



CORNELIA FUNKE NOVELS TEACHERS' NOTES

Cornelia Funke's novels offer a wonderful source of material to support the National Literacy Strategy for Years 4, 5 and 6, and the National Curriculum areas of English, Drama, PSHE/Citizenship for Key Stages 2 and 3. All the novels are rich in characterisation and plot, though each has its own distinctive characters, settings and themes.

INKHEART

An imaginative and challenging novel – a book within a book – about the universal dilemma of good versus evil. Meggie and her father, Mo, representing good, face consummate evil in the character of Capricorn. Mo has a dangerous talent: he can read fictional characters out of books and bring them to life, and send real people into fictional worlds. It was Mo who brought Capricorn into the real world from the book *Inkheart*, and who inadvertently sent his own wife, Teresa, into the *Inkheart* world. Terrified of what his actions might bring, Mo vows never to read aloud again. However, when danger threatens Meggie, Mo must face the most evil character of all – Capricorn – and not only confront his demons, but banish them forever. On Meggie and Mo's side are the author Fenoglio, eccentric book collector Elinor, and Dustfinger, a fictional character who is determined to get back into the story of *Inkheart* from which he came. On Capricorn's side are his henchman Basta and Capricorn's mother Mortola, 'the Magpie' – both characters who have been read out of the same book, *Inkheart*.

Most of the characters have to choose between their own safety and that of a loved one, or debate the choices they might have to make to prove their loyalty to a friend. The uncertainty about Meggie and Mo's fate parallels the uncertainties of the world in real life, and provides many opportunities for discussions in class. The use of quotes from other books to preface each chapter can provide further stimuli for learning and the opportunity to expand pupils' breadth of reading experiences.

***Inkheart* and National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 2**

This is a challenging novel for pupils at Key Stage 2. It can support the range of texts required for Years 5 and 6 and provide learning opportunities within the English curriculum as well as PSHE/Citizenship.

- Year 5 Term 1 – Novels by a significant author: Cornelia Funke is a prizewinning author of international acclaim.
- Year 5 Term 2 – Traditional Stories: there are several references to *The Arabian Nights* and other traditional tales within the novel.
- Year 6 Term 1 – Classic Fiction: each chapter in *Inkheart* begins with an excerpt from a classic novel, and there are many references within the story to classics such as *Treasure Island*, *Peter Pan* and *The Hobbit*.
- Year 6 Term 2 – Genre range: *Inkheart* is both adventure and fantasy, though firmly rooted in the real world.

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Year 6 Term 3 –

Same author, different stories: compare *Inkheart* with Cornelia's other novels, *Dragon Rider* and *The Thief Lord*.

***Inkheart* and National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 3**

This novel can support curriculum work in English and Drama, PSHE/Citizenship and from the bookbinding theme, Art and Craft.

INKHEART – FOLLOW-UP SUGGESTIONS

CHARACTERS

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Consider the character of Dustfinger as seen through Meggie's eyes. What does she see as being his key characteristics? Then consider him through Mo's eyes: what are the differences between each 'real' person's perception of this fictional character?
2. List some words to describe Mo. Do you see him as weak or strong? Why?
3. What are some of the differences between the 'fictional' characters and the 'real' characters? If you opened the book and just read one chapter, how could you tell, for example, that Basta was a fictional character and Mo a real one?
4. Which character would you want to read out of a book, and why?

ACTIVITIES

1. Read the descriptions of Basta and the Magpie. How does the author make the reader dislike them? Then write a description of a fictional character which is intended to make the reader dislike that character. This could be done through dialogue or narrative description.
2. Set up an imaginary panel or inquiry into the evil activities of Capricorn. The whole class should decide who should be summoned to appear before the panel, which should consist of three pupils as judges. Students then assume the roles of those characters before the panel, and answer questions about their conduct, actions and decisions in allowing Capricorn to remain such a dictator.
3. Draw up a character web for one of the characters in *Inkheart*. Put the name of the character in the middle of the web, and then weave a list of words around it, to describe that character. Follow each word with a statement to support your thinking.

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SETTINGS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Where is this novel set? How does the author give the reader a sense of place in the novel?
2. Where is the 'story within the story' – i.e. Fenoglio's *Inkheart* – set? How does its setting differ from the 'real' world of Meggie and Mo?
3. Could this novel have been set anywhere else – for example, New York City? What differences might there be if Capricorn's hideout was in a skyscraper rather than in a village?

ACTIVITIES

1. Draw a story map pinpointing various stages of the novel. Show Meggie and Mo's home, Aunt Elinor's home, Fenoglio's town and Capricorn's village, and write a short summary of what happened in each place.
2. Work in pairs to create a poster advertising a place appropriate to the text – perhaps Fenoglio's town, Capricorn's village or the hotel that Elinor stays in when they escape from Capricorn's village.
3. Create an *Inkheart* class guidebook to introduce visitors to the various sights and characters on offer in the Inkworld.

THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Superstitions: which character is superstitious? What kinds of things frighten him, and why do you think this is?
2. Good versus evil: at what point in the story do you first realise that good will triumph over evil? What reasons might there be for the evil characters being so evil? Do any of the 'good' characters have any evil in them? Choose a relevant scene from the book and explore the relationship of 'good' and 'evil' within it.
3. Literature: why does the author introduce each chapter with an excerpt from a classic novel? How do the excerpts relate to the story, and how do they help the reader?
4. Family life: discuss the relationships within the different families in the novel, both in the real world and in the *Inkheart* world. How do they differ?

ACTIVITIES

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1. Storytelling: choose a chapter from a favourite book, and pick out the characters you would most like to read out of the story. Write your own chapter describing those characters coming into your life, and read both chapters aloud to the class.
2. Bookbinding:
 - (i) Find out about the art of bookbinding from the internet or other resource materials, then prepare a 'lecture' for the other members of the class on this ancient art.
 - (ii) Design an 'illuminated' letter, like the 'D' on the back of *Inkheart*, for one of your favourite books, including decorative elements appropriate to the story.
3. Good versus evil: in pairs, invent a scenario and act out a dialogue between two opposing characters from *Inkheart*. The end of the dialogue should result in a clear winner – whether 'good' or 'evil' – and the dialogue should justify that conclusion.
4. Friendship and loyalty: create a 'consequences chart' indicating what might have happened if certain characters hadn't shown friendship or loyalty to others. For example: if Dustfinger had not been loyal to Farid, what might have happened to Farid? If Fenoglio had decided to befriend one of his characters, instead of Meggie and Mo, what would the consequences have been?

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