



Room on the Broom



adapted by Tall Stories
based on the book
by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler

Study Guide

This study guide has been created specifically for schools to accompany the show *Room on the Broom*. There are seven activities, to engage your students with the story and enhance their enjoyment of the show.

***How the cat purred and how the witch grinned,
As they sat on their broomstick and flew through the wind...***



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Mix up a spell

Make a witch's cauldron by covering a pot or bucket in black card, or cut out a cauldron shape in black card and pin it to the display board, bent outwards with space behind to tuck in cards. Make a stack of coloured cards for words.

Look at the witch's spell in this story and find examples of spells from other tales. What do the children notice about how the spells sound? Talk about 'sound' words and how the sounds work together. Do the words have a meaning? You can look for patterns, such as repetition or substitution and, depending on age, you can introduce terms such as alliteration, assonance and onomatopoeia.

Ask the children to make up single nonsense words which have good 'spell' qualities such as '**Krickle**', '**Plisch**', '**Pazzazz**', or even just sounds, such as '**zzzzz**', '**haaaa**', '**crack**'.

Write each word on a piece of coloured card and invite the child to put their word into the cauldron.

Make a game of stirring the cauldron and then pull out two or three words at random. Read them out to the children. Discuss whether they sound good together and in what order they sound best.

Now look at ways you can repeat the words, add endings, substitute letters or play with the sounds to make a spell of between four and six words long.

Say the spells out loud and really enjoy the sounds they make. Try saying them in different ways.

When you have modeled this activity together, children can work in small groups, choosing cards from the cauldron to make their own spells.



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Multi Monster Collage

Read out the description of the 'monster' emerging from the ditch and let the children study the illustration. Talk about how four friendly creatures have combined to make something very fierce looking.

In groups of four, ask the children to choose any animal (one each), which they will combine to make their own monster. They can draw, paint, print a picture from the computer or find pictures in magazines. Discuss with the children how they will achieve a variety so that they don't all choose birds, for example. They could include animals with horns, trunks, large ears or long tails.

Ask the children to cut out their pictures and place them together on a large piece of paper or card to make the basic shape and size of their own 'monster'. When they are satisfied glue the pictures in place.

Now offer a selection of fabrics and textured materials to make an impression of a 'coat' for the monster. Care must be taken that the features of each animal are not completely covered by the coat - it is better to have a few 'suggestions' here and there. Refer to the illustration and discuss how this effect could be achieved.

Children can have fun inventing names for their monsters.

Follow-up work

Get the children to write descriptive sentences about their own or another group's monster, considering the sounds it makes, its texture and appearance, what it likes to eat, how it moves and what sort of personality it has.



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‘Down!’ cried the Witch!

Read the story aloud to the children, emphasising the two refrains that begin *‘Down!’ cried the witch* and *‘Yes!’ cried the witch*. Encourage the children to join in with these sections, always using the same intonation and emphasising the rhythm, so that they become very familiar with the repetition of the chorus through the story. Clap out the rhythm with the children as you read.

Now agree some simple hand, face or body actions to accompany the refrains. These can be done with the children sitting or standing in their places, or part of a more physical drama/music/movement activity. Challenge the children to think of simple ways of miming the movement of the different animals as they climb on the broomstick.

Read the story again, inviting the children to recite and act out the refrains as you come to them.

As a development, you can now ask the children to continue the actions without the words, whilst you hum or clap out the rhythm. Can they keep the actions in time? Or you could find rhythms from other stories and see how they differ. Try making up new rhythms together.



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I am a dragon, as mean as can be...

Reread the section of the book where the dragon appears, Look at the illustrations. Ask what the children can tell about how the dragon is feeling from his expression in the pictures?

'Hotseat' the character of the dragon. Teachers and classroom assistants should first model this activity for the children if it is unfamiliar. The teacher sits in a chair and adopts the role of the dragon. The assistant questions the dragon to find out more about him. For example:

Why did you want to eat the witch? Were you very hungry? What else do you eat? Have you seen a witch before? Where do you live? Have you got any children? How big are you? Why were you scared of the monster?

As the process progresses, allow the children to add questions of their own. Later, children could occupy the hotseat as the dragon, the witch or another character.

Now ask the children to imagine they are the dragon and retell the story from the dragon's point of view. The dragon is only in a small part of the story, so they will need to consider where he first appears but the children could develop his story further. Where did he fly to? Did he ever find anything to eat?



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Soundtrack

Ask the children if they can think of any sounds or noises from the story. Reread the book to them asking the children to signal every time they come across a sound in the narrative, (include sounds deriving from the weather, and consider whether to include sound to build tension or show atmosphere). Encourage children to make the sounds using, voice, body percussion, tapping on the table or floor (you may also decide to use – or make- percussion instruments)

Either

Give children time to practice making the sound effects and then rehearse a 'performance' of the story with a sound track to accompany it. One group of children could read or retell the story whilst others make the sound effects. The teacher or a child, could act as conductor, indicating when the sounds should come in.

Or

Make a stand alone soundtrack for the story, which can be recorded onto a tape or onto a computer. The children will need to make a 'storyboard' using pictures or brief notes to remind themselves of the sequence of events for the sounds. They could include a few choice pieces of dialogue to add drama to the piece.



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Rhyme Time

As you read *Room on the Broom* to the class ask the children to pick out words that rhyme and make a list of rhyming pairs on the whiteboard.

Think of more rhyming words to add to the pairs to make 'rhyme banks', which you can keep as a resource in the classroom. Make pockets for particular sounds and ask children to write their rhyming words on cards and place them in the pockets. Over the year these can be used to help children select rhymes for their own poems or songs. For older children the list could be compiled on the computer and saved for reference.

Follow-up activity

Think of other animals that might encounter the witch on her journey. As a shared writing activity, make up a rhyming couplet for each animal. These can connect together to make a string of verse.

One way to do this is to ask for a first line, using the structure from the story:

From out of the grass came a..... slithering snake

then brainstorm the rhyming words or lines, e.g. snake/mistake, snake/cake.

Who offered the witch a piece of his cake.

Sometimes it is hard to find a rhyme for a particular word, for example there aren't many words that rhyme with 'lion'. Suggest that the children change the word order, or compose the second line first, which might suggest a rhyme.

**From under the trees came a roaring noise
A lion was playing with one of his toys.**

Encourage the children to be playful with their ideas – let them be as far fetched as they like as they explore the delights of matching sounds which make unexpected connections for meaning.

For younger children let them 'find' the missing rhyme at the end of a line suggested by you.



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Discussions

Losing things

In Room on the Broom the witch loses several things that are important to her. Have you ever lost something special – a favourite toy, perhaps? How did you feel? What did you do? Did you ask anyone for help? Did you find it again? Think about strategies for looking for lost possessions. Do you have a lost property box at school? How can we take care of our things?

Helping each other

The animals in the story all help the witch by finding her things. Can you remember when someone has helped you? What kind things did the witch do for the frog, the dog, and the bird in return? Can you think of anything else the animals did to help the witch? Why is it good to help each other?

Being scared

When the witch saw the dragon, how do you think she felt? Have you ever been scared of anyone who was unkind to you? What can you do if you are scared? Could you tell anyone?

Room on the Broom for me

If you had a place on the witch's broom, what would your seat be like? Can you think of a way to make it special just for you? What special object would you have with you? Would other people be able to say something about your personality by looking at your seat?

Follow up activity: Cut out a very long broom from card or sugar paper and pin it to the wall along the corridor. Ask the children to draw themselves on their very own seats. Pin these in position on the broom. Children can guess which seat belongs to which child.