different areas of the curriculum, in particular Literacy, History, Geography, Art & Design, DT and IT.

Creativity	Independence	Aspiration
<p>The project led to some really creative thinking and activities. For example, we created our own dragons from the inside out and made a fantastic corridor display explaining the process.</p>	<p>Our project involved lots of independent research work using both books and online resources to support our self-guided learning. Whilst using the internet we considered our search terms carefully and took steps to ensure we stayed safe online. Many of our independent homework activities were linked to the project and we took the opportunity to showcase our knowledge and explore particular areas of interest further.</p>	<p>Throughout our project we aspired to become 'How To Train Your Dragon' and Viking experts. We learnt to find our way around the Isle of Berk using 4 and 6-figure grid references and taught our parents to do this as part of a treasure hunt at our Learning Celebration event in November.</p>
<p>Spark</p> <p>On Swapover Day in July 2014 we heard an excerpt from the audio book of <i>How To Train Your Dragon</i> which sparked our interest. Mrs Pearman then read the first chapter and we debated the qualities a dragon needed in groups. We put this to a class vote and came up with our top 5 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brave Strong Protective Fast Sharp teeth <p>We ended the day by designing our own dragons for Top Trumps cards. We couldn't wait to get started with our project when we returned to school in September!</p>		<p>Learning Celebration</p> <p>We celebrated all the learning we had been doing in two key ways which involved engaging with our school community:</p> <p>Firstly, we invited our parents to take part in a Viking treasure hunt using 4 and 6-figure grid references to show off our new geographical skills.</p> <p>Secondly, we held a Viking Day which involved us all dressing up as Vikings and participating in a variety of creative role play activities as we went about our Viking business including visiting the wise woman for cures and creating rune stones. Our parents joined us at the end to see what we had been up to.</p>
<p>Role Playing/Life Skills/Real Learning</p> <p>Our project allowed us to develop some really useful skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reading and creating maps - following and giving compass directions and grid references - copying drawings accurately and to different scales - how to use the internet safely and effectively for research purposes 		<p>Community Cohesion</p> <p>Our parents were involved in both our learning celebration activities – the Viking Treasure Hunt and Viking Day! We really enjoyed showcasing our learning to them and the rest of our school community.</p> <p>We also displayed our work in the lower corridor (as well as in the classroom) and told everyone what we were up to each week via our class blog.</p>
<p>Out of Classroom Opportunities</p>		<p>Home Learning Activity</p>





- A company called *History Off The Page* came into school to help run 'Viking Day' on 9th December – they are Viking experts so we learnt even more! We weren't in the classroom though – we made the hall into our Viking Village!
- When we learnt about using maps and grid refs we set ourselves outdoor orienteering challenges to practice our new skills using the outside space.

Lots of our homework was based around our Creative Curriculum project including: writing a diary entry for Hiccup, deciphering some Dragonese text and designing and labelling a Viking longship.

Computing and E-safety

When carrying out research into the Vikings, pupils used the internet to search for websites effectively and with an appreciation of how search results are selected and ranked. They had to be discerning in evaluating the content found and cross-reference information from a number of sources to ensure its validity. There was a strong focus throughout on the need to stay safe online and how to escalate any situations which gave cause for concern.

Links to discrete subjects:

English/Literacy – the children produced a variety of fiction/non-fiction writing arising from our collective reading of 'How To Train Your Dragon', for example, a story entitled 'The Dragon's Roar' (following a close focus on the adventure genre), diary entries written from the main character's viewpoint and factual training guides. We also looked closely at the use of adjectives to write effective and powerful descriptions of dragons of our own creation. We engaged in a class debate about the definition and qualities of a hero and the assertion from the book that, "*Only the strong can belong*". At the end of the topic we compared the text of the book with the film version of the story and how effects had been used to highlight key themes. Writing and decoding phrases in 'Dragonese' allowed us to practise our linguistic decoding skills in a light-hearted way.

Drama played an integral role in our 'Viking Day' learning celebration. We also performed mimes of the Viking boys entering the dragon cave for our peers.

History – Since 'How To Train Your Dragon' has a Viking backdrop, we studied various aspects of the Viking period including: daily life, inventions (for example, Viking longship designs), shelter and homes, weapons for fighting and hunting and clothing/jewellery. In all our history work we made comparisons with the present day. We also explored Norse mythology as part of Viking beliefs. There were inevitably strong links with **Geography** when we discussed Viking origins and settlements.

Our project provided a great opportunity to enhance our **geographical** skills such as: map drawing and reading, scale drawing, interpreting grid references (with links to **Maths** and **Art**) and features of an island given the setting of the book.

Art & Design – we created dragons of our own design from the inside out for a wonderful corridor display. Firstly we tessellated the bones to match the dragon's shape and physical characteristics and then added skin and wings using a variety of shading techniques to give the illusion of different textures. When we experimented with scale drawings of our dragons we learnt how to apply a water colour wash to add a suggestion of colour without hiding the lines we had drawn so carefully. Our artistic skills were also put to the test on Viking Day when creating Viking rune stones.





Maths – Maths played a role in our project through some dragon questions cropping up in mental maths calculations and creating tallies and bar charts to track and record dragon colours, tail lengths and habitats. We also needed to use our maths skills in working out how long ago the Vikings lived and how far about different key events in the Viking era lasted.

PSHE – We explored the relationship between the main character, Hiccup, and his father in ‘How To Train Your Dragon’ as part of a broader discussion about expectations, growing up and different personalities.

British Values

As part of an anti-bullying policy review discussion, we talked about the need not to discriminate against people due to the differences we perceive in how they look and behave, drawing on aspects of the book to illustrate our points as we did so. Tied into this, we also had a class debate about whether the quotation from the text, “Only the strong can belong” is a fair assertion. We discussed and wrote about what makes a hero and difference between super-heroes and real-life heroes. Finally, we looked at the myth of St George and the dragon and its legacy in terms of British values and the choice of St George as the patron saint of England as part of this piece of work.

Steps to success

Our project grew largely organically according to the interests of the children and having started with a strong focus on ‘How To Train Your Dragon’ and dragons in general, we gradually moved exclusively into Viking history. Key stages were as follows:

- 1.) Art and Literacy focus including: creating and describing our inside-out dragons for display writing adventure stories entitled ‘The Dragon’s Roar’.
- 2.) Geography focus including: scale drawing and learning map reading/orienteering skills against the backdrop of the Isle of Berk.
- 3.) History focus: the background and chronology of the Viking invasions, finding out about how Vikings lived and playing the part of Vikings on ‘Viking Day’.

Project evaluation

The children engaged creatively with the early-stage teacher-initiated activities and had many follow-up ideas of their own which were taken into account when planning next steps. They developed both practical skills, such as reading grid references, alongside scope to work imaginatively and independently. The project covered a number of elements of the Upper KS2 National Curriculum for non-core subjects and facilitated cross-curricular links to create holistic learning experience. The two learning celebration events during the project, namely teaching members of the school community how to navigate around our Isle of Berk map and inviting parents to join us on ‘Viking Day’ at the culmination of our project, were successful in sparking outside interest and showcasing the children’s skills, knowledge and enthusiasm. ‘Viking Day’ in particular was a great success, bringing learning to life and enriching the experience for all children.

