

THE IRON MAN by TED HUGHES

Developed by David Watson in Fife.

Last updated 12th January 2011

Webaddress:

www.collaborativelearning.org/ironman.pdf



COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

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We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of oracy. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of talk.

*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

THE IRON MAN by TED HUGHES - Teacher Notes

The Iron Man opens with the eponymous hero falling down a cliff and shattering into bits. The bits then gradually reassemble themselves. The vocabulary of parts of the body is accessible to children with little English while the vivid description of their movements and appearance provides good vocabulary for native speakers and more advanced learners.

The aim of this exercise is to make the reassembling of the Iron Man more comprehensible and to reinforce the names of parts of the body. It was used in a P7 (year 6) class with considerable success.

The children are the scattered bits of body lying on the pebbly shore. As the body gets reassembled, it has to look for the bits that are still missing. The class is divided up into teams of 9. Each team comprises all the bits for the body (with the second ear missing) and the winner is the team which builds the body first.

Each child in the team gets a slip of laminated paper telling him/her which part of the body they are and which part they have to find next. Children may double up as a body part; this can encourage children with little English or those who are very shy. Until they are found they have to sit quietly and keep their identity secret. Different teams should get different coloured slips. The first eye and the right hand start off by looking for each other then looking for the first arm together. They ask the seated children, "Are you the first arm?" etc.

Once a body part has been found and has found the next part, it should join the rest of the body in a corner of the classroom. When the bodies are all reassembled they can report back on what they did: "I looked for the torso" etc They can also ask questions of each other using the past tense: "Nader, did you look for the head?" etc. The second ear is missing!

MATCHING EXERCISE

This is a straightforward exercise which can be done in pairs or groups. The body parts and the actions should be on different coloured laminated slips. Follow-up exercises can involve acting out the movements - scuttling etc - or cloze using the verbs. Past tense can be reinforced using true/false question and answer: "Did the leg jab at the gulls?" etc.

EXTENSION

Many sequences in stories could be adapted to this hide-and seek format: "You are Oliver Twist. After you have been found, look for the Artful Dodger." "You are the witch's cottage. After you have been discovered, find the witch." This might be useful where a sequence is important but complicated or obscured by difficult vocabulary.

Iron Man Parts



You are the first eye. Find the right hand. Then find the first arm.



You are the right hand. Find the first eye.



You are the first arm. After you have been found, look for the second eye.



You are the second eye. After you have been found, look for the first leg.



You are the first leg. After you have been found, look for the second leg.



You are the second leg. After you have been found, look for the ear.



You are the ear. After you have been found, look for the torso.



You are the torso. After you have been found, look for the head.



You are the head. After you have been found, look for the second ear.

The eye...

...rolled from side to side

The gulls...

...glided low

The bits...

...scattered over the rocks

Some rocks...

...tumbled down

The finger...

...jabbed at the gulls

The hand...

...scuttled hither and thither

The leg...

...hopped over the rocks

An arm...

...dangled from the wrist

The stars...

...wheeled

The wind....

...tugged