

PIRATE ACADEMY

TEACHING RESOURCES



PIRATE ACADEMY

Pirate Academy: Book 1 – New Kid on Deck by Justin Somper

Illustrated by Teo Skaffa, published by UCLan Publishing

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE PACK

4 x LESSON PLANS AND IDEAS

Created by Scott Evans, The Reader Teacher

Suitable for: Ages 8+

Subjects: • English • Geography • PSHE • Drama

- Explore themes of:** ✓ Discovering who you really are ✓ Doing the right thing, even when it's hard
✓ Teamwork makes the dream work ✓ Exploring new horizons
✓ Being brave in the face of fear ✓ Learning from mistakes and growing stronger together
✓ Developing and exploring empathy ✓ Making the world a better place
✓ Believing in yourself and your dreams ✓ Embracing differences and diversity
✓ Standing up for what's right ✓ Navigating life's ups and downs ✓ Climate change
✓ Finding calmness through breathwork and mindfulness

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ABOUT THE BOOK

PIRATE ACADEMY: NEW KID ON DECK

From Justin Somper, award-winning author of the **VAMPIRATES** series, comes a new middle-grade fast-paced and exciting fantasy adventure series. **PIRATE ACADEMY** is set in the same world – and time-period – as **VAMPIRATES**, though both series can be read independently of each other.

The year is 2507. The oceans have risen. A new dawn of piracy has begun. Jacoby Blunt and Jasmine Peacock are students at the elite Pirate Academy. This is no ordinary school! Lessons range from Knots Class and Sailing to Combat Workshop. The teachers are all pirate legends. The pressure is always on. Friendship is everything.

When a new kid, the mysterious Neo Splice, arrives, everything changes **FAST**. Suddenly the dangers are no longer simply out on the oceans but right here, amongst them. In the face of real peril, the students of Barracuda class must put everything they have learned to the test against a ruthless and seemingly unstoppable new enemy.

Welcome to Pirate Academy – once you step through the door you won't ever want to leave!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR – JUSTIN SOMPER

Justin Somper is the award-winning author of the six VAMPIRATES books, which have been published in 35 countries and 25 languages. Cressida Cowell calls VAMPIRATES “a swaggering tale of excitement and adventure that thrills from the first sentence.” PIRATE ACADEMY is set in the same world as VAMPIRATES, though both series can be read independently of each other. Justin is also the author of two books for young teenagers, ALLIES AND ASSASSINS and its sequel A CONSPIRACY OF PRINCES. Justin is currently based in Perth, Western Australia, where he is writing the PIRATE ACADEMY adventures – in between refreshing dips in the Indian Ocean, inspiring visits to lighthouses and long-overdue sailing lessons. During the pandemic, Justin trained as a meditation guide and wellbeing coach, specialising in Effortless Meditation. He now helps people all over the world to relax – ranging from young people and their parents to adult individuals, charities, and companies. You can easily find Justin on social media, where his username is @justinsomper on Instagram, Facebook, X and TikTok. He is most active on Instagram.



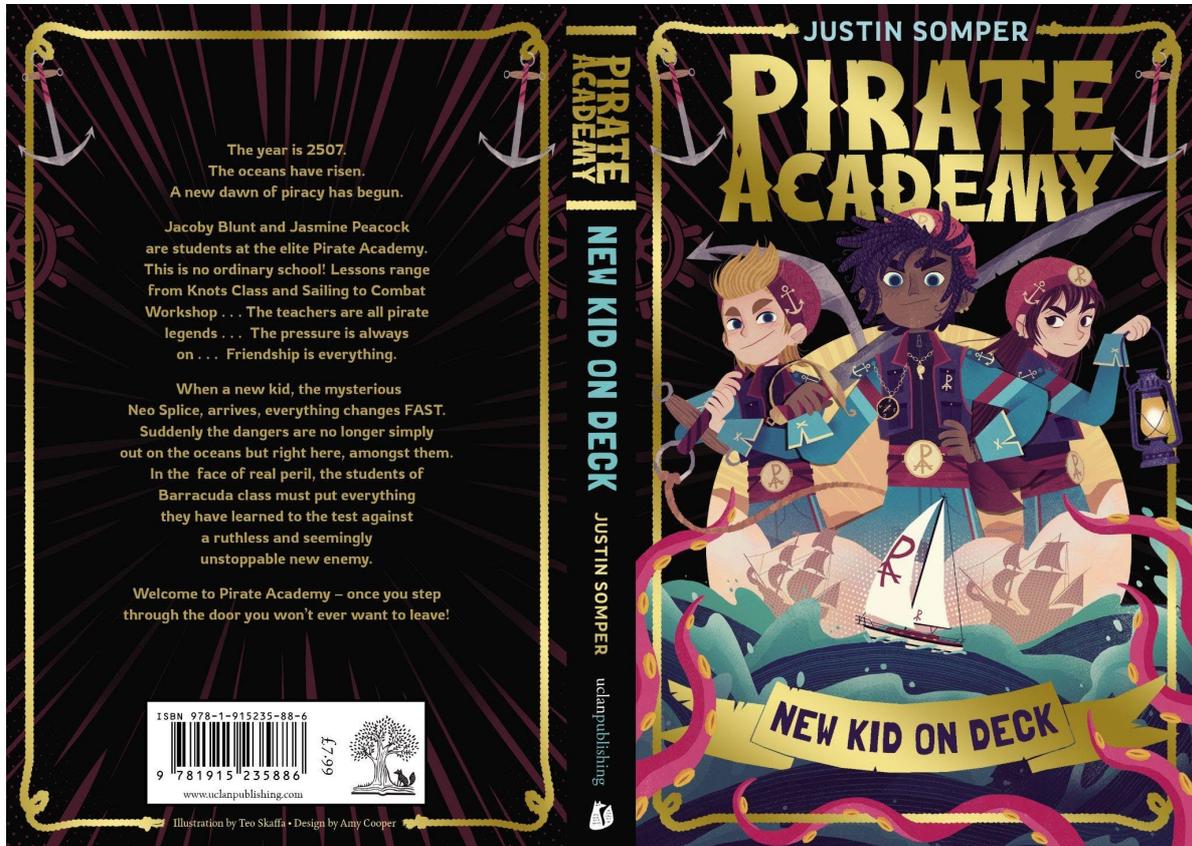
ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR – TEO SKAFFA

Teo Skaffa has lived in many places but currently lives in an abandoned school building in the outskirts of the city of Groningen in the north of the Netherlands. Besides making art, he likes synthesisers, the colour pink and making music with outdated technology. He does NOT like room-temperature watermelon.

He likes drawing creepy-cute atmospheric scenes and characters, and is grateful that he's able to make a living by drawing, especially since he's not particularly good at anything else.

Teo is currently developing his own kids' book about vampires.

BOOK COVER AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. When you first looked at the book, what caught your eye right away? Can you identify the author and illustrator? Check for their names on the cover or back cover of the book.
2. What do you think might happen to the characters on the cover? What adventures might they go on?
3. What genre do you think the book is (e.g. mystery, fantasy, adventure)?
4. The series title is “Pirate Academy” and the title of this (first) book is “New Kid on Deck.” Why do you think these titles were chosen and how do they connect to what you see on the cover?
5. How do you think the illustrator created the images on the cover? If you were the illustrator, how might you have designed the cover differently?
6. Now, let's read and explore the blurb of the book together. In what year does the story of Pirate Academy take place and who are the main characters mentioned in the blurb?
7. What do you think the students learn at Pirate Academy? What kinds of classes does the blurb tell us they have? Are they similar to the ones you have at your school or are they completely different? Would you like to attend Pirate Academy?
8. How does Neo Splice's arrival change things at Pirate Academy? At this point, do you think Neo is going to prove to be a hero or a villain?
9. Why do you think the blurb ends with the line, 'Welcome to Pirate Academy - once you step through the door you won't ever want to leave!'?
10. How do the cover and the blurb make you feel about reading the book? Do they leave you wanting to read more of it? Are you curious to find out what happens next? Why?

EXTRACT 1: A VERY DIFFERENT PLACE

(found at the front of the book)

It is the year 2507. The world is a very different place to what it used to be.

Ocean levels have risen, causing the shape of the world to change.

There is a lot less land and a lot more ocean. A new golden age of piracy has arrived.

Everyone knows that piracy offers the best chance of a dazzling future.

The oceans are now under the tight control of the Pirate Federation – a worldwide organisation of leading pirate captains. The Pirate Federation also runs nine schools around the world. Each Pirate Academy admits only fifteen students each year.

These students are the young hopes of the ocean's fiercest pirate families.

They are sent to Pirate Academy to receive ten years of training at the hands of the world's greatest pirate captains. Upon graduation, the young apprentices will be ready to sail forth as Captains and Deputies, in the hope of bringing fresh success to their families, fleets and empires.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How many years into the future from today does the story take place? Imagine you lived in the year 2507, what do you think life would be like? How would it be different from your life today?
2. In this part of the story, it says that ocean levels have risen, changing the shape of the world. Can you describe the current shape of our world and how might it look if the ocean levels continue to rise?
3. What are some of the reasons why the levels of the oceans are currently rising in our world today?
4. How can we take action to slow down the rapid rise of ocean levels, individually and collectively?
5. What do you think a Pirate Federation is? Why do you think they control the oceans in this story?
6. How do you think the Pirate Federation selects students for Pirate Academy each year? What qualities do you think they look for in potential students?
7. Why do you think pirate families send their kids to Pirate Academy? What do they hope to achieve? How might the young pirates feel about leaving their families to attend?
8. If you were a young pirate, would you want to go to Pirate Academy? Why or why not?
9. What do you think the relationship is like between the pirate families? Do you think they compete or collaborate with each other?
10. Do you think the story might be trying to warn us of potential dangers that we haven't considered that are connected to climate change? Could pirates perhaps gain the ability to dominate the oceans in the future?

ACTIVITY 1: PLANET PROTECTORS

- Start by displaying a world map on the board. Engage the children by asking them to identify and locate the major continents and oceans they are familiar with on the map. Encourage them to use compass directions (such as north, south, east and west) when describing the locations.
- Use this opportunity to delve deeper into the characteristics of each of the world's seven continents (North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and Antarctica) and five oceans (Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, Southern and Arctic), highlighting their unique features and significance.
- Next, show them some images illustrating the evolution of Earth's shape over time, from the ancient supercontinent Pangaea to the gradual separation of the continents. Discuss the geological processes that have shaped the Earth's surface over millions of years, such as earthquakes and volcanic activity.
- Read the provided extract set in the year 2507, discussing the potential consequences of rising ocean levels depicted in the story and linking them to the children's current understanding of climate change.
- Introduce or revisit the concept of climate change, emphasising its impact on the environment, particularly the melting of polar ice caps and the resulting rise in sea levels. Explain how greenhouse gas emissions contribute to global warming and its consequences on Earth's climate system.
- Draw the class' attention to the fact that sea levels are rising rapidly, at a rate of approximately 3.5 millimetres per year, according to scientific research and show this amount as a capacity. Reinforce that although this figure may seem small, over time it accumulates, resulting in significant consequences.
- To visually demonstrate this, provide each child with **Activity Sheet 1: Rising Oceans**

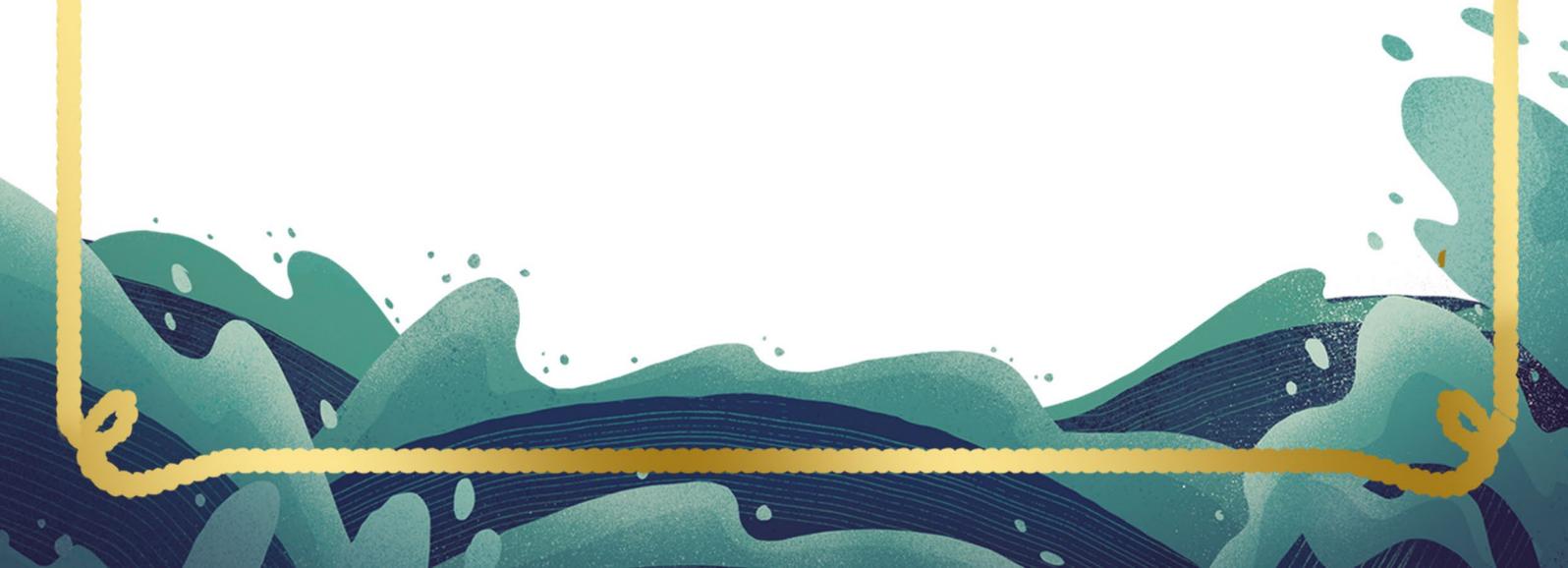
Describe the effects of rising sea levels, including coastal erosion, flooding in low-lying areas and the loss of marine life habitats. Utilise a range of resources to research places that are susceptible to flooding and potential submersion by 2507.

Provide the children with colouring materials and have them colour these areas on their maps, using different shades of blue to indicate the extent of inundation.

Some examples of vulnerable areas you could include: urban areas near the sea such as Miami, Florida, and New Orleans, Louisiana in the United States; low-lying island nations like the Maldives, Kiribati, and Tuvalu in the Pacific Ocean; delta regions such as the Ganges-Brahmaputra Delta in Bangladesh and the Nile Delta in Egypt; and coastal regions in Europe, including Venice in Italy, the Netherlands, and parts of the United Kingdom like Norfolk, Suffolk, East Yorkshire, Somerset and South East Wales.

- After this, emphasise the importance of collective action in addressing climate change, stressing the need for everyone to play a part in preserving the planet for future generations.
- Encourage the children to reflect on what they've learned and how they can contribute to addressing climate change in their daily lives, which could include reducing energy consumption, using public transportation, recycling and reducing waste, conserving water, planting trees and supporting environmental causes in their communities.

Do be mindful that students may find aspects of discussing climate change and the climate crisis quite stressful. You will know best how to address this with your own students.



ACTIVITY SHEET 1: RISING OCEANS



Instructions:

Look at the world map provided.

Use the colours provided to shade the areas blue that could be underwater by 2507 due to rising sea levels.

Use various shades of blue to show the areas at risk of submersion by 2507 (e.g. light blue = minor risk, dark blue = high risk).

EXTRACT 2A: THE BONDS OF BARRACUDA CLASS

(from CHAPTER 20: THE BOY WHO DIDN'T EXIST – page 103)

Shay pushed the door shut and came over to join Jasmine. Neo's room was fairly crowded now there were six members of Barracuda Class there. It was against Academy rules that more than four Barracudas should occupy any 'cabin' at a time but, right now, rules were the last thing on anyone's mind.

"So," Jacoby said. "We heard you telling Jasmine about The League of True Pirates. Now we understand what you meant about the danger on our doorstep. Can you tell us more?"

Neo gazed at Jacoby but, before he could respond, Ocean spoke up.

"Neo," she said. "We really had no idea about your mum. We're all so sorry."

"Thank you," he told them. "To be fair, you couldn't have had any idea because that was the plan. To keep you in the dark and protect you. But I guess we're moving on from that."

"So look, Neo, I know we didn't get off to the best start," Jacoby said now. "But we have a rule here, a motto if you like. *Wound one Barracuda and you wound us all.*"

Cosmo nodded. "That's right. And it's clear that The League of True Pirates has wounded you very badly. Ergo, they are now our enemy as well as yours."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How many members of Barracuda Class were in Neo's room in **Extract 2A**? Why were there more than the allowed number of students in the room?
2. What did Jacoby ask Neo about The League of True Pirates and why did Neo respond the way he did?
3. According to Neo, why were his classmates kept in the dark about his mother's situation?
4. What rule or motto does Jacoby mention to Neo? How do Neo and Cosmo respond to this?
5. What is a motto? Can you think of any examples of mottos you've heard before?

EXTRACT 2B: NEVER UNDERESTIMATE!

(from CHAPTER 24: SAIL AWAY – pages 127-128)

“From what I hear, you guys had quite an adventure last night,” Priya said, her hand on the tiller extension. “I actually feel a bit peeved you didn’t let *me* in on the action.”

“Next time,” Neo told her.

“I really hope there isn’t going to be a next time,” Jacoby said, with a shudder. “It was pretty terrifying,” he admitted. “You don’t want to mess with these agents from The League of True Pirates, Priya. You should have seen the size of their swords!”

Priya shivered, adjusting her steering line. “On second thoughts, I’m glad you let me sleep.”

“I just hope that’s the end of their threat for a while,” Neo said.

“Well now we know the Commodore and the Feds are on the case,” Jacoby said. “We don’t have to fight them off ourselves anymore.”

“No,” Neo agreed, releasing his line on the jib. “Though, we did a pretty impressive job.”

Jacoby pulled the jib over to his side. “We certainly did. Never underestimate a Barracuda!”

“Ooh I like that!” Priya said. “We should make that our new class motto!”

They all grinned, then repeated together: “Never underestimate a Barracuda!”

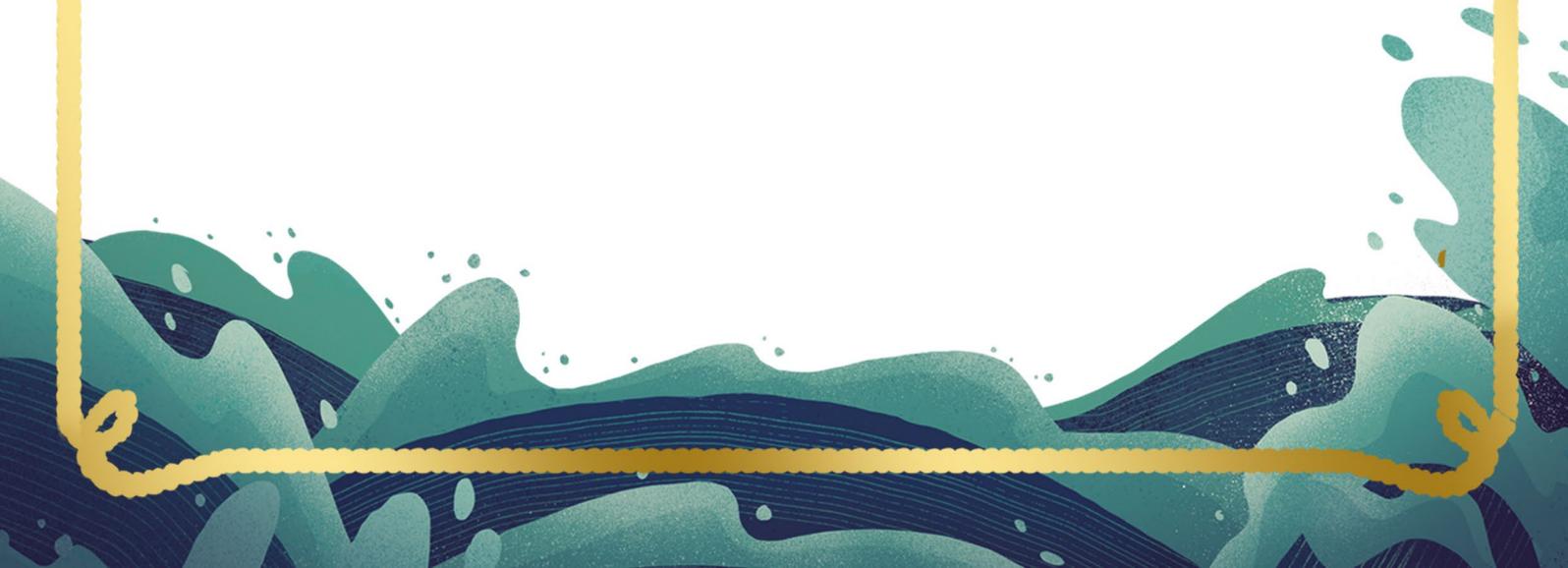
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In **Extract 2B**, why does Priya feel peeved with her classmates? What does Neo promise her?
2. Let’s discuss the leadership dynamics within Barracuda Class. Who do you think is a leader and why?
3. What phrase do the students decide should be their new class motto? Why do they choose this?
4. Do you find the motto “Never underestimate a Barracuda” inspiring? Why or why not?
5. If you could create a motto for our classroom, what would it be? What message would it convey?

ACTIVITY 2: THE MEANING OF MOTTOS

- Begin by writing the word "mottos" on the board for discussion with the class. Ask the children if they understand what a motto is and if they can provide any examples. Some familiar mottos to consider are: "Just do it" by Nike; "I have a dream" by Martin Luther King Jr.; "To infinity and beyond" by Buzz Lightyear (from Toy Story); "All for one, and one for all" from The Three Musketeers; and "Empowerment Through Education" by Malala Yousafzai. As this lesson is linked to pirates, you may also want to share some well-known pirate mottos, such as "A short life but a merry one," which Justin Somper uses in his other book series, VAMPIRATES.
- Introduce the idea that a motto is a short phrase or sentence that expresses a guiding principle, belief or goal. Explain to the class that mottos are often used to inspire and motivate people to act in accordance with their values or aspirations.
- Encourage children to think about mottos they may have encountered in their own lives, such as in school, at home or in popular culture and consider what these mottos mean to them.
- Display or read aloud **Extracts 2A** and **2B**, where the characters devise a new motto. Encourage children to actively participate in discussing the themes and events shown in these extracts, using the provided discussion questions to guide the conversation.
- Inspired by the story, tell the class that they will now work together to create a motto for the classroom based on their own morals and values.
- Divide the class into small groups to facilitate active participation and collaboration. Provide each student with **Activity Sheet 2: Creating Our Classroom Motto** to allow for brainstorming and organisation of ideas.
- Ask them to brainstorm ideas for a classroom motto based on their morals and values. Encourage them to consider what principles are important to them as individuals and as a collective group, and to discuss and debate within their groups, ensuring that all voices are heard and ideas are considered.
- After the brainstorming session, reconvene as a whole class to share and discuss the ideas generated by each group. Compare and contrast the different motto proposals by encouraging children to explain the reasoning behind their suggestions and to respectfully consider alternative viewpoints.
- As a class, narrow down the suggestions by allowing children to vote on their favourite motto or combine elements from different proposals to create a final version that best represents the collective values of the class. During this process, emphasise effective word choices that encapsulate the desired message and evoke the intended emotions. Encourage discussion on why certain words or phrases resonate more strongly and how they contribute to the overall power and impact of the motto.

- Once they have agreed on a motto, write it prominently on the board or on a large piece of paper to display it somewhere in the classroom for all to see and encourage everyone to take pride in their collective creation. You could get artistic with the design of the motto!
- To finish the lesson, lead a discussion about how the chosen motto reflects the values and aspirations of the classroom community and invite children to reflect on how they can embody the motto in their daily actions and interactions with their peers and teachers.



ACTIVITY SHEET 2: CREATING OUR CLASSROOM MOTTO

A classroom motto is a short phrase or sentence that reflects the values and aspirations of our class. Work together to discuss ideas for a motto for our own classroom. Make sure the motto is positive and inclusive, and that it reflects the values of our diverse classroom. Consider how it can motivate and inspire us!

What are some important values that we should all uphold in our classroom?

What kind of atmosphere do we want to create in our classroom?

How can we encourage and support each other as classmates?

What goals do we want to achieve together this year?

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How can our classroom motto inspire us to be our best selves?

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What words can we choose to make our motto strong and meaningful?

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OUR CLASSROOM MOTTO IS:

--

EXTRACT 3A: WISE WORDS

(from CHAPTER 4: THE BEST ADVICE – pages 21-22)

Jasmine took a breath, then blurted out the question. “Captain Salt, what has happened to my parents?”

The Deputy Head’s kind brown eyes did not leave Jasmine’s for an instant, as she came to sit beside her on the sofa.

“I’m not going to spin you a story, Jasmine, because that’s not my style. And it wouldn’t be fair to you. The truth is, at this point, we just don’t know what has caused this delay.” Her eyes blazed. “But I can assure you we are doing *everything* we can to find out.”

Jasmine nodded, grateful for the Deputy Head’s directness.

Mayday reached out for Jasmine’s hand, folding it in her own.

“Of course you’re worried. It *is* an unusual situation. But I want you to consider this, something someone very wise told me some time ago. Most of the things we worry about
in life
never actually happen. We waste so much time and energy stressing about them, when we are better off just getting on with the things we need to do, right here, right now.”

Jasmine drew comfort from Captain Salt’s words and the steadiness of her voice.

“So, Jasmine, what do you think to that advice I was given?”

Jasmine sighed, trying to shut out the dark thoughts and images swimming in her head. “I think it’s very good advice,” she said. “I’ll try my best to follow it.”

EXTRACT 3B: CALM CREWMATES

(from CHAPTER 23: THE ENEMY UNMASKED – page 125)

“We’ll look into this,” Captain Salt told him, then turned to address all six Barracudas who had played their part in Operation Fish Hook. “This was really tremendous work tonight.

You each demonstrated individual skills, bravery and resourcefulness.

But what pleases me most is how well you worked as a team.”

“Hear, hear!” Captain Quivers raised a joyous fist in the air.

“It’s been quite a night,” Captain Salt said. “Let’s head back to my study for some calming breathwork. We need to get this adrenaline out of your systems so you can sleep.”

The victorious crew began the journey back along the jetty and up to the path that wound through the Academy gardens. Jacoby hung back to walk alongside Neo.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is Jasmine feeling worried in **Extract 3a**? How does she respond to Captain Salt's advice about worrying? What impressions do you form of Captain Salt based on her handling of worries?
2. Who might be the 'very wise' person who shared the tips on worrying with Captain Salt?
3. Captain Salt tells Jasmine that 'most of the things we worry about in life never actually happen' and that worrying takes away our enjoyment of the present moment. Do you agree?
4. If Jasmine were your friend, what advice would you give her to feel less worried about her parents?
5. Do you think it's always helpful when someone gives you advice? Why or why not?
6. Listening carefully to someone who is worried can help them feel supported. How can we show that we're really listening when someone is either sharing their worries with us or offering advice?
7. Think about a time when you felt worried, but someone said or did something that made you feel better. What did they say or do and how did it make you feel?
8. What do you usually do when you're feeling worried or anxious? Do you have any special ways to calm yourself, such as taking deep breaths, talking to someone, or doing something you enjoy?
9. When you feel worried, how does your body feel? Do you notice any changes, like your heart beating faster, your tummy feeling funny or your hands getting sweaty? Why do you think this happens?
10. In **Extract 3B**, Captain Salt talks about 'calming breathwork'. How do you think breathing exercises can help us when worrying? Can you describe what happens to your body when you take a deep breath?

ACTIVITY 3: BREATHWORK, SENSE SCANNING AND THE (SUPER)POWER OF NATURE

As well as being an author, Justin Somper is a trained meditation guide and wellbeing coach.

He helps people all over the world to relax and reduce their stress levels, through Effortless Meditation, simple breathwork and other techniques.

Justin says, “In my PIRATE ACADEMY books, I hope to show my young heroes dealing with feelings of fear, stress and anxiety in a realistic way. I’m also keen to show how Jasmine, Jacoby, Neo and their friends face up to fears, both alone and helping each other through. One of my favourite books is FEEL THE FEAR AND DO IT ANYWAY by Susan Jeffers. In this classic book, Dr Jeffers is really clear that the ultimate goal isn’t to rid ourselves of the experience of fear – we simply can’t *do* this! – but rather to allow fear to be with us but not prevent us from doing what we need to do to move forward in life.

In another favourite book of mine – THE LIGHT WE CARRY by Michelle Obama – the always-brilliant Michelle puts forward her own powerful thoughts around fear. Michelle encourages us, when fear arises, to step back and greet it with a casual shrug and say:

‘Oh hello, it’s you again.

Thanks for showing up. For making me so alert.

But I see you.

You’re no monster to me.’”

As human beings, we have evolved to have three systems for “emotional regulation”. These are:

1. THREAT – “Fight, Flight or Freeze”
2. SAFETY- also known as Soothe or Calm
3. DRIVE – also known as Motivation and Momentum

When we feel anxious, stressed or fearful, we trigger our THREAT system. Another common term for this is “fight, flight or freeze”. You might also hear it referred to as the Sympathetic Nervous System – which sounds nice but actually doesn’t feel that way. (The CALM system is called the Parasympathetic.)

Our THREAT system was originally developed to respond to physical dangers – such as being attacked by a dinosaur! It makes our heart rate speed up and quickly releases hormones and chemicals to help us fight back, including adrenaline. You might well start sweating or feel your muscles tense up. Chances are, your brain won't work as well as usual because it is solely focused on the threat. The problem for us, here in the 21st century, is that our brains respond to non-physical threats in exactly the same way. If you are running late for school or worried about a looming test or sports fixture, you might well feel the very same bodily response as if you were being attacked by a dinosaur! That doesn't seem right, really, does it?!

Fortunately, we all have the power – you might even call it a **superpower** – to activate our SAFETY or SOOTHE system and get us out of THREAT mode. There are loads of ways we can do this and I'm going to share three of my favourite techniques for you to try and see how they work for you.

1 = BREATHWORK

There are lots of exciting new studies around the science of Breathwork and the amazing powers we can all harness simply by breathing differently and with intent. One of my favourite books on this subject is BREATH by James Nestor.

7/11 breathing:

One of the simplest ways to calm ourselves – and flip the switch from THREAT to SAFE – is by taking more time on our outbreath/exhale than we do on our inbreath/inhale. Put simply, the exhale activates our Parasympathetic nervous system and starts to calm or soothe us.

7/11 breathing is a really simple technique, which you can do anytime, anywhere... all you do is breathe in (inhale) for a count of 7 and then breathe out (exhale) for a count of 11.

You don't want to strain your breath – as this itself will stop you from calming down – so if those counts feel too much, start smaller with a 4/7 breath – breathing in for a count of 4 and out for 7. You will get the same effects.

Give this way of breathing a go for a minute or two and see how different you feel at the end.

Bonus: It's also worth checking in to see WHERE you feel the breath in the body. If your breath is in your belly/diaphragm area, you are likely to feel much calmer than if your breath is higher up in your chest.

Tip: Be careful not to over-breathe – it's really tempting to take in big gulps of air but you'll find if you focus on taking steady "sips" of air and draw these down deep into your belly, that's your fast-track to calm.

Box Breathing:

This is another easy but powerful breathwork practice which is used by Navy SEALs as well as Zen monks! It's a great way to stay calm and focused when you are feeling stress starting to take hold.

All you need to do is inhale (breathe in) for a count of 4...
 Then hold your breath for a count of 4...
 Then exhale (breathe out) for a count of 4...
 Then hold your breath again for a count of 4...
 And then repeat, starting back with your inhale.

Try repeating this six times or, again, for a couple of minutes.

Tip: It can really help you to get into a good rhythm if you focus on a square or rectangular object – for instance a window, a picture or even the classroom whiteboard. Move your eyes along the length of one side on the inhale, then along the next side on the first hold, along the third side on the exhale and then along the fourth and final side on the next hold. Keep your eyes moving around like this and you may find it easier to maintain your rhythm.

There are lots more breathwork techniques to explore in books like BREATH but do bear in mind that some are quite complicated so may not be easy or helpful for beginners.



Scan the QR Code to LISTEN to Justin's recording where he talks you through a short breathwork exercise, where you will extend your exhale or out-breath.

It's similar to the 7/11 breath but you won't need to do any counting. See if you find this an easier way to relax and breathe rhythmically.

2 = SENSE SCAN

When we trigger our THREAT system, although the effects are often very physical, we can also feel that we are totally caught up in our head and our thoughts.

Another great way to break through this and find calm is to take a little time to tune into our five senses, moving through each in turn. This exercise is going to take just five minutes from beginning to end...

Start by sitting comfortably – you don't need to be in a specific cross-legged position, just in a way that is comfortable for you, whether it's on the floor or on a chair.

Now close your eyes. This will help shut out some unnecessary stimulation and bring you back to YOU.

Now tune into your sense of hearing. As you listen out for sounds, see if you are able not to judge them – “I like that sound, I don’t like that one!” – but instead, just notice them. Stay with this for a full minute and see if you start to tune into different, more subtle sounds – perhaps the sound of your own quiet breath.

After a minute, move over to your sense of sight, even though your eyes are closed. What can you see behind your closed eyelids? There might be some shapes or colours here. Or maybe there’s just a general darkness. Either is fine. Again, just take a moment to notice.

After another minute, tune into your sense of smell. What smells can you pick up – whether close by or a bit further away? Again, try not to judge the smells as good or bad – I know this isn’t always easy! – just notice them.

After another minute, bring your attention inside your mouth and see what tastes or sensations you find here. It can be interesting to check if your jaw feels tight or soft and how your tongue feels in your mouth. If either the jaw or tongue feels tense, see if you can gently relax them.

After one more minute, tune into your sense of touch. Feel the points of contact between your body and whatever is underneath it – e.g. the chair or the floor. Feel “into” your back and your “sitting bones”. Bring your attention to the soles of your feet and the tips of your fingers. What are your hands doing? Do they feel nice and relaxed or a bit tense? If tense, see if you can maybe soften them while you are here.

Now you can let go of your sense of touch and gently open your eyes again.

How do you feel? Usually, people feel nice and grounded after doing this exercise. You might also have the sense that you have moved out of your head and more into your body.

What’s happened to your breathing? Has it perhaps become softer than it was at the start?



Scan the QR Code to LISTEN to Justin’s recording which will guide you all through the stages of the SENSE SCAN.

3 = THE (SUPER)POWER OF NATURE

Nature is incredibly soothing for our bodies and minds. The more we can get out into nature on a regular (ideally daily) basis, the better we are likely to feel.

Research shows that if we expose our face and body to sunlight at the start of the day, we are likely to sleep better and maintain a strong and regular “circadian rhythm”, which not only impacts sleep but also our appetite and body temperature.

What opportunities do you have to be in nature close to your home or school? Are there parks nearby or woods? Maybe there are rivers or you are lucky enough to live close by the coast or a range of hills. As a school class and as a family, can you discuss making a plan to spend time in nature this week?

Now I’m going to share with you something amazing and brilliant... You don’t even need to get out into nature to experience its calming powers. You can get the very same benefits from looking at a photo or film of a nature scene. What’s more, you can get the same benefits simply by closing your eyes and imagining a natural place – whether it’s somewhere you have actually been or somewhere you conjure in your mind.

I find this a really wonderful discovery.

One of the people who turned me into this was Ethan Kross in his book CHATTER but there are also lots of brilliant ideas around the power of nature to heal in Julia Bradbury’s WALK YOURSELF HAPPY.

Here are some exercises you might like to try:

Real nature – with your school class or family, make a date to get out into nature this week. Take note of your mood when you set out, and also if there is anything on your mind – something you might be worried about or a problem you are trying to solve. Check in with your thoughts and feelings again at the end of your nature visit. How different do things feel? Don’t be surprised if you feel quite different or your nature visit has changed your mood or thought patterns. (Ethan Kross describes “trees and grass” acting “like mental vitamins”.)

A picture/video of nature – as a class take a look at some photos or videos of different natural settings. You could even bring in photos of your own favourite natural place to share with the class, and explain how you feel when you are there. Look together at images of different natural settings – perhaps rolling countryside, the heart of a forest, mountains or the ocean. Notice what feelings each of these awakens in you.

Imagined nature – now close your eyes and take some time to conjure a natural place in your head. This could be your favourite natural place which you know really well. If so, put yourself there - whether alone or with family, friends, your pet – and notice how you feel. How clearly can you see this place, hear its sounds? Can you go so far as to smell what smells you might find there? Can you imagine how the ground feels under your feet? Don’t worry if you can’t! Stay with this scene for at least two or three minutes. At the end, notice how you are feeling and what has happened to your breathing. If you feel better, make a note that you have the power to summon this image to your head whenever you need a calming boost.



Scan the QR Code to LISTEN to Justin's short recording which will help you conjure a nature scene in your head.



BONUS TREAT FOR TEACHERS

Justin has recorded a full 25 minute meditation sequence to help YOU relax at the end of your busy day. This includes some calming breathwork and a nature visualisation. The kind of meditation used here is "Effortless Meditation" which is as easy and effortless as it sounds. You don't need to sit in a stereotypical meditation posture, you won't need to control your thoughts... it doesn't matter if you drift off to sleep. So just give it a go and see how it works for you!

ACTIVITY SHEET 3: JUSTIN'S THREE TECHNIQUES

Here's a list of the four QR Codes that link to each of Justin's recordings, so you have them all in one place!



Scan the QR Code to **LISTEN** to Justin's recording where he talks you through a short breathwork exercise, where you will extend your exhale or out-breath.



Scan the QR Code to **LISTEN** to Justin's recording which will guide you all through the stages of the **SENSE SCAN**.



Scan the QR Code to **LISTEN** to Justin's short recording which will help you conjure a nature scene in your head.



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EXTRACT 4: WHICH CLASS ARE YOU IN?

(found at the back of the book)

PIRATE ACADEMY: **WHICH CLASS ARE YOU IN?**

Pirate Academy is NO ORDINARY SCHOOL. Pirate apprentices begin their ten years of studies here aged 7 and sail away to become fully-fledged pirates aged 17.

You will probably find that the year numbers at this elite school don't match with your own year at school.

Mostly, the classes are referred to by their maritime-inspired nickname.

The ten years at PIRATE ACADEMY are as follows:

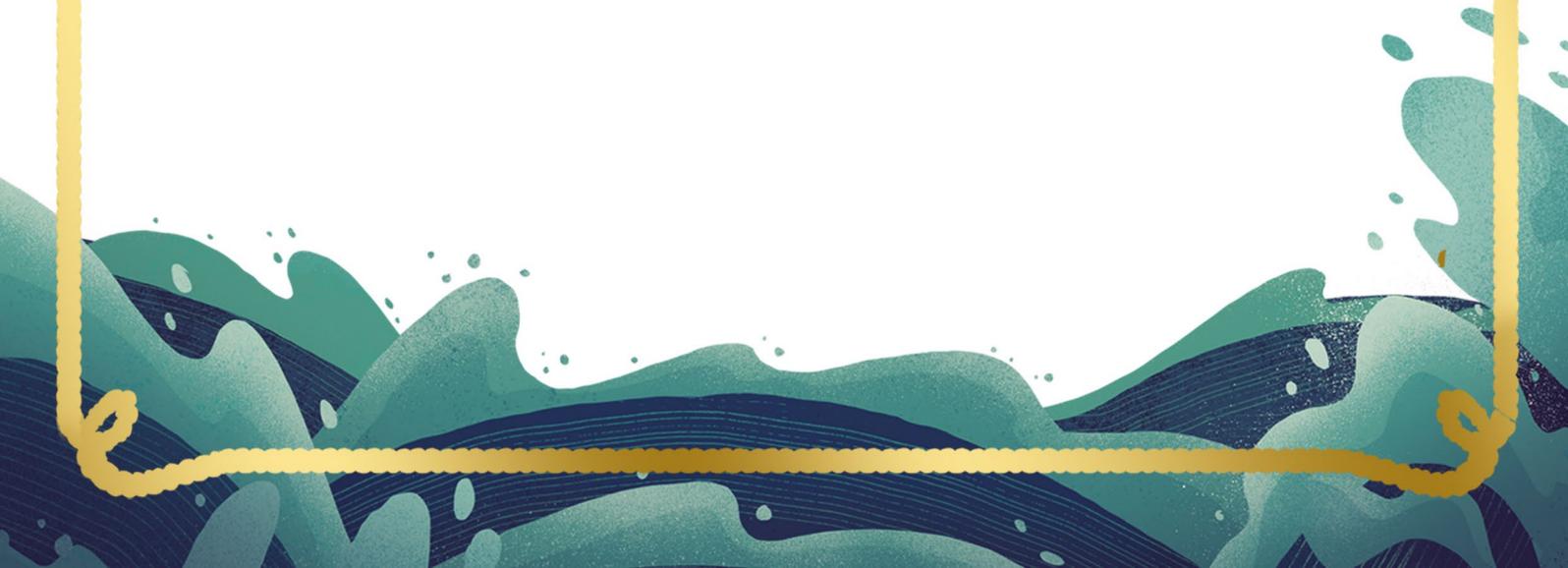
Year 1	Ages 7 – 8	Clam Class
Year 2	Ages 8 – 9	Starfish Class
Year 3	Ages 9 – 10	Crab Class
Year 4	Ages 10 – 11	Squid Class
Year 5	Ages 11 – 12	Barracuda Class
Year 6	Ages 12 – 13	Lobster Class
Year 7	Ages 13 – 14	Stingray Class
Year 8	Ages 14 – 15	Whale Class
Year 9	Ages 15 – 16	Dolphin Class
Year 10	Ages 16 – 17	Hammerhead Class

As you know, Jacoby, Jasmine and Neo are all in Barracuda Class, but you'll sometimes hear them talk about kids from the other classes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why do you think Pirate Academy is called 'no ordinary school'? What makes it special?
2. How is Pirate Academy different from your school? Can you imagine any unique subjects that might be taught there but aren't taught at your school?
3. What do you imagine a typical day might look like at Pirate Academy?
4. What do you think could be the most thrilling part of attending a school for pirates like Pirate Academy?

5. How do you think the school prepares its students for life as pirates?
6. What kinds of adventures or challenges do you think students might experience there?
7. Based on your current age, which year and class at Pirate Academy do you think you would be in?
8. Do you think Pirate Academy sounds like an enjoyable place to go to school? Why or why not?
9. Given the choice, would you rather attend Pirate Academy or stay at your school? Why?
10. If you could visit Pirate Academy for a day, what would you most want to see or do there?



ACTIVITY 4: TRANSFORMING YOUR SCHOOL INTO PIRATE ACADEMY!

You could use this activity as either a pre-reading exercise, during the reading process or as a fun way to celebrate finishing the book, which would likely be the most fitting.

- Begin by engaging the class with a short discussion about pirates. Ask questions such as: What do you know about pirates? What kinds of things do pirates do? Encourage them to share their ideas and knowledge.
- Next, let the class know that because they have read a book set in a pirate school, they are going to get creative and design their own day at a pirate school that they could actually bring to life through dramatic enactment and hands-on experience.
- This will involve planning their own timetable of pirate-themed lessons, giving themselves, their school, their class and their teacher a pirate name, and engaging in other activities such as creating a pirate uniform and mapping out the school and its grounds in a pirate-themed style.
- Divide the class into small groups, ensuring that each group has access to the necessary materials such as paper, markers and art supplies.
- **Brainstorm Pirate Names:** Firstly, encourage children to brainstorm pirate names for themselves, their teacher, their class and even their school. This can be a fun and creative exercise where they can really let their imaginations run wild.
- **Design Pirate Uniforms:** Once the class have come up with their pirate names, provide them with materials such as construction paper, fabric scraps and stickers to create their own pirate uniforms. They can design hats, eye patches, vests or even full pirate costumes. Encourage creativity and remind them to incorporate pirate symbols like skulls, crossbones and treasure maps. Will their designs bear any resemblance to your current uniform or will they take on entirely new and adventurous forms? How do the students' designs compare to the illustrations, by Teo Skaffa, in the book?
- **Plan Pirate-Themed Lessons:** After the children have designed their pirate-themed uniforms, distribute a blank timetable to each group. Task them with planning a day packed with pirate-themed lessons. They can draw inspiration from those featured in the book (such as Knots Class, Sailing and Combat Workshop) or generate their own ideas (like Pirate Language Lessons, Treasure Hunt Training, Sword Fighting Practice, Ship Maintenance, Crew Bonding and Pirate History and Legends). Ask them to consider how these lessons could be taught in real life, as you will be acting them out together.

- **Map Out Your Pirate School:** Equip each group with a large piece of paper and a map of the school. Instruct them to reimagine the layout of the school and its grounds and to transform into a pirate school. They can include essential features like classrooms, dormitories and a shipyard, as well as additional areas they believe a pirate school would require. Encourage the addition of imaginative details such as hidden treasure chests, secret passageways, lookout towers and pirate flags to enrich their designs.
- Once they've planned out their pirate school, host a "Pirate Day" or, if you prefer, a "Pirate Academy Day" for the class to bring it to life. Coordinate with other teachers for themed activities like an assembly with flag hoisting, sea shanties and adventure announcements to start the day. Then, rotate through the pirate-themed lessons, enjoy a pirate feast for lunch and wrap up with a grand pirate parade around the school to finish. Note: If you do do this, you can bet that Justin Somper and his publisher, UCLan Publishing, are going to be keen to know about it and to see some photos! If you are OK to share photos on Instagram, you could nametag @justinsomper and @uclan_publishing. If you'd prefer not to post on social media, you are welcome to e-mail: uclanpublishing@uclan.ac.uk.

ACTIVITY SHEET 4A: COME UP WITH YOUR PIRATE NAMES

Everything sounds better with pirate names! What would you like your pirate name to be? What about your teacher's pirate name? While you're at it, come up with a pirate name for your class and school, as well.

My Pirate name:	
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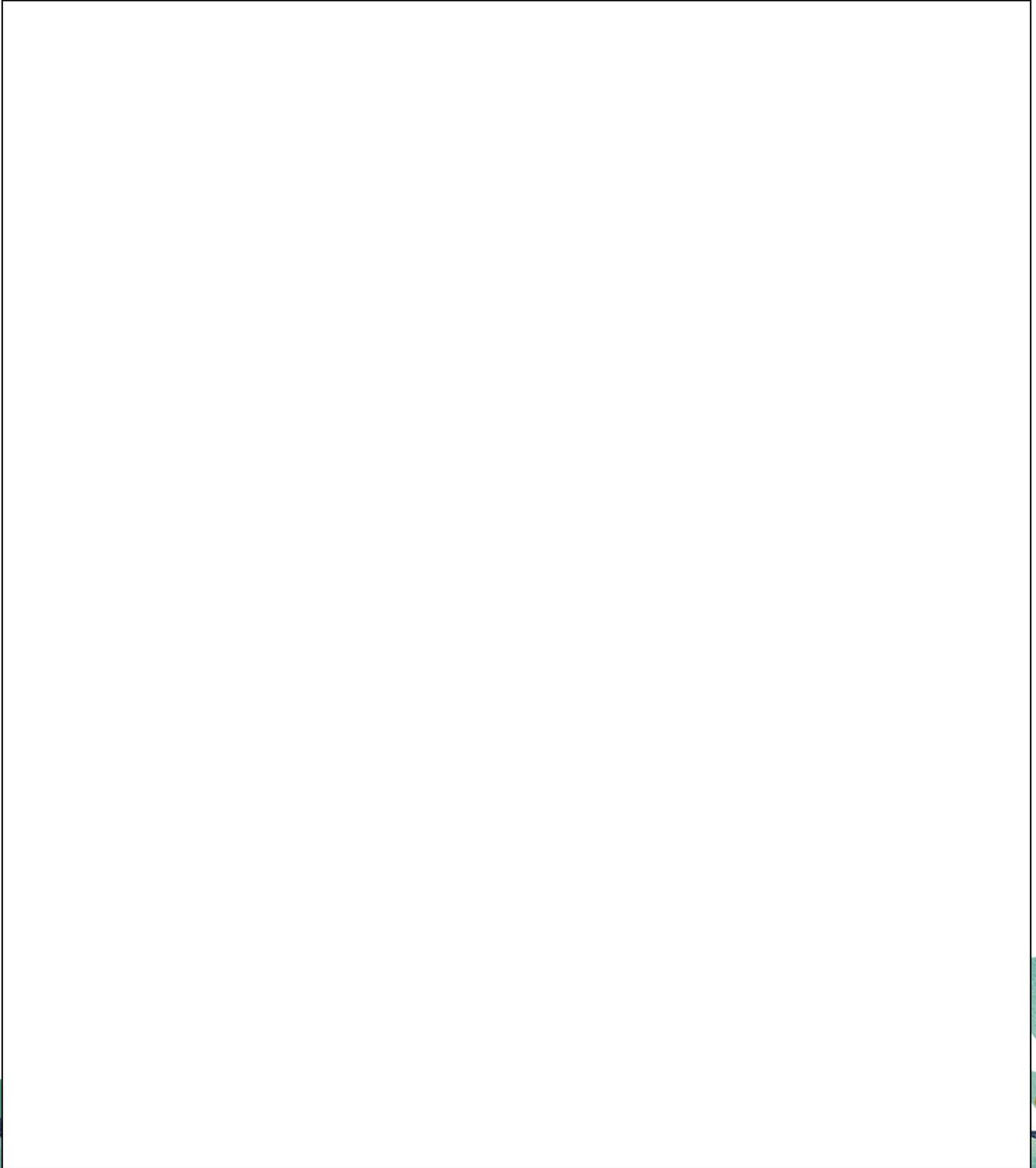
My teacher's Pirate name:	
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My Class' Pirate name:	
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My School's Pirate name:	
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ACTIVITY SHEET 4B: YOUR PIRATE ACADEMY UNIFORM

What do you think a uniform for a pirate apprentice should look like? Draw and describe your pirate uniform.



ACTIVITY SHEET 4C: PLAN YOUR PIRATE-THEMED LESSONS

What would you like to learn at Pirate Academy? Write down the names of five Pirate Academy lessons below and describe the different things you will learn in each one.

Lesson 1:

Lesson 2:

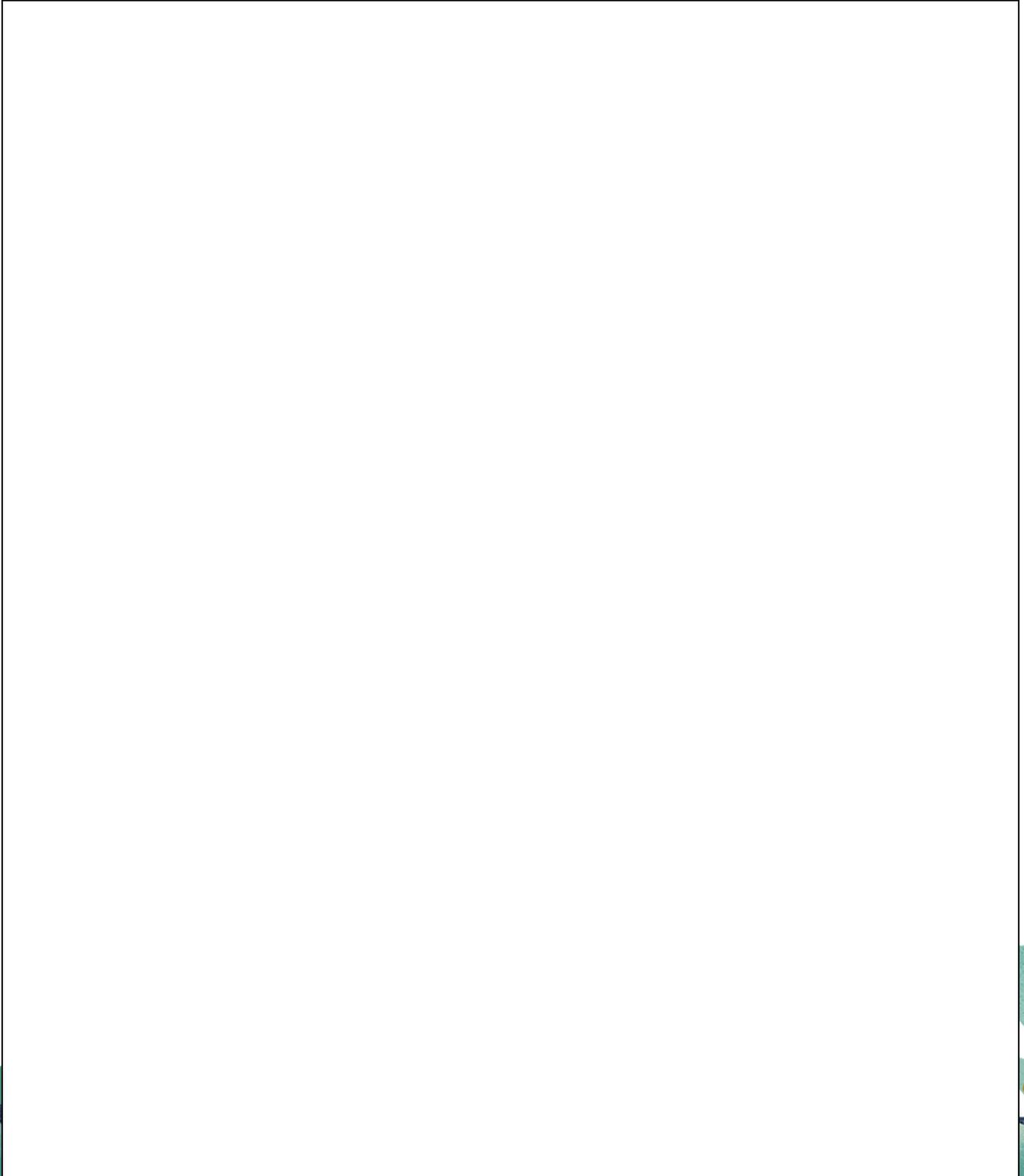
Lesson 3:

Lesson 4:

Lesson 5:

ACTIVITY SHEET 4D: MAP OUT YOUR PIRATE SCHOOL

What buildings and outdoor areas would be at a pirate school? Draw and describe your pirate school layout.



NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

KEY STAGE 2

English

Spoken language

Pupils should be taught to:

- Develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas
- Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play/improvisations and debates

Reading – comprehension

Pupils should be taught to:

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

Writing: composition

Pupils should be taught to:

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)

Drama

All pupils should:

be enabled to participate in and gain knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama. Pupils should be able to adopt, create and sustain a range of roles, responding appropriately to others in role. They should have opportunities to improvise, devise and script drama for one another and a range of audiences, as well as to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances.

Geography

Locational knowledge

Pupils should be taught to:

- name and locate the world's seven continents and five oceans

Geographical skills and fieldwork

Pupils should be taught to:

- use maps, atlases, globes and digital/computer mapping to locate countries, continents and oceans studied at this key stage and describe features
- use the eight points of a compass, four and six-figure grid references, symbols and key (including the use of Ordnance Survey maps) to build their knowledge of the United Kingdom and the wider world

PSHE (taken from Programme of Study for PSHE education: KS1-5)

Pupils learn:

Mental health

- H15. that mental health, just like physical health, is part of daily life; the importance of taking care of mental health
- H20. strategies to respond to feelings, including intense or conflicting feelings; how to manage and respond to feelings appropriately and proportionately in different situations

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS

- **Pirate History:** Explore the history of piracy, focusing on famous pirates and their exploits. Have children research and present reports on different aspects of pirate life.
- **Pirate Language Lessons:** Introduce children to pirate lingo such as 'ahoy', 'avast' and 'aye-aye'. Have them create their own pirate dictionaries with definitions and usage examples.
- **Ship Design and Engineering:** Challenge children to design and build model ships using everyday materials. Test their ships in water to see which ones are the most seaworthy.
- **Pirate Renewable Energy Challenge:** As climate change is one of the themes, ask children to design futuristic pirate ships powered by renewable energy sources such as solar, wind or wave power. Test the efficiency and effectiveness of them in navigating simulated ocean conditions and emphasise the importance of sustainable energy solutions in combatting climate change.
- **Knot-Tying Workshop:** Demonstrate essential knots used in sailing and piracy to children. Provide ropes and guides for them to practise tying knots such as the square knot, bowline and clove hitch.
- **Navigation and Mapping:** Teach children navigation skills with maps and compasses. Guide them in understanding cardinal directions, landmarks and scale. Have them plot courses and solve basic puzzles to find hidden treasures, developing problem-solving and spatial awareness.
- **Sailing Simulation:** Set up a sailing simulation using chairs or tables to represent a ship. Assign roles such as captain, navigator and crew, and have children work together to navigate through simulated challenges like storms and encounters with other ships.
- **Pirate Music and Dance:** Learn traditional sea shanties and pirate dances. Hold a show where children can perform their favourite songs or choreograph their own pirate-themed dance routines.
- **Pirate Code of Conduct:** Discuss the principles of the Pirate Code and have children create their own codes of conduct for Pirate Academy, emphasising values like honour, loyalty and bravery.
- **Pirate Book Club:** Read a range of books with children about pirates and share their thoughts and reflections in a pirate-themed book club. Facilitate discussions about character development, plot twists and historical accuracy.
- **Creative Writing and Pirate Tales:** Encourage children to write their own pirate stories or create comic strips featuring their pirate characters and adventures at Pirate Academy.
- **Pirate Peer Support Groups:** Set up peer support groups where children can share their thoughts and feelings in a safe and supportive environment. Encourage open communication and active listening among peers, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie.
- **Motto Artwork:** Have children create visual representations of different mottos using art supplies such as markers, coloured pencils or paints. They can design posters, banners, or murals featuring their chosen motto along with images and symbols that reflect its meaning.

ABOUT UCLAN PUBLISHING

UCLan Publishing is an independent, trade children's publisher based at the University of Central Lancashire. They are unique in their innovative approach to publishing, combining the best in publishing education with exciting live projects.

ABOUT SCOTT EVANS

This Education Resource was created by Scott Evans, aka The Reader Teacher.

Scott is a primary school teacher from South Wales. He reads, reviews and recommends a range of children's literature on his website and YouTube channel – both called The Reader Teacher – designed for teachers, schools, parents and children to find the best books.

He also hosts #PrimarySchoolBookClub - a monthly Twitter-based children's book club, chat and vote for anyone working in primary education to read the latest literature.

Before training as a teacher, Scott Evans worked in local libraries and is passionate about the importance of school libraries. He has worked with organisations including Waterstones, BookTrust and Literature Wales – as well as with many leading and independent children's books publishers – to produce resources, like this one, for teachers to use in the classroom.

Scott has been a judge on the panels for the Blue Peter Book Awards, the Laugh Out Loud Book Awards (Lollies), the Branford Boase Award; the Read for Empathy Collection and the Wales Book of the Year Award.

Connect with Scott at:

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