Chatterbooks Activity Pack

Barrington Stoke Little Gems

Reading and activity ideas for your Chatterbooks group
Barrington Stoke Little Gems series: Super Readable Books!

Here’s a pack all about Little Gems – the series of books from publisher Barrington Stoke especially for children aged 5 to 8 years of age. Little Gems are lovely books written by favourite authors. They are high quality stories presented in an attractive chunky format, with fun extras and high spec finishes. Unique accessibility features support all early readers on their journey to reading independence, and cream paper and a special easy to read font ensure a smooth read for all.

In this special Chatterbooks Little Gems activity pack -

- you’ll find more about Barrington Stoke and their range of super readable books for children with dyslexia or with other reading difficulties
- we’ve highlighted 6 Little Gems titles, with activity and discussion ideas linked to each book.
- there are also ideas for further reading, plus some general activity ideas for all your Chatterbooks groups, for children of all ages and abilities.

Contact Barrington Stoke directly on info@barringtonstoke.co.uk for shelf signage and other POS for this series.

Coming up soon is Dyslexia Awareness Week – from October 3rd to the 9th in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and from November 7th to the 13th in Scotland.

This pack is brought to you by The Reading Agency and their Children’s Reading Partner, publishers Barrington Stoke. Chatterbooks is a reading group programme for children aged 4 to 14 years. It is coordinated by The Reading Agency and its patron is author Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Chatterbooks groups run in libraries and schools, supporting and inspiring children’s literacy development by encouraging them to have a really good time reading and talking about books. The Reading Agency is an independent charity working to inspire more people to read more through programmes for adults, young people and Children – including the Summer Reading Challenge, and Chatterbooks. See www.readingagency.org.uk

Children’s Reading Partners is a national partnership of children’s publishers and libraries working together to bring reading promotions and author events to as many children and young people as possible.
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For help in planning your Chatterbooks meeting, have a look at this quick guide.

Barrington Stoke
Barrington Stoke specialises in ‘cracking reading’ – publishing super-readable children’s books that break down the barriers that can stop children and young people getting into reading. Here are some of the resources they provide for parents, teachers and librarians.

Dive In
Produced with Dyslexia Action, this is a guide to choosing children’s books for reluctant readers and readers for dyslexia. Its sections include:

- What is dyslexia?
- Reading hints and tips; recommended books for 5-8s, 9-12s and teens
- These book lists cover a wide range of titles from different publishers, plus a selection of Barrington Stoke titles with dyslexia-friendly titles.

Wall Chart/Poster: All the Barrington Stoke Titles At-A-Glance.
This includes a fold-out spread detailing all the titles on offer from Barrington Stoke, highlighting interest and reading ages.

Cracking Reading with Barrington Stoke
This leaflet includes sections on

- Physical factors in a Barrington Stoke book to make reading easier for people with dyslexia: e.g. font, tinted paper, attractive covers
- Factors which hinder people from getting good literacy skills
- How adults can help
Barrington Stoke website

Again here is a lot of useful information for everyone involved in making reading easier – helping people to learn to read and to love to read. The site includes:

- Information about all the Barrington Stoke books and their authors
- Free resources: classroom discussion guides on a range of titles; guided reading pack resources
- Posters and shelf signage available direct from Barrington Stoke on info@barringtonstoke.co.uk
- Reading War: A microsite dedicated to the First World War and Barrington Stoke novels about this war
- Information about Barrington Stoke’s new Tints E-Reading App providing on-screen dyslexia-friendly reading
- Picture Squirrels www.picturesquirrels.co.uk A microsite dedicated to Barrington Stoke's picture book list and supporting family reading. Includes videos and resources for parents and practitioners about dyslexia and reading.

Issues and barriers to reading which children may be facing – and strategies and support which can help

Some children may struggle to see the text properly. Perceptual problems can mean the text seems to move about on the page. Eye-muscle control problems can make it very hard to focus on a line, read along and move down to the next without losing place.

These children can be helped by a variety of simple and inexpensive aids. Remind any child who uses a coloured acetate 'filter' or special glasses in school to bring these along and use them. Ideally keep a stock of filters yourself in case they forget.

A simple ruler can help a reader follow the right line, and don't worry if they use their finger to keep their place. Pay attention to lighting as well - this will help all children.

Some children may appear able to read but fail to understand what they're reading (sometimes called 'barking at text'). It's quite possible that they could read the whole text solo, and still have no idea of what's going on.

You can really help these children by taking the text slowly. Read a section yourself while they listen, and ask them to make pictures in their head of what they're hearing, rather like a film - this is useful strategy for making meaning. Stop reading and discuss what might happen next in the story. Ask them to read a section to themselves, and remind them to make pictures in their heads as they read. Review what happened together - were your predictions correct? Continue to tackle the text in this way, ensuring that their own reading is supported by hearing sections read.
aloud, and backed up by discussion to consolidate meaning. You can also use this approach with a group of mixed ability – it will build listening skills and invite discussion by everyone.

Some children may struggle to read the text on any level. They may struggle to recognise letter shapes. They may have poor letter/sound correspondences and find it difficult to ‘decode’ words. They may have poor working memory and recognise fewer words by sight.

Don't be afraid to take it very slowly with these children - covering even one short chapter in a session might be enough. Read the text aloud yourself, or ask for volunteers among the most confident readers in the group. Keep the pace slow and clear and put in lots of expression. Stop occasionally and ask the group to read the next word. If a child is reading aloud and stumbles over a word, supply it yourself straight away. That way they can keep the flow of meaning - they'll lose it if they have to stop while they work the word out.

Remember that dyslexia is primarily a processing problem and working memory is an issue.
At the start of every session, always recap what you have read and done previously - children are unlikely to remember for themselves.

Being in a reading group: how Chatterbooks can help to give enjoyment and confidence in reading

Chatterbooks is all about having a good time talking about books – being in a group, relaxed and having fun sharing books and exploring books for themselves.

- Chatterbooks encourages children to talk about the books they’ve read, and say what they think about them – and so they steadily develop confidence in expressing their opinions.
- Chatterbooks is also about listening, and being listened to – learning to listen and respond assertively to each other, and further gaining confidence through knowing that people are respecting and taking account of their opinions.
- Chatterbooks sessions also include the pleasure of being read aloud to – this might be fellow members introducing a book, or the group leader reading a story or a taster chapter
- Chatterbooks is about young people's involvement – it’s their group, their choices and ideas, their guidelines about how the group works. This brings empowerment and confidence.
- Chatterbooks involves and endorses all reading choices and formats – all kinds of books, on any subject, at any level, and for every taste - plus comics, magazines, and stories and information accessed digitally, and via audio, and video. Children can choose the formats which work for them – and at the same time feel able to try new reading experiences without being pressurised.
• There is also, if they wish, the opportunity to read aloud themselves, to share a story or a review with the group. Chatterbooks provides a supportive environment for this and again helps to build confidence.

• In Chatterbooks there is often the chance for children of different ages and abilities to work together cooperatively, supporting and encouraging each other. This works well with activities like simple drama, role play, and making videos – and also offers opportunities for children to buddy with and mentor each other.

• Children want to read what their friends are enjoying – Chatterbooks encourages peer recommendations through discussion in the group, and with other groups online, and by using the Chatterbooks Bookbite review slips, and the Chatterbooks scrapbook.

• Chatterbooks members’ reviews of books are also great for keeping library staff and publishers in touch with what children are enjoying reading – and not enjoying! One way children can do this is by reading and reviewing the new titles and proof copies submitted for Chatterbooks Star Reviewers. Children with dyslexia may find this difficult if the proofs have a condensed layout – but if someone presents the book to the whole group and they then all talk about it, there should be openings for everyone’s input.

• There is also the opportunity for young people to contribute to the reviewing of Barrington Stoke titles. Barrington Stoke would love to involve children who find reading challenging, as reviewers for new Barrington Stoke books. Their Young Editors manuscript review scheme gives young people access, pre-publication, to texts in dyslexia-friendly layout.

• Most of all, Chatterbooks is about having FUN reading and talking about books!

**Book talking with your Chatterbooks group**

**Introducing and reading a book**

A good book to choose for your group would be one you can read together, maybe a few chapters at a time, and then talk about them. Look at the cover and the blurb, and set the scene for the book so that people are on a level playing field for getting into the story. Children would enjoy having it read to them, or check if they would like to read and experience it for themselves.

Before discussion, try to allow time for reflection, re-reading, or asking questions about anything anyone finds difficult.

**Some questions to get the chat going**

• How did you feel when reading this book? And when you’d finished it?

• Which parts of the story do you remember most?

• Did you skip any parts? Which ones?

• Was there anything that took you by surprise?
Did you quickly get involved in the story? What caught your attention?
Did the story hold your interest? How did it do this?
What did you especially like about the story?
Were there any parts you didn’t make sense of?
If you gave up on this book can you say why?
What were the funniest/scariest/most interesting bits for you?
Talk about anything you learned from reading this book, or things that got you thinking.
Are there things you’d now like to find out more about?
What word – or two words! – would you use to describe this book?

Little Gems: the books
Here are six great titles from the Little Gems list together with some ideas for chat and activities.
And don’t miss out on the activities on the end-papers of each book!

Anna Liza and the Happy Practice
Eoin Colfer & Matt Robertson  978-1781125595
Anna Liza likes to help cheer up her mother's psychiatric patients with her 17 top knock-knock jokes and cheerful songs, but when she meets Edward, she hits a brick wall. Edward's dad is so sad since his mum left; he says his life isn't going anywhere any more. Anna Liza has a plan to get him on the move again, if only she can manage to evade her mother's attention long enough.
'What seems to be the problem, Edward?' I asked him. For a long time Edward didn’t say a word and I thought he might be having a nap until he whispered. ‘It’s my dad.’ A dad problem. These are very common. At least half the children I talk to in the waiting room have a dad or mum problem.

Eoin Colfer was the third Irish Children's Laureate (Laureate na nOg) from 2014-2016. He is the bestselling author of the Artemis Fowl series and has sold well in advance of 25 million books in his career. He lives in Ireland. Matt Robertson went to Cambridge School of Art & is now a prize-winning illustrator. He lives in Norwich.

Anna Liza Quiz
1. What kind of doctor is Anna Liza’s mum?
2. What does Anna Liza’s mum say is even more important than talking to patients?
3. Where does Anna Liza operate her Happy Practice?
4. What doesn’t Edward like to have on his burgers?
5. What sort of problem is making him sad?
6. What does Edward’s dad say about his life?
7. What does Anna Liza put on Edward’s dad’s feet to help him to get somewhere?
8. Where did Edward’s dad end up after meeting the bread boy, the sand lorry, the tram, and the seagulls?
9. How do Edward’s dad’s adventures make him feel about his life?
10. What is Anna Liza thinking of using to help the girl who is sad about her mum?

Anna Liza Word Search
Here are some words from this story which are hidden in the squares below. See if you can find them – and then talk together about what the words mean. Look for where they are used in this story. (See the end of this pack for page numbers and answers)

psychiatrist  stethoscope  relevant  professional
harassing    dangerous   equipment  explosion
invisible    carbohydrates  situation  mysterious
Talk about

- Listening to people: Mum says that it’s even more important to listen to her patients than to talk to them (4)—why do you think this is?
- Making people happy: I think a that a job where you can make sad people happy again must be the best job in the world (7)—what makes you happy?

Cheerer-upper songs  What are your Top cheerer-upper songs? Make a list and sing to each other! Vote for the one you think is the best cheerer-upper!

Mary’s Hair  Eoin Colfer and Richard Watson 978-1781125106
Mary loathes her big, curly, bushy hair and so she chops it all off...and she looks fantastic! Well, at least she thinks so. But her mammy is not convinced and forbids her from ever cutting her own hair again. But she didn't say anything about anyone else...
A brilliant laugh-out-loud Little Gem about a not-so-brilliant hairdresser and one very unfortunate dog!

_Daddy says that if you don’t like something, then you should do something about it, not just whine at your parents when they’re trying to have a cup of tea._
_So, one day, I decided to do just that._

_Eoin Colfer_ was the third Irish Children’s Laureate (Laureate na nOg) from 2014-2016. He is the bestselling author of the Artemis Fowl series and has sold well in advance of 25 million books in his career. He lives in Ireland.

_Richard Watson_ is an illustrator who likes to draw by hand first before colouring his pictures with his computer. He lives in north Lincolnshire.

_Mary’s Hair Quiz_

1. Why does Mary decide to cut her hair?
2. What three things does she use for cutting her hair?
3. Why don’t her parents notice her new hair cut?
4. What do her friends do when they see her new hair style?
5. What special toy does her friend Imelda let Mary play with?
6. What lesson does Mary learn about when you do something about your hair?
7. When Mary decides to dye her hair, who does she get to help her with this and who does she practise on?
8. What happens after she puts the dye in the toilet cistern?
9. What happens to her dad’s toothbrush?!
10. What’s the happy ending for this story?

_Your Oscars speech!_

Look at Mary’s ‘Oscars’ speech on page 25! Talk about what the Oscars are and the custom of making a speech when you’ve won one. Think of something you’ve done that you’re proud of – e.g. learning to ride a bike – and make up an ‘Oscars’ speech about how you managed it and thanking everyone who helped you!
Or imagine you’re the star in a film – which film?! – and have won an Oscar for your star acting!

_Talk about_

- Mary takes a chance on cutting her hair. Have you ever done anything like that? – something risky that maybe didn’t quite work out
- Your hair! First get everyone to write a brief description of what they think their hair is like and what they think about it. Then get into pairs and each do a
description of your partner’s hair. Compare yours and your partner’s description – do they match? Or not?!

- Being popular – *It’s a terrible thing to be popular for half an hour and then have to go back to being plain old Mary Leary.* (34) Do you think Mary really needs to worry about being popular? Do you think being popular is important?

- What do you think about Mary getting adventurous with cutting her hair, using hair dye, putting the dog in the toilet tank – and thinking about perming her hair herself?! What advice would you give her?

- On a flipchart collect all the things you think about what Mary is like, to build up a description of her

- When Mary’s friends clapped her she says *It was the happiest moment of my life.* (24) What has been the happiest moment of your life so far?

**Blamehounds**  
Ross Collins 978-1781123928  
A hilariously wacky read from author/illustrator Ross Collins. Whenever there's a pong, poo or puddle that can't be explained, Norman and Ringo are the hounds that take the blame. Determined to exploit their status for profit, Blamehounds Inc. is soon in business and small dogs the world over are admitting responsibility for accidents, eruptions and even the occasional war...

Ross Collins is one of the UK’s most popular illustrators and an award-winning picture-book author, most recently being shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway 2016 Medal for *There’s a Bear On My Chair*, which was also the winner of the Amnesty CILIP Honour. His *Elephantom* provided the inspiration for the National Theatre’s 2013 puppet spectacular - from the team behind the smash-hit stage version of Michael Morpurgo's War Horse.

*Prices were very reasonable. A small fart in the customer’s home could be covered for as little as £3. A loud, smelly fart at a posh dinner could make as much as £20. Spills and messes were £10 to £15. Dogs who took the blame for eating homework bagged around £5, or were paid with biscuits if the child didn’t carry cash.*

**Blamehounds Quiz**

1. At the beginning of the story who farted and who got the blame?!
2. Which dog is Norman’s best friend and what is his favourite word?
3. What did Norman take the blame for with the delivery driver?
4. What did Norman and Ringo call their ‘blame-taking’ business?
5. Where did they make the base for their business?
6. Describe two things for which dogs took the blame.
7. How did the dog Sancho end the war between Tripova and Banginta?
8. How did Norman’s ‘blame-taking’ business get rumbled?
9. At the end of the story who do you think has farted and who do you think will get the blame?!

**Blamehounds Word Search**

Here are the names of some different breeds of dogs, Can you find them hidden in the squares below?

alsatians  dalmatians  greyhounds  poodles  scotties
spaniels  whippets  mongrels  huskies

```
 s c o t t i e s q j x p h j w f
q w x z v g r e y h o u n d s
z s v f z j w q b j v q s x j w
x p j q d x q z j f q g k w z x
j a l s a t i a n s j q i x p f
z n j x l z p x f j x z e v b x
b i g z m w p f j z k s w s d
w e z x a j v w d g x p w j z j
x l j q t w q h z x w p d v b w
z s f p i w k i x p f v q f z x
p w j z a v x p q w p z x b m z
x z q p n b q p o o d l e s j x
q z j x s k j e f w x j p z j k
x f b w q t p t m b x z a v s f
m o n g r e l s x v p w q j z p
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**Talk about**

- *The dog...had just been having a nice dream about dropping cats off bridges*(6) ...What else might dogs have nice dreams about? Or what do you think cats might dream about?!
- The Blamehounds were taking the blame for spills, messes, farts – and eating homework. Can you think of some more things they could take the blame for, as well as the things in this story?

**The Genius Aged 8¼  Jeremy Strong & Jamie Smith  978-1781125557**

Sometimes adults need a helping hand. Luckily, Mr and Mrs Poppleton give birth to Alfie (real name: Squeaky Squawky Red-face Splurp-bottom). They are utterly hopeless, and Alfie has little choice but to take responsibility for the family. At school he finds that the teachers are little better. Alfie can't help but think that there's a simple solution to some problems ... A celebration of precocious children and silly adults everywhere.

*So from then on they called their son Alfie, which was a VERY GOOD THING because, you see, Alfie thought that being called Squeaky Squawker Redface Splurp Bottom was just about the most ridiculous thing EVER. And he was quite right too. Alfie was a much more sensible name.*

Jeremy Strong is a favourite children’s author who has written over 100 books, including *The Hundred-Mile-An-Hour Dog* stories. He has won many awards including the Red House Children’s Book Award. He lives near Bath.

Jamie Smith has worked as an illustrator for over 20 years. He lives in Godalming.

**The Genius Quiz**

1. Why did Mrs Poppleton have a bulgy tummy?
2. What names did Mr and Mrs P first give to their baby?
3. What name did their baby want to be called?
4. What was their favourite game?
5. Why do they think their baby is a genius?
6. At school how did the head teacher get the lessons to be the right length?
7. And how did she get all the pupils to take more exercise?
8. How does Alfie solve the one-way problem in the town?
9. And how does he solve the cheese problem between France and Britain?
10. At the end of the story Alfie is not just a pupil at school – what four jobs does he have?

**Talk about**

- Make a list of all the really silly things you can think of that are in this story! Which did you think was the funniest thing?
• Is there anything which happens at school or which your parents do which you think are rather silly?
• Do you think Alfie is a genius?!
• Which part of this story did you like best? Were there any bits you didn’t like?
• What do you think of the name Mish Mash Banana Brain Academy? Make up some funny names for your school!

Well, scrub my onions!
...push me over with a toasted crumpet!(15) These are some funny things people in the story say when they’re surprised about something – what would you say if you were surprised? Make up your own saying – how about ‘Well, brush my hair with a mobile phone...’!

Cheese!
France and Britain nearly go to war over cheese – and it takes Alfie’s genius and 20 cheeses to settle the matter.

Can you fill in the letters missing in the names of these 6 cheeses?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Missing Letters</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E - - m</td>
<td>A Dutch cheese covered in a rind of red wax.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch - d - - r</td>
<td>An English cheese named after a place in Somerset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G - - go - z - la</td>
<td>An Italian cheese with tangy blue veins in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Br - -</td>
<td>French and creamy!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P - - m e s - -</td>
<td>A hard cheese which tastes good grated on spaghetti.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M - zar - ll -</td>
<td>Another Italian cheese: creamy white and good on pizzas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ted thinks there's something fishy going on. Ever since his birthday when he got a special loyalty card at the local shop, all his great ideas are being thought of by the new Prime Minister too. Now there are laws about walking to school and everyone has Mondays off! Could the shop's market research lady have anything to do with it? And if Ted has become a Leader, shouldn't he start thinking up proper laws to save the world...?

Benedict held up his hands. ‘Well, come on, you’re in control of the whole country and all you’ve done is get us a few extra Premier League cards. You could really improve people’s lives.’ of course Benedict was right. The Prime Minister had asked for my help. Why? Because I’m a genius. Because I could save the world. But how?

Frank Cottrell Boyce has written many books including Millions and The Astounding Broccoli Boy. He has also written films, TV programmes – and the 2012 Olympic opening ceremony. He has won the CILIP Carnegie Medal and the Guardian Children’s Fiction Prize. He lives in Liverpool.
Cate James also illustrates the Lollipop and Grandpa books. She lives in Edinburgh.
Chris Riddell (cover illustrations) is an award-winning artist, cartoonist and author.. He has won the CILIP Kate Greenway Medal and is the current Children’s Laureate. He lives in Brighton.

Ted Rules the World Quiz
1. Why had Ted’s parents forgotten his birthday?
2. What does the nice lady at the supermarket give to Ted?
3. What advice does Ted give when he’s asked whether children should walk to school one day a week?
4. How does he realise that somehow his ideas are being taken up by the prime minister?
5. Why does Ted think the Prime Minister wants him to run the country?
6. What does Ted’s friend Benedict think Ted should do with the power he has?
7. What is Benedict’s idea about dinosaurs?
8. What is Ted’s idea about all the food that is flown around the world?
9. And what is his idea about redheads? What turns out to be the problem with this?
10. It turns out that the government was using Ted as a kind of unofficial adviser, via the nice lady in the supermarket – why did they choose him?
Ted Rules the World Crossword

ACROSS

2. What creature would Benedict get scientists to bring back? (8)

5. The new supermarket at the end of Ted’s road (13)

7. Ted’s birthday present from his mum and dad (4)

9. The lesson learned in this story is that everyone is s p _ c _ _ l (7)

10. Ted’s new favourite food (11)

DOWN

1. Ted’s best friend (8)

3. The town where Ted’s favourite football team comes from (9)

4. The colour of Ted’s hair (3)

6. The vehicle which makes a surprise landing in Ted’s garden (10)

8. What day would Ted add on to the weekend? (6)
Talk about

- What ideas would you suggest if the Prime Minister asked for your help in governing the country?
- In what ways can you get involved and help to do something about things that you think need sorting out or improving? – e.g. through your school council, or joining an organisation like the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – or maybe discussing and making action plans in your Chatterbooks group!
- ‘Supermarkets know everything about you...It’s called market research.’ What exactly is market research? How is it carried out and why do shops and businesses want to do it?
- Ted’s first favourite thing at birthday parties is Hula Hoops. What are your favourite things?

Monster Slayer  Brian Patten & Chris Riddell
978-781125489

The monster Grendel has awoken and the townspeople are terrified. Even the King has abandoned his great Hall. Hero after hero comes to slay the monster, but no one can outwit Grendel. Only Beowulf has a chance. But when Beowulf finally triumphs, an even greater horror awakens. Grendel's mother, the Hag, wants revenge on the slayer of her son.

**Evil suited Grendel. He was half-man, half-monster, a terrible creature stronger almost than any living thing. He was covered in a green, horny skin that no sword could cut, and he came from a race of sea monsters, giants, goblins and other outcasts from the human race.**

**Brian Patten** first found fame as one of the Liverpool Poets in the 1960s. He has written extensively for adults and children and won numerous awards. He was given the Freedom of Liverpool in 2002.

**Chris Riddell** is an award-winning artist, cartoonist and author. He has won the CILIP Kate Greenway Medal and is the current Children’s Laureate. He lives in Brighton.

**Monster Slayer Quiz**

1. Why did the king decide to hold a party?
2. What happened as everyone slept after the party?
3. What then became of the kingdom?
4. What are two of the weapons with which warriors tried to kill the monster Grendel?
5. Who is Beowulf?
6. How strong is he?
7. Beowulf believes that to defeat the monster he must first make him angry. How does he do this?
8. How does the monster Grendel die?
9. While the people are celebrating the monster’s death, who comes and attacks them?
10. What three barriers does Beowulf have to get past before he kills Grendel – and how does he get past them?

**Talk about**

- What does everyone think of this story? Did you find scary? – if so, what made it scary for you? Are there parts which you found funny? Or exciting? Or parts that you didn’t like?
- What other stories do you know about monsters? And about heroes? List them all on a flip chart. Get together a collection of books with stories about monsters and share some of these stories together.

**Draw a monster in the nest of bones and colour it in**

Have a go at this activity on the back end-paper of the book.

**Similes**

In this story the author often uses similes to make vivid descriptions by comparing one thing to another – introducing the comparison with words such as ‘like’ and ‘as’. Here are some examples:

- *In his ears that music sounded like the buzzing of flies* (p9)
- *And each night he (Grendel) sat and brooded in the Great Hall like a bloated spider inside its web.* (p18)
- *The light retreated and the shadows thickened. They crept out of the forest and across the marchland like severed fingers.* (p35)
- *His fist smashed Grendel’s jaw, and scattered his teeth like black pearls.* (p49)

Talk about each one: do the similes help you to imagine the story even more clearly? You could choose one of the similes and draw the picture it makes.

Have a go at completing these similes, thinking up your own comparisons:

- *The scraps of paper fluttered in the wind like…*
- *The bright sun was like…*
- *The field of blue flowers shimmered like…*
Riddles
Beowulf has to answer three riddles to get past the Riddle Stones to face Grendel’s mother, the Hag. In *The Hobbit* (by J R R Tolkien) Bilbo and Gollum challenge each other with riddles – try these. (The answers are at the end of the pack.)

*What has roots as nobody sees,*
*Is taller than trees*
*Up, up it goes,*
*And yet never grows?*

*Alive without breath,*
*As cold as death;*
*Never thirsty, ever drinking,*
*All in mail never clinking.*

*Thirty white horses on a red hill,*
*First they champ,*
*Then they stamp,*
*Then they stand still.*

A box without hinges, key or lid,
Yet golden treasure inside is hid.

**Monster Slayer Word Search**
Here are some words from this story – can you find them in the squares below?

Grendel  mayhem  wolves  demons  Beowulf  hero
Hag   lair  warrior  celebration  shadows

A few more activity ideas
Write a review for your favourite Little Gems book
Tell your friends about your favourite Little Gems book so that they want to read it too!
What will you say about the book? Here’s a template you could use in putting together your review.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Little Gems Book Review</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title of book:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illustrator</td>
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<td>What happens in the story?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What was your favourite bit?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who was your favourite character?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How did you feel when you finished the book?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anything you learned from the story?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the illustrations like?</td>
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</table>
Read out loud
People love being read to – and reading a story or an extract is a great way of introducing children to new books and genres. Any of the Little Gems series would be perfect for this. Before reading aloud, introduce the book, set the story in context, and encourage responses as you read. Ask questions to help with understanding the text. Encourage discussion and building on each other’s ideas. You might want a drink or a snack while children are listening, if you didn’t offer one at the beginning of the session.

Look at stories in different formats
Choose some favourite books and make a collection of them in as many different formats as possible – e.g. CD, DVD, graphic novel, abridged version (e.g. Usborne classics), different editions with different covers/illustrations. Get your group looking at them, listening to them, comparing them, saying which they like best and why.

Keep a reading diary
Keeping a reading diary can encourage you to keep on reading – and builds your reading story. Have a small notebook which can easily be carried around. Decorate the cover. Your diary just needs to be a list of what you’ve read or tried to read – with only very simple notes about the books – e.g. ‘Great’, ‘Couldn’t get into it’!

Have an author event
Meeting with an author is an exciting experience, and often a real stimulus for inspiring children’s reading and writing. You can contact authors via their websites – or get in touch with Children’s Reading Partners. This is a partnership of publishers and librarians which offers opportunities for author visits.

Belonging to the library
Get your group involved in choosing books for the library and having a real say in the library meeting their needs. They can bring ideas for stock, create displays, and also contribute to the design, lighting and layout of the library, so that they can feel that this is their space.

Young Editors
Barrington Stoke would love to involve children who find reading challenging, as reviewers for new Barrington Stoke books. Their Young Editors manuscript review scheme gives young people access, pre-publication, to texts in dyslexia-friendly layout. Registration for this scheme is free for schools.
More Reading! A selection of books from Barrington Stoke.... and more by the Little Gem authors above

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<tr>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
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<td>If you like these authors then here’s some more reading!</td>
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Have a look at this Chatterbooks pack which also features Barrington Stoke titles together with activity and discussion ideas.

**Answers**

**Anna Liza Quiz**
1. Brain doctor; psychiatrist
2. Listening
3. In her mother’s waiting room
4. Sauce
5. A dad problem
6. His life is not going anywhere
7. Roller skates
8. On to the pier and into the sea
9. His life is going places
10. A skateboard

**Anna Liza Wordsearch**
psychiatrist (6) stethoscope (11) relevant (24) professional (25) harassing (28) dangerous (37) equipment (43) explosion (45) invisible (48) carbohydrates (66) situation (86) mysterious (89)

```
psychiatricist qwtxs z
qwxa v j f zw t v b q x i w
zb v r z j w q b r elevant z
ixjbp x q z j f t g y w z x u q
rqzo v gb p v h q w x v g a v
yvzh q ze explosion xt p
izg y q wp v f j skzws dx
sqzd kj v fd gc pw ez j of
if j r kw q h z x o p d q b v n x
bxf aj wk ab p bq w u j x zf
lwjt fv professional
ezqej b qa xpqp vgpj vbw
```
Mary’s Hair Quiz
1. She hates it. It’s all bits.
2. Scissors; hair gel; swim goggles
3. They’re trying to get baby Peter to have some porridge.
4. They clap.
5. Rollerblade Barbie
6. Try it out on someone else first.
7. Noely Rochford and his dog Bruce
8. Bruce falls in the toilet.
9. The bristles were melted away.
10. Mary and Noely become friends.

Blamehounds Wordsearch
**Blamehounds Quiz**

1. Mr Lime; Norman the dog
2. Ringo; ‘Sausages’
3. Broken eggs
4. Blamehounds
5. The old toilets in the park
6. Farts; spills & messes; eating homework; a bad day’s fishing; traffic jams; burnt sausages; bad movies; ruined harvests; a tornado; a war
7. It took the blame for the war
8. People realised that you can’t blame a dog for a war – or for most things
9. Mr. Lime; the cat

**The Genius Quiz**

1. She was going to have a baby.
2. Squeaky Squawker Redface Splurp Bottom
3. Alfred – Alfie for short
4. Toss the Baby Over the Pond
5. He says ‘urgh’ when a week old and talks while he’s still a baby
6. She took bits off the long lessons and added them to the short lessons
7. She gave every child a bike – and scooters for the younger children
8. He says to make half the roads one way and half the roads the other way
9. He gets someone from each country to taste and choose from 20 unlabelled cheeses, saying if they are French or British - and which are their favourites. Each country likes a mixture of cheeses – both countries make great cheeses!
10. Head teacher; Mayor; Prime Minister of Britain; President of France

**Cheese!**

Edam; Cheddar; Gorgonzola; Brie; Parmesan; Mozarella

**Ted Rules the World Quiz**

1. They stayed up all night for the election results
2. A loyalty card
3. Children living within one mule from school should walk once a week.
4. He hears her announcing his ideas on TV
5. He thinks she thinks he’s a ‘top person’ because of his habits & exam results.
6. Improve people’s lives
7. Countries to send their dinosaurs to fight each other, instead of having wars
8. Leave food where it is to avoid waste, pollution and starvation
9. Redheads shouldn’t be blamed for things; so criminals dyed their hair red
10. He was actually chosen because his habits & exam results showed he’s average
**Ted Rules the World Crossword**

1. B  
2. D  
3. I  
4. N  
5. O  
6. S  
7. A  
8. U  
9. R  
10. T  

**Monster Slayer Quiz**

1. The King’s last battle was over and there was peace again.
2. Grendel the monster came to the Great Hall and killed everyone there.
3. The King was in despair; there was no more laughter. Everyone took to the forest each night, hiding from Grendel.
4. A magic bow and a magic dagger
5. A strange young man from the Northern Rim; it was written in the stars that he would face up to Grendel.
6. He had the strength of 30 men.
7. He filled the Great Hall with the light of candles, and taunted Grendel by pretending to be a mouse and then an owl.
8. Beowulf overcomes Grendel in a fight; Grendel’s arm is broken off and he stumbles to his lair, sinks into the stench and dies.
9. Three Riddle Stones; Beowulf has to answer their riddles correctly.

**Riddles**
The answers are: 1. Mountain  2. Fish  3. Teeth  4. Egg
### Monster Slayer Word Search

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**Qzjgwkjzdemons**

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