

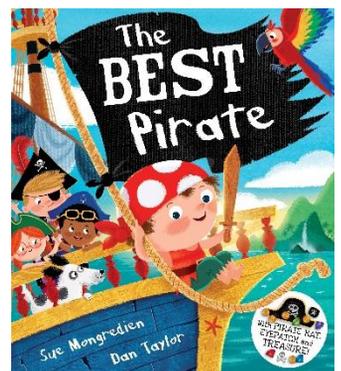


The Best Pirate

written by Sue Mongredien,
Illustrated by Dan Taylor

1 – Introducing the book

- Look at the title of the book. What skills and qualities would a ‘best pirate’ have?
- Read the first pages which introduce the crew. Why do you think the other pirates say Paul is hardly a proper pirate at all? Draw children’s attention to the fact that it says ‘or so the others thought’ in brackets. Why do you think it says that? What might Paul do to prove them wrong?
- As you read through the story, plot a ‘feelings graph’ for Paul. Along the x axis, record the events in the story, and on the y axis have a scale from feeling very positive and happy, to feeling really upset and unhappy. Use this activity to explore what influences Paul’s feelings and why. Talk about what the other pirates could have done differently so that he didn’t feel upset and left out. What can you do if you can see someone is feeling sad?
- Stop at different points in the narrative (for example when the pirates set off to explore, or when they fall in the hole) and ask children to discuss and predict what might happen next.





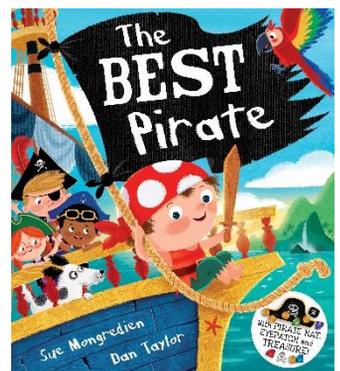
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2 – A scurvy pirate crew

- Re-read the first page of the story with all the rhyming pirate names. Display some other pirate names (possibly from children in the class) and ask children they can think of rhymes to go with them. Use the examples from the book (Dave/brave, Giles/miles) to show it is the ending of the word that indicates if it will rhyme or not. Set up a pairs game with names and rhymes on different cards, and see if children can match them up. For example: Pirate Fred won't get out of bed, Pirate Sam likes eating ham, Pirate Molly loves her dolly, Pirate Rose has a big nose, Pirate Lizzy is always dizzy, Pirate Ben is nearly ten, Pirate Matt has a pet cat, Pirate Josh is really posh, Pirate Meg has a peg leg. Remind children that names always start with a capital letter.
- Children could then create their own scurvy crew of peg doll pirates, using felt tips, and making pirate hats and cloaks from felt.





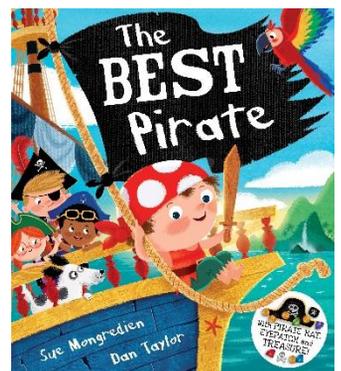
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- Draw children's attention to the picture of the compass rose on page 6 and talk about how and why a compass is used. Play a pirate version of Simon Says (Pirate Paul says!) to practice the different compass directions. Display the compass directions around the classroom. Give instructions to turn to a different one in turn, and providing the instruction is preceded by 'Pirate Paul says...' then children should follow the instruction. However, if you just say 'turn to face East' and children follow that instruction, then they are out of the game.
- Once children feel confident with the different directions, see if they can use the compass directions to give and follow instructions. Set out a series of P.E. mats and obstacles around a hall or large open space. Decide on a starting point and an 'X marks the spot' end point. Choose one child to stand at the start and then await instructions from the rest of the crew as to how and where they should move. For example 'take three steps forward, turn so you're facing east'. Can they navigate their way to the treasure without falling in the shark-infested waters (P.E. mat)?





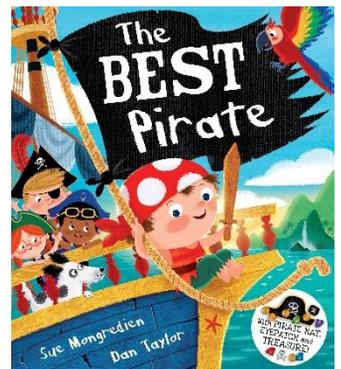
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- The pirate theme can also be used as a P.E. warm up, with children devising different actions for swabbing the deck, climbing the rigging, polishing the portholes etc. Help children develop co-ordination and balance by asking them to 'walk the plank' (either a bench, skipping rope laid on the ground or length of masking tape). Make this harder by challenging them to do so backwards, or balancing a beanbag on their head or while throwing and catching a ball.
- Pirate Paul comes to the rescue by blasting himself out of the cannon. Make simple catapults by glueing a lolly stick along the length of a peg, extending over the 'squeezing end'. Balance a counter (representing Paul) on one end of the lolly stick, and press down on the other end to 'fire' it as far as possible. Children could compete in small groups to see whose counter goes the furthest. Can they measure the distance it's travelled?

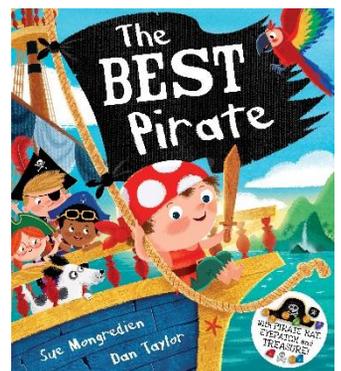




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3 – Treasure ahoy!

- Children could make their own pirate maps. Use a tea bag dipped in water to stain a piece of paper on both sides (watercolour paper works best as it's more absorbent). Encourage children to really dab at the paper in places with the tea bag to give concentrated patches of staining to look more realistic. Once the paper has dried, it can be crumpled and the edges torn so it looks old. Show children the example of the treasure map from the book on page 16 with its different features such as the mermaid caves and jagged cliffs. Ask them to draw their own map using felt tips, adding their own features that pirates must beware of. Don't forget to mark with an X where the treasure is hidden!
- Help children to make their own pirate treasure chests by painting egg boxes with brown poster paint, and decorating with gold paper. Can they count out a particular number of play coins to put in their chests? How many more will they need to add to make 10 or 20 coins altogether?





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- Bury different coins in sand, and ask children to dig them up and find the total value.
- Mix up different sorts of treasure (bead strings, coins of different sizes and jewels (beads or small pebbles of varying size) and ask children to sort them out. They can then use weighing scales to work out how much they have of each type of treasure.

