

Silas and the Marvellous Misfits TEACHER'S PACK



About this pack:

- This resource includes support and guidance to help teachers use *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* in the classroom, and accompanies the children's activity pack. You do not need to have copies of the book to take part, and the first chapter is included in the children's activity pack.
- This pack is for teachers of pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4. It contains activities that can be easily differentiated to suit the needs of your pupils.
- This pack includes three easy-to-follow lesson plans plus access to EXCLUSIVE FILMS from author Tom Percival.
- All our *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* resources are downloadable at www.literacytrust.org.uk/marcus-rashford-book-club. For more teacher resources, go to www.literacytrust.org.uk.

Contents

About Silas and the Marvellous Misfits.....	p.3
About the Marcus Rashford Book Club	p.3
About the author	p.4
About Chapter 1.....	p.4
Themes and curriculum links.....	p.5
Lesson Plan 1: What do you know?.....	p.7
Lesson Plan 2: What makes you amazing?.....	p.8
Lesson Plan 3: Best dream ever!.....	p.11
Additional activities.....	p.13
Answers to the questions in the children’s activity pack.....	p.14
Further support and resources from the National Literacy Trust.....	p.16

“Encouraging children to find joy in, and celebrate, their differences is so powerful in today’s society. Tom inspires this mindset in the most fun, engaging, action-packed way. I would have loved to read this book as a child!”

– MARCUS RASHFORD, MBE



About

Silas and the Marvellous Misfits

Erika has a BIG secret. She's a member of the Dream Defenders – a top-secret organization that banishes your worries while you sleep!

And tonight they're on a mission to rescue Erika's best friend Silas from the clutches of the evil Glooms – creatures who want everyone in the dream world to look and think exactly the same way!

Can the Dream Defenders save Silas and help him to see that being a misfit can be a truly marvellous thing?

Silas and the Marvellous Misfits by Tom Percival is an action-packed adventure that shows children the joy of being who they really are.

About the Marcus Rashford Book Club

Silas and the Marvellous Misfits is the second book in the Marcus Rashford Book Club.

- The Marcus Rashford Book Club is a reader-recommends programme created by England international footballer and food poverty campaigner Marcus Rashford, MBE and Macmillan Children's Books to encourage and nurture a love of reading in children.
- The book club aims to encourage reading for pleasure among children who do not have access to books at home.
- This is the second book recommend by the scheme. It launched with **A Dinosaur Ate My Sister** by Pooja Puri and illustrated by Allen Fatimaharan in June 2021, and a third Marcus Rashford Book Club choice will be launched in Spring 2022.



About the author and illustrator, Tom Percival

Tom Percival writes and illustrates all sorts of children's books. He has produced cover illustrations for the *Skulduggery Pleasant* series, written and illustrated the *Little Legends*, the *Dream Defenders* series, as well as 12 picture books. His *Big Bright Feelings* picture book series includes the Kate Greenaway-nominated *Ruby's Worry*, as well as *Perfectly Norman* and *Ravi's Roar*, and has been translated into 21 languages.



In 2020 he created the animation *Goodbye Rainclouds* for BBC Children in Need to celebrate unsung heroes and launch their campaign. He lives in Gloucestershire with his partner and their two children.

Tom has been drawing since he's been able to hold a pencil, and making up stories for as long as he can remember, in fact, probably longer, especially as his memory is not what it once was. Basically, he's been making things up his whole life and he's not about to stop any time soon.

Silas and the Marvellous Misfits: Chapter 1:

The resources in this teacher's pack are predominantly based around the first chapter of *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits*. The chapter is included in the children's activity pack.

Chapter 1 launches straight into the action, seeing Erika and Beastling flying through the Dreamscape (the magical world that Erika visits when she's asleep) on their way to help Miles, a child who is having problems in his dreams.

After narrowly escaping deathly (but delicious) marshmallow clouds, Erika and Beastling land on an upside-down mountain, where they are due to be met by Silas, another member of the Dream Defenders.

Together, they all head deep into the mountain to meet the rest of the Dream Defenders (Wade and Sim) who are already busy trying to rescue Miles from his bad dream.

Themes and curriculum links:

Silas and the Marvellous Misfits supports delivery of statutory requirements of the national curriculum for English, and recommendations from the PSHE, programmes of study. It is particularly well-suited to supporting reading for enjoyment, creative writing and wellbeing in your classroom.

English

Reading for enjoyment and comprehension: This is a fun, action-packed book, perfect for reluctant readers – even more so because of Marcus Rashford's support. This pack has plenty of activities that you can use to encourage children to connect reading with having fun while supporting their comprehension of the text. Relevant curriculum links supported in these activities include, but are not limited to:

KS1 (Y2) pupils should be taught to: *develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by:*

- *listening to, discussing and expressing views about a wide range of contemporary and classic poetry, stories and non-fiction at a level beyond that at which they can read independently*

KS1 (Y2) pupils should be taught to: *understand both the books that they can already read accurately and fluently and those that they listen to by:*

- *making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done; answering and asking questions; predicting what might happen on the basis of what has been read so far*

LKS2 (Y3/4) pupils should be taught to: *develop positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by:*

- *listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks*

LKS2 (Y3/4) pupils should be taught to: *understand what they read in books they can read independently by:*

- *drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence; predicting what might happen from details stated and implied*

Creative writing: The Dreamscape (the dream world that Erika travels to when she's asleep) is full of unusual and amazing things. This book is a great way to encourage children's creativity, and to help them write about imaginary worlds where their wildest dreams can come true. Relevant curriculum links supported in these activities include, but are not limited to:

KS1 (Y2) pupils should be taught to: develop positive attitudes towards, and stamina for, writing by:

- writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

LKS2 (Y3/4) pupils should be taught to: draft and write by: in narratives, creating settings, characters and plot

PSHE

Wellbeing: Over the course of the story, the Dream Defenders learn that it's important to be yourself and not to worry about blending in or being judged. The book is also great as a hook for discussing ideas such as ourselves, empathy, being different and friendship. Relevant curriculum links supported in these activities include, but are not limited to:

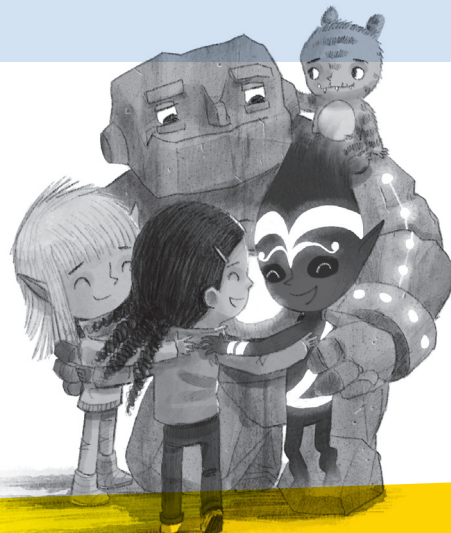
Core Theme 1: Health and Wellbeing – Ourselves, Growing and Changing

KS1 (Y2) pupils should learn:

- to recognise what makes them special
- to recognise the ways in which we are all unique
- to identify what they are good at, what they like and dislike

LKS2 (Y3/4) pupils should learn:

- about personal identity; what contributes to who we are (e.g. ethnicity, family, gender, faith, culture, hobbies, likes/dislikes)
- to identify personal strengths, skills, achievements and interests and how these contribute to a sense of self-worth



Lesson Plan 1: What do you know?

Overview:

This lesson uses a short film from Tom Percival to engage children immediately with the book and the activities. After reading the first chapter as a class, a quiz-style comprehension activity is used to develop children's understanding of the text. Finally, children are tasked with creating their own quiz to develop their understanding of the chapter further.

Learning objectives:

Pupils will:

- Have a positive attitude to reading and an increased motivation to read
- Have greater understanding of the text and be able to make inferences about what they have read
- Be able to answer and ask questions about the text and justify their inferences

You will need:

- A laptop and screen
- **Film 1: A welcome from Tom Percival**
(download it here: www.literacytrust.org.uk/marcus-rashford-book-club)
- A copy of the *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* children's activity pack for each pupil
(download it here: www.literacytrust.org.uk/marcus-rashford-book-club). This lesson uses the section 'Challenge 1: What do you know?'
- Paper and pens for all pupils

Step 1: Hand out a *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* children's activity pack to each pupil, and hand out the books too (if you have them). Then tell the children that you have a very special message to play them. Play **Film 1: A welcome from Tom Percival**.

Step 2: Read the first chapter of *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* together. The chapter is printed in the *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* children's activity pack. Key questions: what did you like about the first chapter? Is there anything that you didn't understand, or would like to ask about? What do you think might happen next?

Step 3: Challenge the children to complete the 'What do you know?' quiz questions printed on pages 6 to 8 in the *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* children's activity pack. They can complete this in pairs. (NB To modify the activity for younger or lower-ability children, you may wish to ask them just to order the first three sentences in the sequencing activity on page 8).

Step 4: Once you have gone through the answers to the quiz (found at the back of this teacher pack), challenge the children to create their own quiz about the first chapter of *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits*. There is a template to support pupils on pages 9-11 of the children's activity pack. Depending on ability or time, support pupils to create one or more questions to challenge their friends with. Your most confident pupils may prefer to create their own quiz without the template.

Step 5: Children challenge each other (or even the whole class) to complete their quiz.

Lesson Plan 2: What makes you amazing?

Overview:

This lesson builds on children's excitement for *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* by enabling them to further get to know the author and illustrator, Tom Percival. In this lesson, children will think about the positive qualities that they and their friends have. They will be encouraged to consider the importance of being their true selves.

Learning objectives:

Pupils will:

- Have a positive attitude to reading and an increased motivation to read
- Be able to recognise what makes them special and unique, identifying personal strengths, skills, interests and achievements
- Be able to recognise the ways in which they are the same and different to others

You will need:

- A laptop and screen
- *Film 2: What makes you amazing?*
(download it here: www.literacytrust.org.uk/marcus-rashford-book-club).
This lesson uses the section 'Challenge 3: What makes you amazing?'
- A copy of the *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* children's activity pack for each pupil
(download it here: www.literacytrust.org.uk/marcus-rashford-book-club)
- Flip-chart or sugar paper
- Marker pens for all pupils
- Pencils for all pupils

Step 1: Tell the children that you have another exciting video from the author and illustrator Tom Percival. Play *Film 2: What makes you amazing?*

Discuss the qualities that the author and illustrator, Tom Percival, said he had. Key questions: do any pupils think that they are similar to Tom? Do any pupils think that they have any positive characteristics that are very different to Tom's?

Step 2: Divide the children into pairs. Give them two large pieces of paper each. One child must now lie on the floor while the other draws around their partner in pencil to create an outline. Swap around so that each child has their own outline. (Dependent on resources! You may wish to do this activity as a class, or use smaller pieces of paper and allow the children to draw a shape to represent themselves.)

Step 3: Now children must work together to write down all the positive characteristics they have on the picture of their partner. These can be written on the inside of the character, as these are attributes that are on the inside of the friend and can't always be seen. Remind children about the different types of characteristics and values that their friends might have: things that they are good at, things that they enjoy, values that they show regularly (such as good at sharing and being kind, always trying hard, etc. There are some examples to support them in their activity packs). Children can also draw any features that their friends might have, such as long or spiky hair, a football at their feet if they like football, or a microphone in their hand if they like to sing!

Key questions: in what ways are we similar and different to each other?

Step 4: Now challenge the children to create their own 'Skill Cards' using page 16 of the children's activity pack. Using the card template, they should write their name, draw a picture of themselves and then list some of their positive characteristics. If there's time, or if they prefer, they can do this for a friend instead.

Step 5: If you have time, read the class another extract from the book (pp 37-41, printed below). If you are short on time, you may wish to skip straight to Step 6.

This part of the story sees Erika with her parents and her little brother, Randall, in Café Yum (in the non-dream world). Her parents are struggling to keep Randall occupied while Erika eats her ice cream. Erika suggests that Randall plays with a doll, which upsets her dad. Ask the children:

- How did Randall feel in this part of the story? Why did his feelings change?
- Why did Erika's dad replace the doll with a different toy?
- Do you think Erika's dad was right or wrong to do that? Why?

Step 6: Finally, hold a vote with pupils by asking: do you think it is important to be yourselves? Support pupils to remind each other about key learnings from the lesson about why difference is so important, and how we can all support each other to be our best selves.

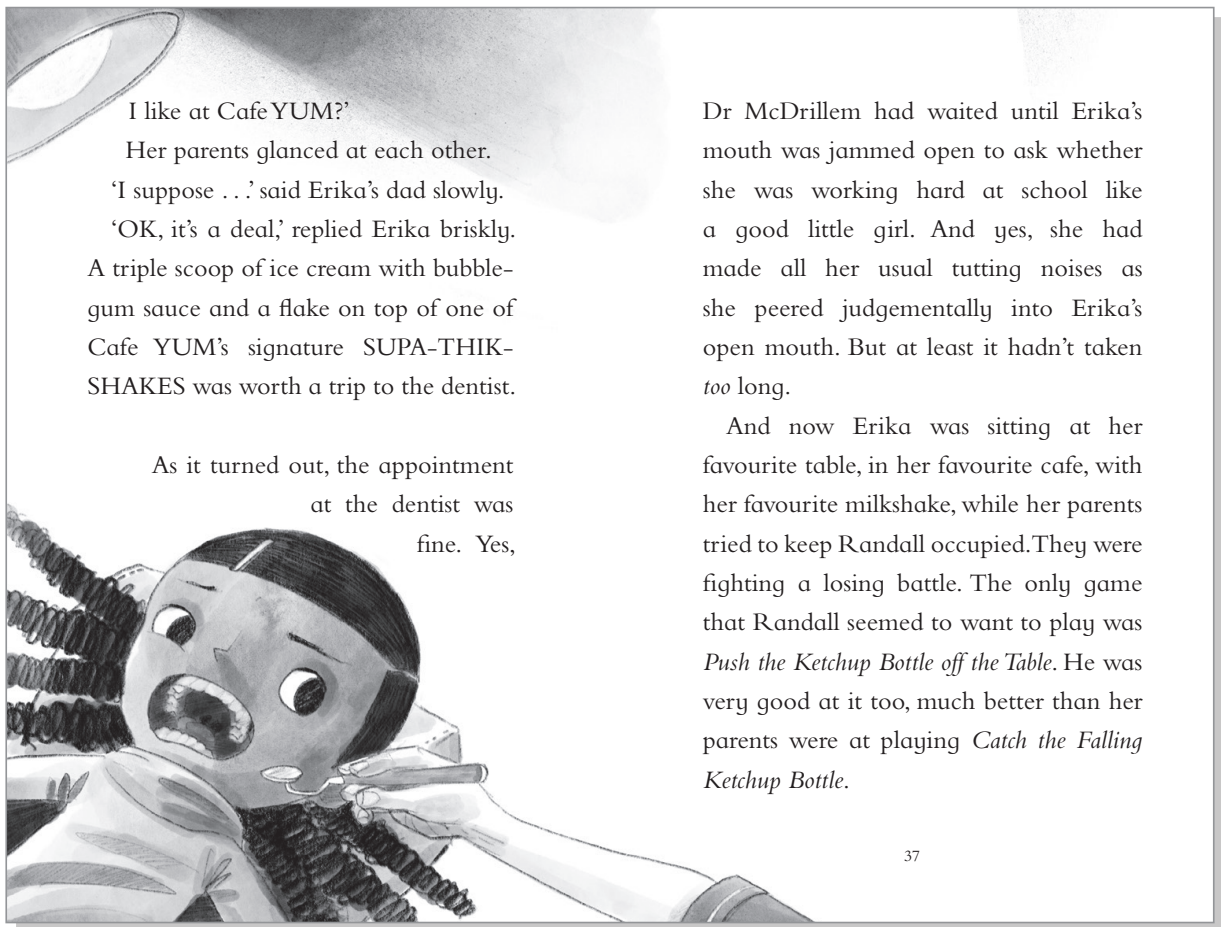
Extract for use in Step 5

I like at Cafe YUM?'
Her parents glanced at each other.
'I suppose ...' said Erika's dad slowly.
'OK, it's a deal,' replied Erika briskly.
A triple scoop of ice cream with bubble-gum sauce and a flake on top of one of Cafe YUM's signature SUPA-THIK-SHAKES was worth a trip to the dentist.

As it turned out, the appointment at the dentist was fine. Yes,

Dr McDrillem had waited until Erika's mouth was jammed open to ask whether she was working hard at school like a good little girl. And yes, she had made all her usual tutting noises as she peered judgementally into Erika's open mouth. But at least it hadn't taken *too* long.

And now Erika was sitting at her favourite table, in her favourite cafe, with her favourite milkshake, while her parents tried to keep Randall occupied. They were fighting a losing battle. The only game that Randall seemed to want to play was *Push the Ketchup Bottle off the Table*. He was very good at it too, much better than her parents were at playing *Catch the Falling Ketchup Bottle*.



‘Shall we go now?’ asked Erika’s mum in a thin, brittle voice.

‘Mum!’ said Erika indicating her almost-full milkshake. ‘I’ve not even got through the toppings yet!’ Her mum’s shoulders slumped.

‘I’ll take Randall to get something from the toy box,’ said Erika. She held her hand out and helped Randall down from the table.

‘Right!’ she said as she led him over to the huge toy chest in the corner of the cafe. ‘Let’s find you something to play with.’

Randall murmured happily to himself as he fished through the toys, picking them up one by one. He settled on a doll in a long sparkling gown that Erika recognized.

38

‘Hey!’ she said happily. ‘I’ve got one of these at home! I loved playing with her when I was your age! She sings a song when you pull this string.’ Erika pulled the string, but no sound came out. ‘Hmm, must be broken . . . Still, she’s loads of fun!’ As they walked back to the table, she demonstrated all the things that Princess Sparkleadore could do.

Randall played happily with the doll while Erika finished her milkshake. Her mum sat and read her book for a while, but her dad kept frowning and looking awkwardly over at Randall.

‘Do you think Randall should be playing with a . . . well . . . *you know?*’ he asked Erika’s mum, nodding towards the doll in Randall’s hands.

39

‘What’s that?’ asked his wife, looking up from her book.

‘Well, he’s got a . . . *doll!*’

‘Yeah,’ replied Erika, ‘an AWESOME doll!’

‘Yes . . .’ said Erika’s dad, looking flustered. ‘But still, shouldn’t he have something a bit more . . . *you know . . .?*’

‘No,’ said Erika’s mum, looking confused. ‘I don’t *know*. Randall was bored, and now he’s playing happily. What’s the problem?’

‘But it’s a *doll!*’ said Erika’s dad loudly. ‘I’ll get him something more suitable.’ He stood up and strode over to the toy chest, picking up a toy car and an action figure.

He then marched back and took Princess Sparkleadore out of Randall’s hands.

40

Things rapidly went downhill from there.

Randall cried out in frustration. His little face crumpled at the interruption to his game and when the car was placed on the table in front of him, he bashed it furiously aside. It shot off the table and knocked over an old lady’s cup of tea. The cup fell to the floor with a crash that startled one of the waitresses so much that she dropped her tray of SUPA-THIK-SHAKES all over an angry-looking man on the next table.



Lesson Plan 3: Best Dream Ever

Overview:

This lesson uses a third video from Tom Percival to engage children with the book and the supporting activities. The aim of this lesson plan is to develop children's creativity, encouraging them to consider some of the amazing things that could take place in a dream world. Finally, they develop a piece of creative writing in the form of drafting a plan for an Instagram story or TikTok-style social media post.

These social media platforms are for use by older students and adults. We have chosen to emulate the concept of these as they hold a high 'cool factor' with pupils, which will help to engage them and provide a relatable purpose for their writing. You should not encourage children to create their social media story and post it online unless you wanted to use a school account and the necessary permissions were in place. If you are uncomfortable using social media as a concept, then more traditional writing formats such as diary entries or film storyboards can be used.

Learning objectives:

Pupils will:

- Have a positive attitude to reading and an increased motivation to read
- Be able to write narratives about fictional personal experiences
- Be able to draft settings, characters and plot

You will need:

- A laptop and screen
- **Film 3: Best Dream Ever** (download it here: www.literacytrust.org.uk/marcus-rashford-book-club)
- A copy of *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* children's activity pack for each pupil (download it here: www.literacytrust.org.uk/marcus-rashford-book-club). This lesson uses the section 'Challenge 4: Best Dream Ever!'
- Large flip-chart paper (one piece of paper per child)
- Pens/colouring pencils for all pupils

Step 1: Children watch **Film 3: Best Dream Ever**. This film shows Tom Percival talking about some of the favourite things he likes to dream about.

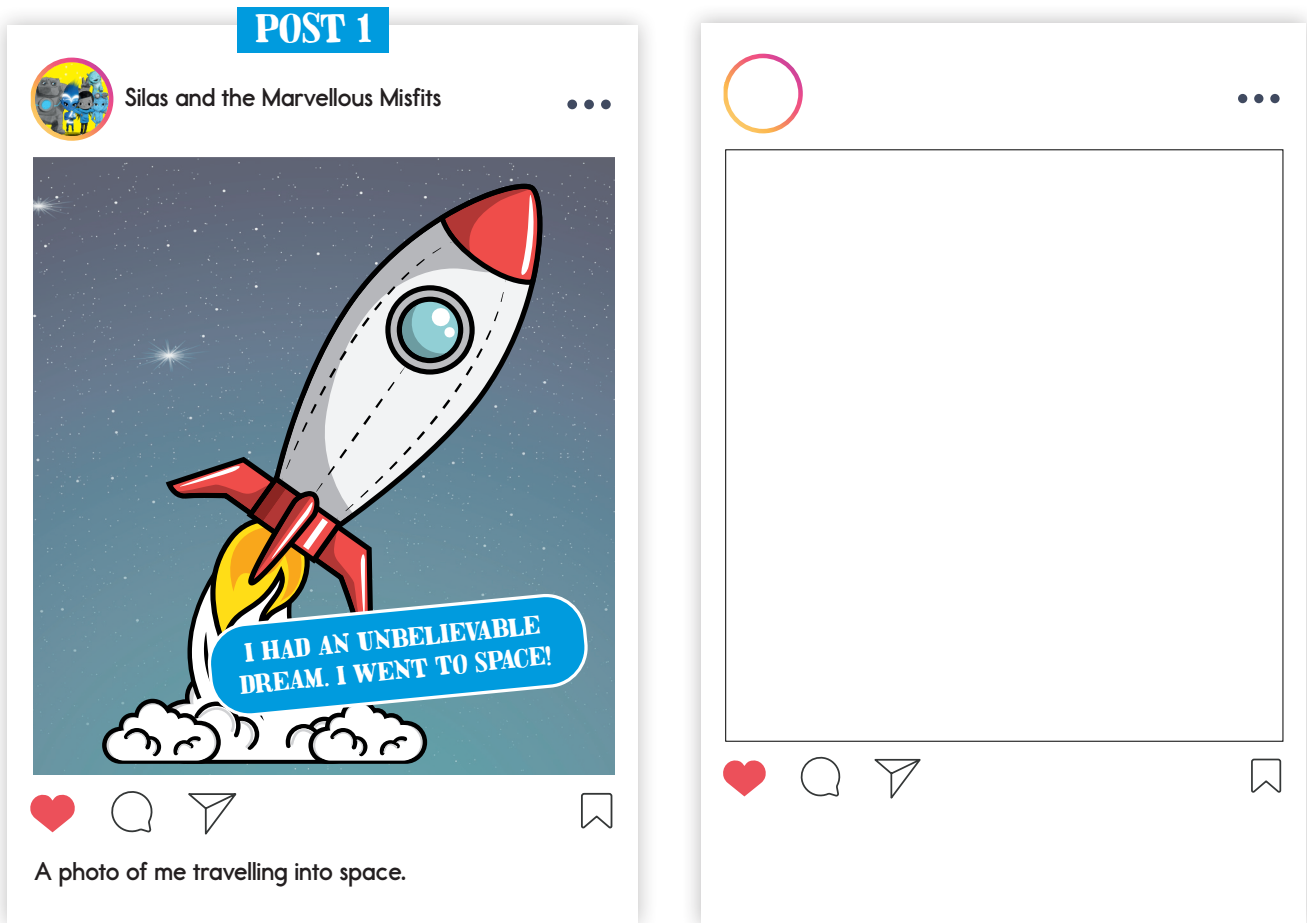
Step 2: Ask the class what sort of things they would love to see in their dreams. Encourage them to be as imaginative and creative as they like. To get their creativity flowing, you could ask them: if anything was possible...

- Where would you like to go?
- What would you like to see?
- Who would you like to meet?
- Is there anything you would like to do or play?
- How would you like to travel?
- What would you like to eat?
- What would you wear?

Step 3: In groups, children are tasked with drawing a picture encompassing all of the different things that they would love to see in their dreams on a large piece of paper i.e. pictures of their favourite activities, food, people etc. Alternatively, this can be done by the whole class as a way to capture answers to the questions above.

Step 4: Using the template in the *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits* children's activity pack on pages 18-19, children create a plan for a TikTok / Instagram-story-style post, imagining that they are telling their friends about something amazing they saw in their dreams. Use the example in the children's activity pack to help illustrate the task. Children can do this in pairs or on their own if they prefer.

Example social media template from children's activity pack



Step 5: Finally, challenge the children in groups to create freeze frames of some of the things that they would like to see in their dreams, inspired by their social media story plans. Give children a few minutes to devise their freeze frames, then encourage them to perform these to the class. One child in each group could be responsible for talking through what is happening in the freeze frames. An option would be to capture these as short films and photos, as if they were real social media posts for the school.

You could even get a little competitive! Choose ideas for freeze frames yourself from the social media plans the children have created, and give groups 20 seconds to create the best freeze frame they can in a short time.

Additional activities

There are further activities in the children's activity pack. Encourage children to do these at home, or use them as additional classroom activities if needed.

If you have copies of *Silas and the Marvellous Misfits*, you can encourage children to read Chapter 2 of the book once they have finished the activities for that lesson.

1. Crack the code:

This is on page 14 of the children's activity pack. It is based on the communication-style of Beastling, who creates images in order to speak.

Children are given Beastling-style messages to decipher and are then encouraged to create their own.

You could also ask the children:

- How do you feel about how Beastling speaks?
- How does Erika react to Beastling's speech bubble images?
- How would you feel if someone spoke to you in that way?

2. Create your own bookmark

There is a template bookmark on the final page of the children's activity pack. Children can cut this out, decorate the front, and use it to record any words they enjoy or are unsure of, or any favourite parts of their book.

Emphasise to children that it is okay to read a book and not fully understand every word. Key questions: are there any words in the book that you are not sure of? If you had to guess, what do they think they might mean? Are there any words that they particularly like? Why do they like them? Do you have a favourite part of the story, or a favourite character? What do you like so much?

You could also ask them whether they have heard the phrase 'Heebie Jeebie' before. Did they understand what it meant each time from the way Beastling said it?

My favourite parts of the book...

I like what happened on page _____

because _____

I like what happened on page _____

because _____

Words I didn't know:

1. _____

What it means: _____

2. _____

What it means: _____

3. _____

What it means: _____

Answers to the questions in the children's activity pack

Challenge 1: What do you know?

1. Fill in the gaps! (p. 6)

- a. "The Dream Defenders are a top-secret **organization** that help children solve any **problems** they're having in their **dreams**."
- b. "Erika and Beastling have been bonded **together** since Erika's first adventure in the **Dreamscape** when Beastling bit her."
- c. "The two words that Beastling normally says out loud are **Heebie Jeebie**."
- d. "Erika gets a shock when she first meets **Silas** because he is **invisible**."

2. True or false? (p. 7)

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| Erika's school friends know that she's part of the Dream Defenders. | False |
| Wade's favourite food is marshmallows. | False |
| In the Dreamscape, forests grow from the underside of clouds. | True |
| Erika's uncle doesn't own a Ferrari. | True |
| At the end of Chapter 1, Erika leaves Beastling at the top of the mountain. | False |

3. What happened in Chapter 1? Number each sentence from 1-6 to put it in the correct order. (p. 8)

The correct order is:

- (1) b. Erika and Beastling swim through a cloud that is turning into a marshmallow.
- (2) e. Wade calls Erika to ask her to bring him some donuts.
- (3) d. They burst out of the cloud and land on an upside-down mountain.
- (4) f. They walk deep into the mountain to meet Silas. At first, they can't see him because he's invisible.
- (5) a. Silas checks that they have the truth cannon.
- (6) c. Erika, Beastling and Silas decide to head into the centre of the mountain to help Miles.

Challenge 2: Crack the code (p. 14)

A.

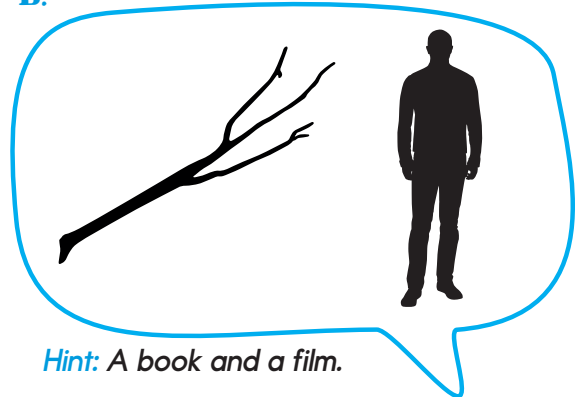


Hint: A football tournament.

Answer:

World Cup

B.

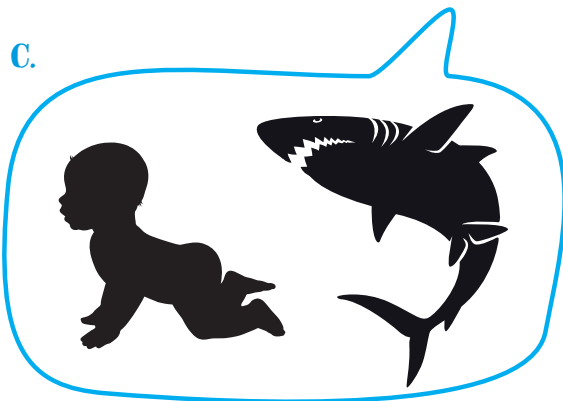


Hint: A book and a film.

Answer:

Stick Man

C.

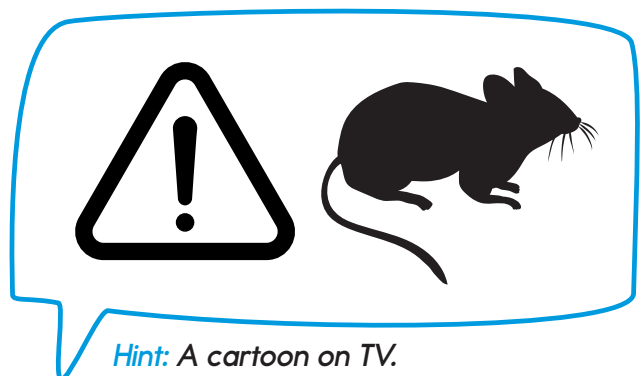


Hint: A very catchy song and dance.

Answer:

Baby Shark

D.



Hint: A cartoon on TV.

Answer:

Danger Mouse

Further support and resources from the National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity working with schools and communities to give disadvantaged children the literacy skills to succeed in life. As part of this, we provide a range of high-quality teaching materials for early years settings, primary schools and secondary schools.

You can find more free National Literacy Trust resources here:

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/free-resources/>

School membership:

For additional benefits, including premium resources, free online training courses, discounts on book purchases and subscriptions, school-improvement tools and exclusive competitions, go to: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/join-us/>



At home:

For free high-quality resources to be used by parents and guardians in the home, visit:

<https://wordsforlife.org.uk/>



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