



FIRST STEPS IN DRAMA

Age 7 - 9

THE SUTTON HOO TREASURE SHIP



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Curriculum area: History - Anglo-Saxons

Learning objectives: to explore through drama what we can learn about Anglo-Saxon life in this country from the archaeological discovery at Sutton Hoo; to consider who should have ownership of the artefacts discovered in such archaeological excavations.

Other School Radio drama series:

Let's Make a Story - the series for 5 to 7 year olds. Traditional stories are explored through simple movement and language activities. Go to:

www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/drama/letsmakeastory

Fun, interactive learning!

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Introduction

Aims of the series:

First Steps in Drama aims:

- to develop imagination and creative responses
- to provide opportunities for careful, focused listening using a range of voices and a variety of styles
- to enable children to see issues and dilemmas from a number of points of view
- to build pupils' confidence in drama, gradually introducing more complex tasks
- to engage pupils in drama activities involving: discussion, co-operation, planning, enacting and presenting
- to provide opportunities for 'teacher in role' to extend pupils' vocabulary, speaking skills and imagination
- to offer a flexible cross-curricular resource, meeting drama and other subject goals

First Steps in Drama provides carefully structured language and drama activities that encourage imaginative, co-operative work. It provides a rich stimulus to fully support teachers who are less confident in using drama and can be adapted and developed by those with more drama experience. It targets key areas of the National Curriculum that can be explored and supported by the programmes.

Before using the programme:

- listen to the programme and read through these notes in advance – assess suitability and note areas for development or extra support
- use the best equipment available – it makes a real difference to the children's concentration and work
- you will need a fairly large, cleared space
- allow at least 40 minutes to complete the work for each programme
- larger groups may need longer to allow time for everyone to feed back and participate (the amount of time allowed for groups to show each other their work is a key factor in determining how long the material takes).

Preparation:

- Pupils should dress to allow easy movement. They do not need PE kit.
- No warm-up is necessary as the programmes build in a progressive development but settle the pupils in the correct groupings quietly to listen at the start – the notes for each programme give details of the activities.

During the programme:

Refer to the programme notes. They provide:

- a brief synopsis of the story
- the programme structure – the activities that will take place during the programme
- teacher guidance – ideas for teacher involvement intended to get the most out of the programmes

In most programmes you will hear:

- short, dramatised scenes with a narrator – these set the scene and give instructions
- sections of background sound effects – these provide a stimulus for pupil activities
- instructions from the narrator – these tell pupils what to do and the groupings to work in
- the stop signal – usually music – used to indicate either that it's time to bring an activity to a close (stop the programme and focus the children to hear the next part of the programme) or that the programme should be stopped so pupils can perform an activity, often discussion or enactment, following the narrator's instructions
- short pauses in the narration – so that pupils can get organised (switch off and start the programme as necessary)

Assessing your group's use of the series:

Speaking and listening skills:

- how well do pupils listen to the ideas of others and contribute their own?
- do some pupils find it hard to talk about a situation or solution if asked?
- are they using new vocabulary introduced during the unit?

Drama skills - are pupils:

- using their imaginations as they become part of the situation and act out aspects of the story?
- showing empathy with the characters and their situation?
- joining in with acting activities? All or some?
- able to translate the ideas that arise from discussion into drama?
- using the information they have gained from the programmes to appropriately inform their work - eg with regard to language?

Social skills:

- how well do pupils work together in twos, larger groups, with the whole class?
- are they able to see things from another point of view?

Cross-curricular skills:

- are the pupils thinking in a historical or scientific way if required by a unit?
- in relation to PSHE, how are they responding to the ethical dilemmas posed in many programmes?
- in relation to Citizenship, how do they respond to the challenges offered by the programmes such as decision making and working as part of a community?



Reconstruction of the Sutton Hoo helmet in the British Museum

Feedback

We are always pleased to hear how you use our programmes and, in particular, how your own school performance has gone. Please send any feedback to:

BBC School Radio
3rd Floor Bridge House
MediacityUK
M50 2BH

Or email us at:

schoolradio@bbc.co.uk

Downloading these programmes

These programmes can be downloaded for **60 days** following transmission. Go to this page of the BBC Podcast Directory:

www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/fsid

If you subscribe to the podcast your computer will automatically search for any new content, meaning you should never miss a programme. Alternatively refer to the transmission dates right to see when programme becomes available.

Programmes remain available from the School Radio website and iPlayer Radio following transmission.

The Sutton Hoo ship

Synopsis:

Becky, a young archaeologist, welcomes the group to Sutton Hoo. She begins the story of the famous archaeological discovery at the site. In 1938 Mrs Edith Pretty approaches a local archaeologist called Basil Brown to begin excavations on the site. At his insistence the largest of the mounds is left untouched. However, the smaller mounds yield very few artefacts.

In May the following year Mrs Pretty engages Brown again and this time he begins excavations on the largest mound. Within four days he and his helpers have uncovered the impression of the Sutton Hoo ship.

They are on the verge of a great discovery...

I The Sutton Hoo ship

Programme structure

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Individual. Making contrasting still pictures showing first a Saxon invader, then a Saxon settler.</p>	<p>Emphasise that the mood of the two pictures should contrast. Encourage children to make use of previous class work on Saxons as appropriate. Focus on a slow, smooth change from one picture to the next. Switch off the tape if you wish to practise a controlled transition from one picture to the next.</p>
<p>Individual. Digging carefully in the earth at the start of the excavation of the burial mounds.</p>	<p>Remind the children to take care with their digging movement - since each turn of the spade may reveal a discovery. Observe which pupils are engaging with their role and which are having difficulty. Pause the programme and allow the activity to continue longer if you wish.</p>
<p>Individual. Revealing what Basil Brown is thinking - at the end of a long day's digging without finding anything - by speaking his thoughts.</p>	<p>Pause the programme at the signal. Ask pupils to recommence the digging, emphasising that they are feeling tired. At a suitable moment 'freeze' the action. Then pass among pupils and invite them to speak their thoughts.</p>

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Pairs. Carefully excavating inside the ship to reveal the lines of iron rivets.</p>	<p>Remind the children again of the need to work with great care to ensure that no damage is done. Encourage them to co-operate both in terms of their work and in their use of the space. Move among the pairs, joining in alongside them and asking questions to encourage less confident pupils and to establish detail.</p>
<p>Whole group. Considering how the ship might have come to be buried in a field through class discussion.</p>	<p>Direct the discussion by asking questions. Remind the children of some of the relevant details - eg that a river runs near the site. If the pupils already know the circumstances of the ship burial the activity will be an opportunity to recap their knowledge. For those who do not it is an opportunity to speculate using the facts gained from the programme. Encourage pupils to use their imaginations and welcome suggestions that demonstrate careful thinking, even if not strictly accurate.</p>
<p>Whole group. Recreating the process by which the ship is brought from the river to the burial place in a still picture.</p>	<p>Allocate roles and then space children to suggest the outline of the ship and move among them to work on individual areas of the picture. When the whole group is ready create the still picture at a signal given by you. Extend the activity by bringing the still picture to life! Emphasise the enormity of the task - moving the ship would have required close co-operation. You could choose someone to lead, calling out when to pull to co-ordinate the group's efforts.</p>

Programme structure

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Pairs. Recapping the first session by creating a 'phone conversation in which either Basil Brown or Edith Pretty explains the discovery of the ship to an archaeologist who doesn't know about it.</p>	Remind the children of the type of details the discussion should include by asking questions. Move among the pairs listening to conversations and joining in as necessary. Listen to see which pupils are able to use vocabulary associated with archaeology and the Sutton Hoo discovery.
<p>Pairs. A sequence of movements working inside the ship to reveal the first treasures of the site, prompted by the voice of the narrator.</p>	Emphasise again the need to work with painstaking care. Listen for instructions from the narrator and repeat these as necessary. Move among pairs observing their work and joining in as necessary.
<p>Pairs. Talking in role as one of the archaeologists to describe a spectacular new find to a colleague.</p>	Move among pairs listening to their descriptions, noting which children have based their finds on information in the programme or on previous class work. Encourage children to describe their objects in as much detail as possible, drawing them out by asking questions of your own as necessary. Extend the activity by selecting pupils to describe their particular object to the whole group without actually saying what it is. Can the others deduce what it is from the description?

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Whole group. Considering the evidence to decide what can be said about the person buried in the ship through class discussion.</p>	Lead the discussion by asking open-ended questions. Remind the children of all the relevant details that have been discovered so far. Draw on class work as appropriate. Extend the activity by asking volunteers to summarise what has been decided in role as archaeologists by giving a verbal report to the group.
<p>Whole group. Taking it in turns to persuade Edith Pretty (teacher in role) what she should do with the treasure.</p>	This activity is likely to work best with you in role as Edith Pretty. Invite the children to speak in turn. Encourage them to sustain and develop their opinions by asking questions of your own. Encourage the children to consider what the just thing would be to do with the treasures.
<p>Whole group. Recreating the coroner's court at which the ownership of the treasure will be decided.</p>	Allocate roles and shape individual sections of the picture taking into account the key focal points of the coroner (the 'judge') and Charles Phillips / Mrs Pretty. Extend the activity by adding spoken thoughts and allowing the judge to say what he has decided. A further picture could reflect the response to the judge's verdict.

The Sutton Hoo treasure

Synopsis:

Becky welcomes the group for their second session at Sutton Hoo. She takes them back to the summer of 1939 and the discovery of the Anglo-Saxon burial ship.

A team of expert archaeologists from around the country visits the site and Charles Phillips assumes responsibility for the dig from Basil Brown. The excavation of the burial chamber begins and before long the treasures of the site are revealed.

However, just who the artefacts should belong to is yet to be determined. A special coroner's court is convened nearby and it decides that Mrs Pretty is the rightful owner. She then gives the treasure to the British Museum - where it can still be seen to this day.

Treasure trove:

Treasure trove is an ancient law which states that if treasure is buried with the intention of getting it back it should belong to the crown; whereas if it can be shown to have been buried with no intention of recovery it should belong to the landowner. No-one is sure what the origin of the law is.

Visiting the Sutton Hoo collection:

The Sutton Hoo artefacts form one of the most important collections in the British Museum in central London. The artefacts are well-worth a visit and school visits can be arranged with the museum.

Weblinks: (copy and paste links into your browser)

The Sutton Hoo collection at the British Museum:

http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/young_explorers/childrens_online_tours/sutton_hoo/sutton_hoo.aspx

The Sutton Hoo site a Woodbridge in Suffolk is managed by the National Trust:

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-suttonhoo/>

A Sutton Hoo diary

20 June 1938. Basil Brown visits Sutton Hoo for the first time. He examines the mounds in the company of Mrs Pretty. She would like to open the largest of the mounds but Brown dissuades her, drawing attention to signs of disturbance which may indicate that robbers have cleared the mound.

21 June. Brown begins digging in the first of the smaller mounds. Some minor artefacts discovered over the next few days.

6 July. Brown begins excavations on a second mound. Again, some minor discoveries over the following days.

Mid-August. Excavations suspended.

8 May 1939. Brown arrives at Sutton Hoo and returns to the mounds in the company of Mrs Pretty. She suggests excavating the largest of the mounds and Brown agrees.

9 May. Brown begins excavations with the help of John Jacobs (Mrs Pretty's gardener) and William Spooner (her gamekeeper).

11 May. At about noon John Jacobs shouts out that he's found 'a bit of iron'. It is the first rivet to be uncovered.

12 May - 9 June. Excavations continue and slowly the impression of the ship is uncovered.

9 June. A delegation of experts visits the site, including Charles Phillips.

9 June - 8 July. Brown continues excavations, uncovering the full size of the ship. 8 July. Charles Phillips arrives and assumes control.

13 July. Excavation begins on the burial chamber.

21 July. First artefact discovered - a piece of gold and garnet jewellery.

22 - 30 July. The remaining artefacts discovered - 263 in total.

31 July. All the discoveries are packed and sent to British Museum for safe keeping.

8 August. A team from the Science Museum arrives to undertake a full survey of the ship.

14 August. Treasure trove inquest convened close to Sutton Hoo.

Mid-August. Scholars suggest that the ship may be the burial place of Raedwald, a king of East Anglia, who died c. 625.

3 September. Britain declares war on Germany. The Sutton Hoo ship is covered over with bracken.



Charles Phillips and Basil Brown working on the excavation of the impression of the ship left in the earth (showing the lines of rivets).