

First Steps in Drama



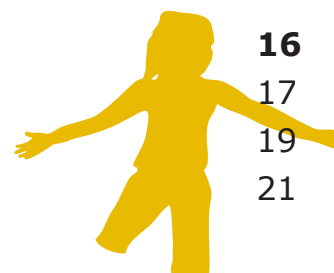
Age: 7 – 9

Audio on demand: These programmes are available as audio on demand from the School Radio website. Further information at the School Radio website.

These programmes from First Steps in Drama offer simple, ready-to-use drama sessions exploring a range of exciting historical topics.

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Introduction:

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 and sharing of ideas and co-operation
 - planning and enacting responses
 - presenting ideas to other members of the class
- 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. Most units have a clear link with at least one other subject and can often be used to initiate activities in PSHE, citizenship, art, music, etc.

Why use radio drama?

Radio 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.

Radio drama contributes to the requirements for English in the National Curriculum and Curriculum for Excellence guidelines in Scotland by offering pupils opportunities to participate in a wide range of drama activities, including improvisation and role-play.

Before the programme:

Programmes and equipment -

- 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.

Space and time:

- 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 will take to complete.

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 these 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

Short pauses in the narration – so that pupils can get organised (switch off and start the programme as necessary)

Assessing your group:*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 all acting activities?
- 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?

Social skills:

- How well do pupils work together in twos, larger groups, as a 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?

Unit 1: Eyam, the Plague Village

by Katherine Freeman

Curriculum area: History / PSHE

This unit of 3 programmes is set in 1665 and explores the dilemmas faced by the inhabitants of Eyam, in Derbyshire, when they are confronted with plague in the village.

Pause programme signal: a short orchestral chord

1: The plague comes to Eyam

Eyam is a small village in Derbyshire. It is the Autumn of 1665. John is 11 years old; his best friend, Lizzie, is also 11. They are in the fields helping to get in the harvest when Lizzie tells John about a terrible disease she has heard about, currently killing many people in London. She's happy to joke about it – after all, there's no way it could ever come to Eyam.

Shortly after John is with his mother when he sees the local tailor, George Viccars, take possession of some cloth from London. Then John's mother wants to know when her Christmas dress will be ready so she sends John to the tailor to ask. When there is no answer at the door John looks in through the window and witnesses a terrible scene – George Viccars prostrate on the ground and the vicar, Rev Mompesson, praying over him.

John is sure the plague has arrived from London...a fact confirmed a few days later after a number of deaths in the village, including one of Lizzie's cousins.

2: The villagers decide

Plague has come to Eyam and a number of villagers have died. The Rev Mompesson calls everyone to the church. He suggests that to try to stop the plague from spreading everyone should agree a number of measures...including agreeing to stay in the village and have no contact with the outside world. The villagers have some time to decide what to do.

Then the villagers return to the church and vote to stay in the village and cut off contact from the outside world.

But when John gets up early in the morning what should he see but Rev Mompesson sending his own children away to ensure their safety...

3. The plague ends

The plague continues and, indeed, gets worse in the summer. The villagers have developed a means of leaving money for goods received from the surrounding villages – they leave money outside covered in vinegar.

John is worried about Lizzie because he hasn't seen her for a long time. He goes to her house and looks in through a window. He discovers that the plague has come to Lizzie's house...and is about to take off her sister.

Finally the plague is over. John and Lizzie are reunited and the Rev Mompesson creates a bonfire to burn possessions in the hope of preventing the disease from ever returning.

1. The plague comes to Eyam

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
Pairs – movement in role. Children take on roles of village children in Eyam helping with the harvest. They work together to load a cart with hay.	This simple mime is a way into the story and the historical context. Be ready to pause the programme at the first signal and then arrange the pairs ready for the activity: one member of each pair standing on the cart, the other passing up hay.
Whole group – talk in role. Everyone becomes a villager in Eyam, moving around the space. The villagers meet and greet each other and share their rumours of the plague.	Be ready to pause the programme when you hear the signal. Make sure that everyone understands what they are going to do. The essence of the activity is to share rumours of the plague – with plenty of exaggeration and opportunities for black humour. Take part yourself and move around meeting and greeting, modelling responses for others.
Individual – movement in role. Children take on the role of the tailor, George Viccars, opening the bundle of cloth from London.	The movements are: opening up the bundle of cloth; unfolding it; spreading it out to dry in front of the fire. The skill here is to be able to convey the imaginary cloth, especially as it gets bigger as it is unfolded. Allow some time for some to show their brief mimes to everyone else.
Pairs – talk in role. Each pair takes on the roles of John and Lizzie. The one being John relates everything he has seen while Lizzie asks questions to find out as much as possible about what is going on.	Move among the pairs listening to their conversations and joining in where necessary. You may need to remind the one being John that he has seen something quite difficult to speak about. Try to allow time for pairs to show their scenes. You could also choose one member of the group to be John and have them stand in a circle created by the rest of the group. Then everyone takes on the role of Lizzie asking John questions about what he has seen.
Pairs – discussion. Each pair talks about how the plague may have come to Eyam and reports back to the group at the end of the discussion.	The plague is widely believed to have been a disease caused by bacteria in fleas, spread by rats (though some suggest it may have been otherwise). When the fleas bite humans the bacteria is passed from the flea to the human...leading to boils and deep bruising and fatal in about 60% of cases. In the case of Eyam, fleas were transported from London in the cloth delivered to George Viccars. When the fleas bit him he became infected.
Groups 3 / 4 – Ring a ring a roses. The group works on a short ritualistic movement sequence to accompany the nursery rhyme 'Ring a ring a roses.'	The group begins by holding hands and walking around in a circle. Then they create their own moves to illustrate the remaining lines of the rhyme. Encourage the groups to think of stylised movements, perhaps in slow motion. Replay the rhyme so that groups can show their sequences to everyone else.

2. The villagers decide

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
Whole group – movement. The children become villagers again, moving around their space doing everyday tasks. When they hear the church bell they stand heads bowed as a funeral procession passes.	The activity is accompanied by a sound track that begins at 02 38 into the programme. The movements are: i) move around the space, perhaps working in the garden or out buying and selling; ii) when you hear the bell slowly move into two lines facing each other; iii) when you hear the cart, remove hats and bow heads as the procession passes. The sound effects sequence lasts about 45 seconds.
Pairs – talk in role. Children take on roles of villagers from Eyam and nearby Bakewell to 'argue' whether it's right to ban the Eyam villagers from entering Bakewell.	Remind children of the context if necessary – the villagers from Eyam are now being refused entry to other villages in case they spread plague. A classic case of the rights of the individual and the rights of the group. Move around the pairs listening to the conversations and joining in as necessary. Then allow some pairs to show their scenes and perhaps take a vote on what the children think is fair in this situation.
Whole group – speaking. The group takes on the role of the villagers again, in church to listen to suggestions from Rev Mompesson... including a plea that the villagers should quarantine themselves.	Be ready to pause the programme at the signal. The issues at stake here will be explored in a bit more depth...what's needed now is a quick response to Rev Mompesson's suggestions. So move quickly around the circle encouraging the children to share their ideas, but passing over any who are reluctant to speak and trying to ensure that children do not simply repeat what they have heard from others.
Pairs – discussion in role. Taking inspiration from the conversation between John's parents, one partner is a villager who thinks they should leave...the other a villager who thinks they should stay.	This is a situation that will have confronted many of the families in Eyam...whether it's right to leave the village, or whether it's right to stay. Those wanting to leave might argue that they have no illness; that to stay means unnecessary risk. Those who think it's right to stay might point to the fact that perfectly well-looking villagers might already have the plague and thus spread it further.
Whole group – decision taking. The group makes a show of hands to indicate whether they intend to stay or leave the village.	The group is organised in a circle once more to hear the Rev Mompesson. The Rev will ask those intending to leave and those intending to stay to put up their hands to show their intentions. Then everyone gets back into their pairs again.
Pairs – discussion. Pairs discuss Rev Mompesson's decision to send his own children away... having asked everyone to agree to stay in the village.	More than likely the children will feel that Rev Mompesson's decision is completely hypocritical. But can they think of any reasons to be sympathetic? Is the Rev simply being a good parent? Is he aware as a leader of what is right...but too weak to follow his own suggested course of action? And are there any possible historical 'excuses' for him – for example, was it really a case of one law for one, a different law for another?
Groups – Ring a ring a roses. Children get into groups to end as they did the first programme, by making a slow and solemn movement sequence to illustrate the rhyme 'Ring a ring a roses'.	Give the groups a moment or two to recall their actions from last time. Then allow some groups in turn to show their sequences. Are they looking more polished and detailed now that the groups have had longer to work on them?

3. The plague ends

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
Groups of 3 or 4 – still pictures. The groups work on a series of still pictures showing scenes from the story so far.	A way of recalling the main events of the story before moving on. The suggestions are the cloth arriving from London; buying goods across the stream from the Bakewell visitors; the scene in church when the villagers decide what to do. Choose some groups to show their pictures and ask those watching to say what they like about each picture.
Pairs – movement in role. Recreating the means by which money is left in holes in the rock and covered with vinegar.	Working with a partner the children place their money in the special holes drilled in the rock and then cover them with vinegar, poured from a jug. Then they collect the goods that have been left for them and return to the village. The activity is accompanied by a short sound track, but you may prefer to pause the programme at the end of the activity and offer the children a chance to expand their scenes.
Whole group – movement. The children create the scene as Lizzie's Aunt Mary is shunned by the villagers of Tideswell.	An activity that explores the reactions of the surrounding villagers to the people of Eyam and also what it must have been like to be ostracised. One member of the group is Aunt Mary; the others are the villagers of Tideswell in the market place. The group shows the moment it recognises and moves away from Aunt Mary. Then, when you are ready, freeze the scene and move among the villagers asking them to say how they are feeling about her presence. And the one being Aunt Mary can say how she is feeling to be treated this way.
Pairs – talk in role. The children take on the role of two villagers and make up biographies to let everyone else know who they are and how they have been affected by the plague so far.	A chance for the children to demonstrate how much information they have picked up about Eyam and the story so far. Allow the pairs a short time to practise first and move among them questioning to establish detail. Then you could call everyone into one big circle and move around it allowing everyone to speak their biographies.
Pairs – still pictures. Pairs discuss what may have happened to Lizzie and why John no longer sees her. Then they make a still picture to illustrate their thoughts.	You may want to discuss some possibilities with everyone beforehand (if only to guard against too many deathbed scenes). Perhaps Lizzie's family has run away...perhaps Lizzie is looking after someone who is ill...and perhaps she is ill herself.
Groups – still pictures. Still pictures of the key moments of the story. First talk about which pictures to make. Then, after the signal, create the pictures with the 'Ring a roses' rhyme.	Allow the groups just a minute or two to decide on their pictures and the best way to show them. Then return to the programme. The 'Ring a roses' rhyme is repeated three times. Each time they hear the rhyme the groups walks slowly and solemnly around with the words. On the line 'We all fall down' they create their first still picture. Then they resume walking with the rhyme again until each of the pictures has been made.

Weblinks:

The Eyam Museum: www.eyammuseum.demon.co.uk/

With thanks to **John Clifford** for help with research for these programmes.

The BBC is not responsible for the content of external websites.

Unit 2: 'Fire!' The Great Fire of London

Curriculum area: History

This unit of two programmes is set in an interactive museum. The children remain in role throughout as visitors to the museum, helping to test a new exhibition about the Great Fire of London, 1666. At various points through the programme our guide – Kerry – asks the group to come together and offer her suggestions. Be ready as these points to pause the programme and assume the role of Kerry yourself if you feel it will aid the quality of work.

Pause programme signal: a music sting, as at start of programme 4.

4: Welcome to Matrix!

Kerry welcomes the listeners to 'Matrix' – the Museum of Advanced Technological Realisation and Interactive Exchange – or Matrix for short! She explains to the listeners that they are here today to help the museum try out a new virtual reality exhibition about the Great Fire of London. Soon they will put on virtual reality helmets and be transported back to the sights and sounds of 1666. First though, Kerry plays the children a short recording to begin their visit: as they move around London in 1666, looking for safety, they must undertake three challenges: i) they must offer help if asked along the way; ii) they must return something that has been lost; iii) they must speak with a king.

Then the children don their 'VR' helmets and are transported back to London at the time of the Great Fire. First they must escape from their own home, which is in danger of catching fire.

Following that the children travel towards the River Thames in the hope of getting across. They are stopped in the street and must help to tackle the fire, using a human chain of buckets. Later the children try to persuade the ferryman to take them across the river – but with no joy. Before returning to Matrix and the modern day the group resolves to head to higher ground to the north of the city boundary.

5: Completing the challenge

The group returns for a second visit to Matrix and the new virtual reality exhibition about the Great Fire of London. After a reminder of the challenges the group dons 'VR' helmets and returns to the sights and sounds of 1666.

The group begins travelling towards the north wall of the city. A horse and rider passes by, dropping a bag of money, which the group decides to hold on to in the hope of finding the rightful owner.

Later the group helps to pull down some houses to create fire breaks, having considered the circumstances of the poor homeowners.

The group learns that King Charles II is nearby, helping to direct the battle against the fire and also that the King is the owner of the gold coins. Here is the chance to achieve all three challenges at once.

The children rehearse how to speak with the king...who then provides a guide to escort the group away from the city. The group imagines looking back to see the smouldering ruins of the city from their position of safety. Then it's time to return to the present day.

4. Welcome to Matrix!

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Solo – individual imagination. The programme begins with the 'signal'. Listen out for this so that you are ready to pause the programme when you hear the signal used again with the programme. There is no need to the group anything about the Great Fire before beginning. In fact, it will help if they are unaware of this to begin with. Kelly asks the members of the group to put on their 'VR helmets'. Then they listen to: i) a short sequence of a dinosaur; ii) a battle scene between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings</p>	<p>Make sure everyone is sitting in their own space before starting. The sound of Kerry's voice changes as children put on their 'VR helmets' to show that Kerry is now being heard from the earpiece inside their helmets. The aim of the first activity is to get the children to engage with the idea of 'seeing' things using their 'VR helmets'. Join in alongside the children if you think it will aid their commitment to the shared fiction. The first activity is purely imaginative – 'seeing' a dinosaur as it moves across a swamp. Shortly after there is a battle sequence between Anglo-Saxons and Vikings. Everyone must be ready to jump up swiftly and give battle. The battle lasts about 15".</p>
<p>Whole group - discussion. Kerry plays the group another audio sequence – this time of the Great Fire of 1666. Then she asks the group for their ideas about what the visit to the museum is going to be about and whether anyone can tell what event it was that they were listening to.</p>	<p>Ensure everyone listens carefully to the fire sequence. Then bring everyone rapidly into the group circle. This is one of many instances when Kerry asks the group for ideas and these activities will probably work best if you adopt the role of Kerry yourself during the discussion, or nominate someone else to do so. The clue that the fire is happening long ago is basically that pails of water are being used to tackle it, rather than modern equipment.</p>
<p>Solo - movement. Kerry plays the introductory video for today's visit which includes the challenges the group must undertake: i) offering help; ii) returning something lost; iii) speaking with a king. Then the children are straight into an extended movement sequence to sound effects: i) getting up from bed; ii) climbing through a window onto the roof; iii) jumping across to another roof; iv) climbing carefully down to the street</p>	<p>Check that everyone is listening carefully and has noted the challenges. Be ready to take part in the movement activity alongside the children if it will aid their commitment to the fiction. The complete movement sequence lasts about 1' 15" and Kerry talks the group through the various moves. If you'd like to repeat the sequence rewind to 06 02 in the track to begin again...or pause at 07 15 and try the activity again without the sound effects. You may like to do this so that some group members can show their escapes to everyone else.</p>
<p>Whole group - discussion. The group listens to a 'fact file' which gives them the option of going to the river, travelling west towards the home of relatives... or doing something else. Kerry asks the group to come together to discuss the options.</p>	<p>Quickly get everyone into a group circle and be ready to adopt the role of Kerry, managing the discussion. Try to maintain the tension while the programme is paused – so that the group understands that time is of the essence. Key points to keep in mind are: the river is nearby and if the group can get across the river they will be safe; the relatives live in the same direction that the fire is travelling, so going there may not help. Perhaps the group will have other ideas...</p>

4. Welcome to Matrix! continued

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
Solo - movement. The group begins to move towards the river, showing the heat from the flames all around. Then they are approached by someone for help.	Be ready here – and elsewhere throughout the programmes – to remind everyone that they are in a Virtual Reality museum...not at the scene of the actual fire!
Groups of 5 or 6 – movement. The groups splits into smaller groups of 5 or 6 (or thereabouts) to help tackle the fire. The small groups create two short lines, side by side. The first member of one line mimes filling a bucket with water, then passes it up the line. The person on the other end throws the water on the fire, then passes the empty bucket back down the other line.	Again it is vital to maintain the sense of tension while the programme is paused. To do this you could adopt the role of either Kerry or the fire-fighter – instructing the groups, inspecting them, offering encouragement where necessary. The fire is all around the group, so they will need to show how difficult the conditions are. The aim is to make the passing and throwing of the buckets as rapid, but smooth, as possible.
Solo – movement. Each member of the group begins pushing towards the river. But it's difficult due to the crush of people heading for the river.	The sequence is short, but look for movements which convey how crowded the streets have become. Be ready when instructed for everyone to sit down quickly, ready to hear the sequence involving the ferryman.
Whole group – talk in role. The children try to persuade the ferryman to take them across the river, using whatever arguments they can think of (excepting financial payment – they don't have any money!)	Again, organise the circle quickly to maintain the tension. You could take on the role of the ferryman yourself, answering the children's suggestions. Or you could nominate someone to sit in the middle of the circle to be the ferryman...or you could allow group members to alternate as the ferryman.
Whole group – movement. As Matrix closes down for the day the children remove their 'VR helmets'.	
Whole group – discussion. The group joins together for one last discussion today: what they've enjoyed about their visit, what they think could be done differently, anything they've learned. Kerry suggests they make up a short mime to illustrate their ideas if it helps.	The session ends with another discussion activity intended to reinforce the children's high status role as exhibition testers, with the power to comment and alter what Matrix offers to the public. If necessary make sure everyone understands the difference between 'seeing' events using the 'VR helmets' and actually being at the scene.

5. Completing the challenge

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Solo - movement. The programme begins with the 'signal' – listen out for it elsewhere in the programme and be ready to pause. Each member of the group puts on their 'VR helmet' – thus returning to the sights and sounds of 1666. They listen to the introductory video that begins this visit to the museum.</p>	<p>The putting on of the helmet helps to reinforce the imaginative journey into virtual reality. As the helmets are put on Kerry's voice changes, indicating that she is now being heard from inside the children's helmets. Listen out for a reminder of the three challenges: i) to offer help; ii) to return something that has been lost; iii) to speak with a king.</p>
<p>Solo – movement. The children begin moving towards the north, pushing their way through the crowds. They must be careful not to barge.</p>	<p>Join in alongside the children if it will help to re-establish their commitment to the fiction. They will need to move almost as if in slow motion: the streets are extremely crowded with people, some pushing carts etc. Progress is very slow. The sequence lasts about 25" and ends with the sound of a horse approaching, when Kerry asks everyone to 'stand still'.</p>
<p>Whole group – discussion. The group comes together in a circle once again and discusses what to do with the money they have found.</p>	<p>Some of the issues are: - the children have no money in the fiction and money is clearly important in a crisis – e.g. wealthy Londoners are using their financial clout to hire boats and carts to escape the fire and load their possessions. - however, the group also has to return something that has been lost if they are to win the challenge...and perhaps this is that something - more general issues to do with honesty and what should be done with things that we find...but does the fact that the money has been found in a virtual reality museum, rather than the real world, make any difference...?! As before, be ready to adopt the role of Kerry (or nominate someone else to do so) to manage the discussion and to keep things 'moving forward' with a sense of purpose.</p>
<p>Whole group – calling out ideas. Another talk activity follows quickly after the one before. Children must consider whether it is right to pull down the houses of local residents in order to create fire breaks.</p>	<p>It's important to maintain the sense of tension so you may like to be pro-active about the discussion and invite responses from specific members of the group. There's no need to dwell at length on the answers – the programme will reveal more information once resumed – so all that is needed at this stage is a quick response.</p>
<p>Pairs or threes - movement. Be ready to pause the programme so that children can get into pairs or threes. Together they are going to pick up a fire hook, feel the weight of it in their hands, then get to work pulling down a house.</p>	<p>The fire hooks are long and awkward to use. It will take a degree of co-ordination between the pairs / small groups to manipulate their pole together. They need to reach up with the pole together, use it to get a grip on something – e.g. part of the roof – and then together work at pulling the house down bit by bit. The sequence lasts about 35". If you'd like to replay it, go back to 06 33 on the CD. Or pause at the end of the sequence and allow the activity to begin again (or continue) without the FX sequence. You may wish to do this so that some groups can show off their work to everyone else.</p>

5. Completing the challenge - continued

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Whole group – discussion. The group comes together to discuss what it must have felt like to be one of those Londoners who lost everything in the fire.</p>	<p>This is an action-packed unit, but the aim here is to pause briefly and consider the emotional aspect of the fire. Although fires were a constant hazard in C17th London and the experience of fire was widespread, the Great Fire was on an altogether unprecedented scale.</p>
<p>Solo – movement. Everyone starts pushing through the crowds again, heading towards the north. The sequence lasts just over 20"; be ready to pause where you are when the next 'fact file' is heard. The sequence begins again after the fact file, when everyone steps towards the king to hear what he is saying.</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>Pairs – discussion...followed by whole group. The group splits into pairs to rehearse talking to King Charles II. In each pair one member will be the king and the other will continue to be a visitor to Matrix. Afterwards, one member will be selected to represent the whole group in the conversation with the king.</p>	<p>This is the most complex of the activities to arrange, so be ready to organise and supervise. The group needs to split into pairs. The key points to consider for the rehearsal are things like: i) how should respect be shown to the king – what form of words should be used, what movements? ii) how can you be sure to make the king understand that you found the money (and didn't steal it)? The king may want to find out more about the person they are speaking to – like where they have come from and where they are heading. After a minute or two bring everyone into a group circle. Then select one member of the group to represent everyone else and either take on the role of King Charles II yourself or nominate someone else to do so. Then allow the conversation to happen with the whole group to witness. If you have time you could allow several group members to have a go speaking with the king.</p>
<p>Whole group – imagination. The group imagines their journey to safety, leaving the city through a gate in the north wall and heading to high ground (Moorfields). Then the group removes 'VR helmets' to return to Matrix.</p>	<p>Make sure everyone is listening carefully and be ready to pause the programme if necessary.</p>
<p>Whole group – discussion. The group quickly considers other periods from history that they may have studied that could be shown at Matrix – Victorians, Vikings, etc.</p>	<p>An opportunity for children to apply the Matrix formula to other periods from history that they are familiar with.</p>

Unit 3: Grace Darling – heroine of the sea

by Katherine Freeman

Curriculum area: PSHE / Citizenship

These two programmes explore the short but extraordinary life of Grace Darling. The story is related by a modern day member of the RNLI who explains that Grace's story is her inspiration for joining a lifeboat crew.

Pause programme signal: a brief music chord.

6: At Longstone Lighthouse

Grace Darling's story is related by Louise – someone who works at a supermarket at a seaside town, but who is also a member of the local lifeboat crew. When Louise's bleeper sounds it's time to go 'out on a shout' – there's a boat in difficulty and the lifeboat crew must launch their vessel as quickly as possible.

After the rescue Louise tells us about her heroine, the inspiration for her joining the RNLI...

Grace Darling was born in 1815 in Bamburgh, Northumberland, one of eight children. When she was just a few months old she went to live on a remote island in the Farne Islands, where her father was the lighthouse keeper. Grace and her siblings spent their time rowing, hunting for shellfish and also fishing at sea.

When Grace was 10 she moved to Longstone – an even more remote spot in the Farne Islands – where a new lighthouse had been built.

And it was here, when Grace was 22 years old, that she took part in the sea rescue that made her famous.

7. The rescue

Louise continues the story of Grace Darling...

The ship that has struck Big Harcar Rock is called the Forfarshire. She has 60 passengers and crew on board and she is sailing from Hull to Dundee when her boiler breaks down and she starts to drift.

When the ship strikes Big Harcar she breaks in two – many passengers are swept away but some manage to cling to the rock. Grace is determined that she and her father should row to the rescue immediately, even though their 21 foot boat should have a larger crew.

Grace and her father make it to Big Harcar Rock where Grace holds the boat steady while her father alights. They are only able to bring some of the survivors back on the first trip. Later Grace's father will make a second rescue to pick up the remainder.

Following the rescue Grace becomes a national heroine. Every time her father makes the journey to the mainland he returns with more fan mail. Even Queen Victoria congratulates Grace and sends her a reward. And then, Grace falls ill...and dies while still just 26 years old.

Today her life and extraordinary achievement is commemorated in the Grace Darling Museum in Bamburgh, the place of Grace's birth.

6. At Longstone Lighthouse

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
Solo – movement. Everyone imagines that they have been summoned to the lifeboat station for a launch. The pupils must move with urgency, but also carefully, making sure they avoid everyone else.	Pause the programme at the signal and then, as quickly as you're able, signal to the group to begin moving. There's no need to indicate a general direction to move in, but you will need to let everyone know when the lifeboat station has been reached. Look for pupils who can demonstrate the physical layout of the town as they move – around corners, across streets, etc.
Solo – movement. Launching the lifeboat. Pupils take charge of the lifeboat. They follow Louise's instructions as she explains what to do to get the boat started. Then bump across the waves on the way to the ship in distress.	Make sure everyone is in plenty of space and encourage everyone to listen carefully to the instructions: i) squeeze fuel into the engine ii) check the steering iii) give a thumbs up signal iv) stand behind the wheel as the boat is pulled by the tractor v) press the start button vi) hold tight to the steering wheel and bump across the waves!
Pairs –still pictures of Grace's childhood. The three still pictures are: i) gathering shellfish in rock pools ii) fishing at sea – holding the boat steady and dropping a net iii) pulling up a net with fish	Allow some time for everyone to practise making their pictures. Then either strike the pictures all together at the same time or allow individual pairs to show their pictures in turn. Look for a smooth transition between pictures and pairs who can create clearly delineated roles for both members.
Solo – arriving at Longstone lighthouse – speaking thoughts. Pupils imagine arriving at the new lighthouse for the first time. They imagine the building as they hear Louise's description of it. They speak their thoughts about their new home.	Be ready to pause the programme and then move among the children inviting them to speak their thoughts out loud, e.g. by lightly touching each pupil on the shoulder. Repeat the spoken thoughts out loud to ensure that everyone can hear what is said clearly.
Pairs – mime. Pupils make up a short mime to show the crucial work of keeping the light in good working order: i) polish the lighthouse windows ii) clean the brass plates around the light iii) pour oil into the light reservoir to keep it fuelled.	You'll need to listen carefully and be ready to remind the group what the elements of the mime are. Look for pairs who can clearly demonstrate the different elements and who work co-operatively.
Pairs – talk in role. Each pair adopts roles like Grace and her father. Grace is keen to row out immediately to the aid of the stricken ship; her father thinks it is prudent to wait until the weather improves.	Remind the children of the circumstances – how bad the weather is, the apparent danger to the ship and her passengers – and then allow pupils time to practise their scenes. Make sure you allow some time for some pairs to show their scenes to everyone else. At the end you could take a vote: who do the children think is right – Grace or her father?
Whole group – discussion. The group discusses the similarities between Grace's life and our lives today.	An opportunity to consolidate what has been learnt over the session before ending. Some key things: families living in lighthouses; catching food locally; lack of communication equipment.

7. The rescue

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Solo – movement. The passengers on board the Forfarshire.</p> <p>The children imagine they are the passengers on board the ship as it pitches and rolls. They try to carry out some simple tasks in their cabin – making a bed, putting things away – and show how the movement of the ship makes their tasks difficult.</p>	<p>Remind the children of the sort of tasks they could be doing...or, if they prefer, they could be members of the crew going about their duties. The key thing is to show the dramatic rolling of the ship. Allow some time for some to show their mimes to everyone else.</p>
<p>Pairs – talk in role.</p> <p>The pair take on the roles of Grace and her father. Grace's father asks Grace questions about what she can see of the wreck and Grace replies with as much detail as she can.</p>	<p>The key thing here is for the one being William Grace to ask the right sort of questions – questions that invite detailed answers. This is also an opportunity for pupils to show how much of the detail they have picked up of the wreck and its circumstances. Be ready to move rapidly between the pairs assessing their work and to be aware when the time is right to end the activity and move on.</p>
<p>Pairs – mime. Rowing to the rescue.</p> <p>Children sit one behind the other, to row to the rescue. They turn around at times to check they are on the right course and when the music ends they speak their thoughts about their task.</p>	<p>The music for this activity begins at 07 00 and ends at 07 16. You may wish to pause the programme immediately before the music starts in order to allow each pair to get into position ready to row. When you hear the signal, pause the programme and then move around the pairs asking everyone to speak their thoughts in turn.</p>
<p>Small groups – still pictures of the rescue.</p> <p>Pairs join together to make a group of 4 if possible. They create a still picture to show an aspect of the rescue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the survivors beckoning to Grace and her father ii) William clambering onto the rock while Grace holds the boat steady iii) the survivors stepping down into the boat while William and Grace help. 	<p>An opportunity to create really dramatic still pictures, full of energy. Allow groups to choose which picture they wish to make, but try to ensure a spread. Move among the groups, helping as necessary and looking for groups that establish clearly defined roles for each member of the group that makes a significant difference to the overall impact of the picture. When you come to show the pictures you could run them in order, with all groups dealing with the early part of the rescue showing together and so on. 21</p>
<p>Pairs - talk in role. Newspaper interviews.</p> <p>One pupil takes on the role of a reporter from the Sunderland Herald and asks the other – as Grace – all about the rescue... what happened, how did they feel, etc?</p>	<p>Again the questions are the key to the success of the activity. It's also an opportunity for the children to demonstrate some of the historical context and language of the unit. Allow some pairs to show their scenes at the end.</p>
<p>Groups of 3 or 4 – mime.</p> <p>Creating an exhibit for the Grace Darling Museum to commemorate Grace's life. It could be something like a video tribute...or something physical that moves.</p>	<p>An opportunity for the children to use drama strategies of their own choice to create a fitting tribute for Grace – perhaps involving still pictures, moving pictures, mime, talk in role, etc. It's also a chance to for pupils to demonstrate how much of Grace's life story that have learnt during the programmes. The activity will take some time to do it justice so you may wish to return to at some point after the session has ended.</p>

Unit 4: It's a lovely day... ...tomorrow (World War 2)

Curriculum area: history

This unit of three programmes explores aspects of World War 2 – particularly the experiences of children evacuated to the countryside. The setting is one of the many provincial cities – e.g. Nottingham, Coventry, Plymouth – that suffered sustained bombing. Pause programme signal: music sting, as heard in programmes 4 and 5.

8: Parting gifts

We meet Ella and Harry and their mother. Harry and Ella are doing a project on World War 2 at school, so their mother has given them both a family heirloom - she's given Ella a diary that belonged to her grandmother, called Ruby (Ella's great-grandmother); to Billy she's given a special watch that belonged to Ruby's brother, Billy.

The diary and watch date from 1941 and were given to Ruby and Billy by their father that year as he returned to the navy after shore leave. Ella and Harry have decided to bring the diary to life by recording some of the scenes described by Ella using a microphone and the computer. And they'd like the listeners help to work out what their scenes should show. Harry and Ella are going to record the voices of Ruby and Billy and their mother will play some of the other parts.

Ruby's diary tells a remarkable story that happened to her and her brother in 1941. When their home town is bombed Ruby and Billy's mother tells them that they are shortly to be evacuated, along with the other members of their school.

On the day of evacuation Ruby and Billy walk to the train station with their mother. They board the train with their classmates and set off for a new life in the countryside.

9: Life in the country

Harry and Ella continue bringing to life the diary of their grandmother Ruby from 1941. After leaving their home town by train the diary describes how they travel to a village in the countryside where they are gathered together in the village hall. The process of selecting the evacuee children begins and Ruby and Billy are eventually chosen by a Mrs Bigglestone who takes them back to her farm.

Ruby and Billy have no prior experience of the countryside or farms and the animals on the Bigglestones' farm is a cause of anxiety to Billy in particular.

Ruby and Billy's mother makes a first visit. However, when their mother fails to arrive for her next visit Billy becomes convinced she has been hurt in an air raid. He determines to run away to find his mother...

10: Going home

Ruby wakes to find that Billy has left. Ruby thinks she may be able to catch up with Billy on the journey home and, indeed, joins him on the first train home.

They get back to their home town to find it devastated by a recent air raid. When they find their own home, in the company of an ARP warden, they find it badly damaged. Billy is convinced his mother is in the house somewhere, injured. Eventually they find her trapped in the cellar...their actions have most likely saved their mother's life.

8. Parting gifts

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Solo – movement, followed by discussion. The children show what it is like to be caught in an air raid by moving to a sound effects sequence: i) walking home from school on an ordinary day ii) showing how the mood changes when the planes appear overhead – running on the spot to find shelter iii) taking shelter and making a still picture as the bombs begin to fall. At the end the children discuss what it must have been like to be caught in an air raid.</p>	<p>You may wish to ensure that everyone understands the context – they are listening to sound effects from World War 2 being played from a computer. The sequence lasts about 40". If this is too short you could pause the programme after the still pictures or at the signal and run the activity in your own time. You can find the air raid sound effects on the School Radio website at the World War 2 Audio Clips Library.</p>
<p>Pairs – talk in role. One member of the pair is a child - like Ruby or Billy - being left by a parent during the War. The child want the parent to stay; the parent must find the right way to tell the child that they have no choice but to leave.</p>	<p>Put a time limit on the activity if this will help the children to focus. Move among the pairs, assessing their work, questioning to establish detail and helping where necessary. If you have time: i) allow members of the pairs to swap over so that everyone has a turn at both roles ii) allow some pairs to show their scenes to everyone else and allow those watching to say what they like about the scenes.</p>
<p>Pairs – still pictures. Remaining in their pairs the children make three still pictures to show two children – like Ruby and Billy – caught at home when an air raid starts. The pictures are: i) in bed, hearing the planes overhead ii) running downstairs at the bombs begin to fall iii) crouching in the cellar to take cover.</p>	<p>As before, move among the groups assessing work and reminding the children of the pictures to make as necessary. When everyone is ready you will need to orchestrate the showing of the pictures. Ask everyone to stand in their pairs and then offer a pre-arranged signal for everyone to create each picture – e.g. 'Picture 1...Picture 2...Picture 3'. Look for pairs who can make a smooth transition from one picture to the next.</p>
<p>Pairs – talk in role. Staying in their pairs, pupils create a dialogue between two children in the same situation as Ruby and Billy: one concerned about being evacuated, the other try to offer reassurance.</p>	<p>This is an opportunity for the children to really empathise with the circumstances of children who were evacuated. So you may like to preface the activity by asking the children to think about how they would have felt if it was them being evacuated. Try to leave time for some pairs to show their scenes to the rest of the group.</p>

8. Parting gifts - continued

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Whole group – ritual. The group comes together in a circle. They take it in turns to say what special item they would pack to take with them on evacuation – something of personal value that can fit into a suitcase. They say what it is and why it is precious, before placing the imaginary item in the circle.</p>	<p>Some children may limit themselves to items that were available in 1941, but it's perfectly ok for them to select things from their own lives. Move around the group inviting the members to speak but passing over any members who do not wish to and also encouraging everyone to think of their own items, rather than simply repeating ideas already heard. At the end talk about the sort of items that were chosen – things of monetary value...or things of sentimental value..? Has anyone changed their own idea based on what they've heard the others say?</p>
<p>Whole group – still picture. Everyone in the group contributes to a still picture of the moment the children depart by train for evacuation. The elements are: i) children watching at the window ii) a group of parents opposite waving good-bye iii) others – including teachers, train driver, guard, etc.</p>	<p>Help to orchestrate the picture by putting the children into place. Once the picture is created you have a couple of options: i) move around the picture asking everyone to speak the thoughts of the person they are being (and repeating the words as necessary to be sure that everyone can hear) ii) bring the picture to life for a brief period at your own signal – parents and children waving and calling; station master waving a flag; teachers looking after pupils; etc.</p>

Weblinks for Unit 4:

BBC School Radio's own collection of audio clips from World War 2, including air raid sirens and music, eye-witness accounts of the Blitz etc:

www.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/subjects/history/ww2clips

More archive material from the BBC:

www.bbc.co.uk/archive/ww2outbreak/index.shtml

BBC Primary History:

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/primaryhistory/world_war2/

Search the BBC People's War website for the sort of personal stories these programmes were based on:

www.bbc.co.uk/ww2peopleswar/

9. Life in the country

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Pairs – talk in role. One child is like Billy in the story – feeling anxious about the journey and about evacuation; the other is like Ruby – more self-assured and trying to find positive things to say.</p>	<p>Another opportunity for the children to engage with the emotions of evacuation and feelings of uncertainty in particular. As before, move among the pairs listening and offering help where necessary. Try to leave some time for pairs to show their conversations to everyone else. At the end you could take a straw poll – how are the children feeling about evacuation? Is it exciting? Or a time for anxiety?</p>
<p>Whole group – evacuee selection. The whole group lines up in rows. Then choose someone – a potential host guardian – to walk along the lines asking questions of all the children. At the end you can conclude with a discussion: how did it feel to be lined up like this and asked so many personal questions.</p>	<p>The activity will probably work best if you take the role of the adult yourself (though you could nominate one of the children). Move along the lines asking the children questions – how old they are, where they come from, are they 'good', can they work hard, etc? It was quite common for siblings to be split up. It was also common to prefer strong looking boys as their labour was useful on farms etc. The children are talking in role as evacuees, so they don't need to offer answers about their actual selves.</p>
<p>Solo – mime. Everyone in the group mimes some of the activities on the farm. Those mentioned are: i) scattering corn to feed the chickens ii) working the pump to fill a pail with water iii) scattering hay in the stables - but you could include others.</p>	<p>Make sure that everyone knows what the activities are before they begin and then begin the action with your own signal and run it for about 1 minute. If you'd like to develop the activity you could pretend to be one of the Bigglestones' dogs. When the children hear you barking or snarling they have to stop what they're doing as quickly as possible and crouch to hide, until it is safe to resume the tasks again. Working on the farm involved plenty of repetitive manual labour.</p>
<p>Pairs – still pictures and spoken thoughts. Working in pairs, the children create two contrasting still pictures. The first shows two children like Billy and Ruby waiting for their mother, straining their eyes to see her coming down the farmyard lane. The other shows what happens after Billy returns with the watch that has stopped.</p>	<p>The aim is to create two very different pictures – the first tense but inert, the second full of energy. There are a number of ways you could show the pictures, e.g.: i) move around the whole group asking each pair to show their pictures carefully, looking for a smooth transition between them ii) ask all pairs to move at the same time, to a signal from you. Move among the pairs and ask pupils to speak their thoughts.</p>

9. Life in the country - continued

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
<p>Whole group – hot-seating. The group comes together to form a circle. Then one child takes on the role of Billy and sits in the middle of the circle. The others try to persuade Billy not to run away – e.g. by saying that he doesn't know anything for sure about what has happened to his mother or that he is not used to travelling alone. The pupil being Billy will need to find reasons for saying why he still intends to go home to look for his mother.</p>	<p>Organise the circle and choose someone to be Billy – though this is clearly an opportunity for you to take on the role of Billy also. If you like you could allow the children to volunteer to become Billy, taking over from each other as the dialogue develops. What do the group think about Billy's decision? Is it rash? What do they think about his idea that the watch somehow indicates that his mother is in danger?</p>
<p>Whole group – discussion and mime. To end the session, pupils consider some of the differences between living in 1941 and living now. They think of things they'd like...and not like...and then show them in a quick mime for everyone else to identify.</p>	<p>The activity needs to be snappy to work effectively, so encourage the children to think quickly and then offer their mimes...it doesn't matter if they're a little rusty. Is there a consensus on what would not be good about living in 1941? Or the things that would be good?</p>

10. Going home

Drama activities	Teacher guidance
Whole group – recap. The group recalls the main events from the story so far. If you have time split into pairs or groups of three to make still pictures illustrating some of the key moments mentioned.	Plenty has happened in the story, so this is a chance to ensure that everyone has a grasp of the main events before moving on. How would the group describe Ruby and Billy? What are the differences between them?
Groups of 3 or 4 – still pictures. The small groups work on still pictures of the moment Ruby runs alongside the train, trying to persuade Billy to open the door. The picture will need to show Ruby and Billy...and then some of the other people involved in the scene: the driver, perhaps the guard or station master, an onlooker.	The picture should look as dramatic as possible. Give the group a few minutes to work on their pictures. Then ask everyone to strike their pictures and freeze at the same time. Then move among the pictures inviting those taking part to speak their thoughts as the person they are being, repeating their words as necessary to ensure that everyone else can hear.
Solo – movement in role. The children become like either Ruby or Billy, walking through the destroyed streets of their home town, witnessing the terrible damage. They need to clamber over things - because the streets are full of rubble; they also need to pick something up and examine it. At the end they report back about what they have seen.	Pause the programme and then move swiftly into the activity – it doesn't need time to prepare. Allow the activity to run for about 1 minute ensuring that everyone keeps to the spaces and doesn't knock into anyone else. Then, at the end, call everyone together and ask individuals to report back about the things they saw – the damage to the buildings but also small items, like photographs, blown out of the houses and lying in the streets.
Pairs – movement in role. Each pair becomes like Billy and Ruby, moving slowly through the bombed-out house, looking for their mother. As they go they point out things to each other – once familiar things, now destroyed.	You may want to give some ideas for the things the pairs can point out to each other (basically anything that would have existed in a typical house in the War). Allow 1 – 2 minutes for the activity. Then ask everyone to come into a circle to report back. What sort of things did the pairs see on their journeys around the bombed-out house? How many things are they able to report back on?
Pairs – movement in role. Working in pairs, the children work quickly but carefully clearing the debris out of the way of the cellar door. The activity happens to a sound effects sequence. At the end the children hear their mother's voice. At this moment they freeze in their positions and speak thoughts out loud.	The sequence of sound effects lasts about 1 minute. Stay close to your playback machine. You have to be ready to pause the programme at the signal and then move quickly among the frozen pictures. As you pass them by invite the pupils to speak their thoughts – e.g. with a light tap in the shoulder – and repeat any words so that everyone else can hear clearly what is said.
Small groups – still pictures. Ending off by making some still pictures showing key moments from the story.	The pictures should be drawn from across the three programmes.