



Evidence of Dragons - 4 model texts plus related unit outline by Pie Corbett

This unit of work begins with the children finding a diary entry. The children are in role as local villagers and learn from the diary entry that there are winter goblins coming to the area.

On our way to the tower, we made another discovery. As we were climbing over some rocks on the edge of a stream, we heard someone singing. We crouched down and crawled forwards. Sitting by a patch of snow was what looked like a rather small and very old man. He had a long beard, enormous ears and very bright eyes. On his head was a very strange looking hat which had a candle stump in the middle. He introduced himself as Garven. He told us that goblins had been spotted making their way towards our village!

Later on, in the forest, we met Marengorm. When I first saw him, I thought that he was part of a branch because he was camouflaged with all sorts of leaves, strips of bark and seeds. He was a Wood Elf and no higher than my thumb. He said that the forest was full of winter goblins and that we should seek help as soon as possible. We needed to hire a goblin catcher.

In one school, I used this idea and followed the reading with drama. I put the children into pairs and threes in role as villagers. They had to build up a way to persuade a reluctant goblin catcher to help in their struggle. We heard a few of their ideas and then carried out the role-play. To do this, I froze the villagers in their small groups and entered the room as the goblin catcher. As I wove between the different pairs, I paused so they could 'come alive' and try to persuade me. There would be a brief exchange and then I would move on to another pair whilst the couple that had just spoken froze again.

Using this method of 'teacher-in-role', it is easier to keep the drama under control. The children could not persuade me as I was tired after a

year of goblin chasing, the winter snows were setting in and I was heading home for Christmas.

I then challenged them to write a persuasive advert for a goblin catcher. To do this, we looked at a piece of writing from another village who had sought assistance from a dragon catcher. We mapped and learned the text before reading it carefully. We boxed up the basic structure and identified the transferable phrases and strategies that are used to persuade the reader.

Wanted Dragon Catcher

Are you sitting at home twiddling your thumbs? Do you have expertise in the field of dragon catching? Do you want to be wealthy as well as the talk of the town? If so, today is your lucky day.

We are looking for a skilful dragon catcher who can rid our locality of an unwanted invasion of these beasts. First, imagine your name in the national news as our saviour! Furthermore, we will guarantee a fine reward of dragon treasure. Our unimaginable offer of a lifetime includes the amazing chance for you to carry off twice your weight in pure dragon gold. Additionally, we will provide superb accommodation in a unique goat herder's hut. If successful, you will enjoy a well-deserved bonus of 100 fireflies to light your way in the darkness.

Don't be the only monster slayer left dozing at home! Grab this stupendous chance of a lifetime.

The next part of this unit is for the children, in role as dragonologists and as experts in the field of dragons, to complete an independent log entry about their discovery of a rare breed of dragon. While out dragon seeking, what clues do they come across, what evidence has been left and what do they see? To tune the children into this, we used a useful section from the *'Dragon Tracker's Manual'*.

Evidence of Dragons

(notes taken from *The Dragon Tracker's Manual*)

Large enough, most can be identified from a safe distance.

(However, the Redhill Ridge-back is only the size of a puppy and, therefore, hides with ease.)

When seeking dragons, take care to look for telltale signs - trees may be stripped bare of leaves, bark will be charred. It should not be hard to find scorch marks on walls and, of course, the smouldering remains of buildings are a good indicator that a dragon has passed your way.

After a dragon has called - houses, shops and town centres are deserted - front doors left open, unfinished meals on tabletops, and TVs still blaring. A daring dragon will rob shops, leaving the butcher's empty. The chewed remains of cattle are a dead giveaway.

Dragon tracks are hard to miss - even by the least experienced of hunters. So too are places where trees,

bushes and sheds have been blown over.

(Remember - the force from
a full-grown dragon's wings
is as powerful as a hurricane.)

Of course, claw marks raking the earth,
turf scratched and scars on pavements
or tarmac roads all indicate a dragon's presence.

Fragments of broken shell
and piles of jewels
suggest an abandoned dragon's nest
and should be treated with caution
in case the owner returns
and burns anyone
caught loitering nearby.

Any sighting of a dragon flying,
at rest, or on the move,
should be reported at once
To the DPD
(Dragon Prevention Department),
who will attempt to tempt
the dragon to kiss a princess
and fall into a hundred years
of blissful sleep.

PS
Vacancies exist
for any princess
who will not be missed!

© Pie Corbett 2019

A local wood is ideal for tracking dragons though they visit playgrounds as well! Ask the children to make a list of tell-tale signs that a dragon is in the area, adding their findings to the trail of evidence from my poem. The type of dragon the children come across will depend on the chosen setting: beach dragons, rock dragons, field dragons, forest dragons, storm dragons, cloud dragons, hedge dragons, river dragons, school dragons, playground dragons ... all are possible.

Pie's signs:	The children may come across:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees stripped bare • Charred bark • Scorch marks • Smouldering or deserted buildings • Open front doors • Unfinished meals • TVs still switched on • Robbed shops • Chewed cattle • Claw marks • Fragments of broken shell • Piles of jewels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A huge claw • Scorched grass • Dragon footprints • Hot air • A twisted, white horn • The tip of a tail • A tough scale • A muddy, giant tooth • A dragon egg – they may even hear a dragon roar, etc

Collect all the children's ideas before writing together. It can be made even more exciting if the children start off by looking for another species and just happen to chance on dragon signs that you have carefully placed for them to find.

We worked on this idea with a group of Year 4 children. We used shared writing as if we were dragonologists, drawing ideas from the poem and extra ideas from the class. This took several days but the children were drafting as we went along.

Yesterday evening, at approximately 5 pm, I set off to see if I could catch a sighting of the rare wild boar that roamed my local woodland. Daylight was turning to dusk and the temperature was dropping as I entered the wide wood. I knew

the signs: scratched bark at pig height; patches of dug up earth especially near bulbs; the sound of snorting; trotter prints in the mud; short wiry black hair, and unmissable snouts! At least, that was what I expected.

What I discovered turned out to be something quite different. Broken branches lay everywhere as if a bulldozer had flattened the ground and I could see the soil had been disturbed. I stopped to look and listen. Cautiously, I walked on, only to find freshly dug turf with footprints that were neither human nor those of a wild boar. Not trotters, but giant claw marks! I stepped closer and ran my hand along the uneven scratches. I felt a shiver run down my spine. What extraordinary creature could have made those? Certainly not the wild boar that I had set out to find.

Treading carefully around the footprints, I headed deeper into the wood. It was growing darker and I drew my coat closer around me. Before long, I came to a clearing covered in fallen leaves. I stopped. My foot had brushed against something hard. Something solid. I looked down and, to my surprise, I saw the tip of a tusk. But this was no ordinary tusk; this was long, sharp and twisted! I gasped!

Then, just a few feet away to my left lay a still, dark shape, with another right beside it. Two dead sheep lay stretched out, surrounded by scorched earth. Horrified, I shrieked and turned away! I ran home, as fast as I could, all thoughts of wild boar forgotten. But as I ran, the silence of the wood was broken by the sound of beating wings and a roar that seemed to fill the wood and split the air. I ran even faster.

By the time I was home and safe, I knew that that was not a boar I had stumbled across. Later research into the *Dragon*

Hunter's Guide Book revealed that I had most probably witnessed the reappearance of the Chalford Woodland Dragon.

We developed the boxed-up plan as we went along so that we used shared writing to compose together several paragraphs as a class and then the children wrote their paragraphs.

Paragraphs	My investigation
<u>Introduction:</u> What did you start off looking for?	
First sign of dragon evidence.	
Second sign of dragon evidence.	
Third sign of dragon evidence.	
Was anything more seen or heard?	
<u>Conclusion:</u> What did you discover?	
Extra facts.	

Alyssia wrote (typed as written).

Extract from Alyssia Waite's log:

On Friday at about midnight, I was sailing in the Atlantic Ocean looking for rare breeds, eyeing the ripples with my underwater camera. Suddenly, I noticed something. A flash. A lightning strike I wasn't sure, when suddenly a huge wave called a tube whisked me up and I heard it. A roar like a T-rex followed by a lightning strike.

As soon as I arrived at a beach named Tenby Beach, I slipped on something. It looked like some sort of dark purple skin. I thought to myself, whoever shed this must be 50 feet long. I knelt down beside the skin and moved my hand around it like a mouse belonging to a computer that never stopped twirling. The skin was patterned with continuous lightning shapes that made my back trickle with fear. Without hesitation, I jumped up, backed away and raced off back to my boat. As I set off back into the sea, I reached a small island. On landing, I had a feeling there was something almost eerie about this place, it was as if something was there watching you from in the shadows. Suddenly, it moved. A rustle. I wasn't sure. I stood bolt upright on the sand. I heard it. A deathly screech. I heard the T-rex like roar again.

Appearing from nowhere, I saw two gleaming red eyes staring right at me. Eyes the size of a ballroom floors. The sand circled my feet as I stared at the glowing eyes. They stared at me. I tore from the beach. Back to the boat. The eyes followed me until I was bobbing up and down in the sea once again. I heaved a sigh of relief. But it wasn't that calm for long. Almost immediately, a thunderous storm came from nowhere and my boat crashed into rocks, whisked up in waves and even turned upside down once! As soon as the boat was turned upright again, a colossal shape stood in the middle of the foaming ocean, roaring! It looked at me. The beast...red eyes and all. Cursing the ocean, it roared a second time, then lifted itself from the ocean, aggressively spraying water and flew off into the distance. I sat there. Stunned. Because I believed I had witnessed the first sighting of the Ocean Storm Dragon!

Later entries into this Dragon Hunter's log book reveal the Ocean Storm Dragon to closely resemble the Volcanic Lava Dragon.

Did you know?

- ***Dragons of the Ocean are known to curse oceans of the world by sending tube waves.***
- ***In winter, dragons eat icicles and thrash ice with their claws. This gives them a strange white glow that blends in with the snow.***

About the Author

(back cover)

Alyssia is a very talented writer who has written many famous books including this log: The Tempest and the Lost Crown. She has also written poems: In my dream I, Silent Secrets and many more. Here are some more stories she has successfully completed: The Fisherman and the Cormorants, The Poacher and the Pheonix, The Snow Queen and the Tales of Beetle the Bard and many more. She hopes you will enjoy reading this book and thanks you for reading.

Alyssia – Year 4

We published our writing in beautifully illustrated, dragon guide booklets with coloured covers and inside drawings, charting each dragonologist's journey. We added extra facts and author details to give our accounts even greater credibility and to convince our readers as to the truth of our discoveries. As with any writing task, children respond best when they have an inspiring task, a clear direction and the goal of a final publication to polish, share and preserve.

Dragon Point of View

While on the theme of dragons, you can challenge older children to write from a dragon's point of view. We looked at ChapterXII, *Inside Information* from Tolkien's, *The Hobbit* when Bilbo comes face to face with the dragon Smaug (who is pretending to sleep with one eye open) and thought how the conversation would seem from Smaug's point of view. We listed his thoughts and feelings, what he smelt, heard and

© Pie and Mel Corbett – Talk for Writing 2019. This resource may be reprinted for use in your class only. It should not be forwarded to others, duplicated in any other format, placed on the internet or used for commercial gain.

how he reacted to Bilbo's presence. Our planner looked something like this:

Story events	Smaug's point of view
Smaug is intrigued and flattered by Bilbo's 'riddling talk'	He thinks Bilbo has an over-inflated opinion of himself when he talks about being a 'Barrel-rider', 'Ringwinner' and 'Luckwearer'
Smaug boasts to gain power over Bilbo	He laughs at Bilbo's boasting, bragging that he had eaten six ponies
Smaug tries to gain the upper hand over Bilbo by giving him advice	He questions whether Bilbo will receive a fair share of the treasure
Smaug worries Bilbo by talking about how difficult transporting the treasure will be	He reminds Bilbo about armed guards and dangerous trolls
Smaug mocks Bilbo when Bilbo mentions his enemies	He laughs at the suggestion
Smaug demonstrates his power when Bilbo talks of 'Revenge'	He boasts of his strength and tells of his feats of valour to terrify Bilbo

We used shared writing to create together a possible starter and end before the children wrote the scene in role as Smaug.

Reflections of Smaug (following his conversation with Bilbo).

Shared writing of the start:

What a fool that insignificant thief was to imagine he could outsmart me; what a fool to imagine I would fall for his flattery; and what a fool to set foot in my impassable domain.

Shared writing of the end:

What a fool to talk of 'Revenge'. Retribution belongs only to me, the great Smaug. Unassailable, I will unleash a furnace of punishing fires on any unwelcome visitors who dare disturb my slumber.

Before the children write, you could help them shift into role by using hot seating or getting them in role as Smaug to do a monologue, thinking aloud about Bilbo.

Here is Hattie's writing, typed as she wrote it.

What a fool! That rude creature thinks that I don't know what he's doing! But I do. He's trying to steal my gold; he won't get far. He doesn't even know I can smell him! This is the SECOND time he has come to take my loot! Outrageous! Absurd! Who does he think he is?

What a fool! He's trying to engage me in a conversation. Now he's trying to flatter me. He's clearly underestimated my intelligence! He should've thought twice before he interrupted my slumber!

What a fool! Trying to impress me with his riddles shall not help him. Once he's heard of my pleasure of eating six ponies last night, he's bound to go running! And if he thinks he can sneak in here while my back's turned and steal from me, then he's got another think coming!

What a ... What's that smell? In my whole four hundred years, I have never smelt something that bizarre! Who ever he is, he clearly hasn't thought his plan through. Even if he could steal from one as invincible as me – which he certainly cannot – then how could he ever hope to transport the gold off of this mountain?

What a fool! He 'claims' that he has come for revenge rather than my precious gold! Doesn't he know how strong I am? Tut! Tut! Tut! I'll show him who he's messing with, then he won't be so smug. Just one look at my marvelous, magnificent diamond armour should be enough to shut him up!

What ... a ... fool! I was thinking of letting him go but now he's crossed the line. He's pushed me too far! The mere suggestion that I would not be able to catch a pitiful, little creature like him is ridiculous! Finally, a midnight snack; I shall rain fire down on him!

By Hattie – Y6