

Trabajo Fin de Grado

Magisterio en Educación Primaria

Storytelling in the English classroom.
Analysis of stories and techniques to achieve oral
comprehension.

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ABSTRACT

With the intention of analysing in depth storytelling and its use in Primary Education, this project will give reasons for using children's stories in the English class. After that, affective and cognitive characteristics of children in different stages of Primary Education will be explained and finally, four factors involved in storytelling will be distinguished.

Once objectives and methodology of the project are established, it can be found an organised analysis and exploitation of three different stories corresponding to first, second and third cycle. In this section the analysis is centred in certain aspects of the stories and story-based activities will be proposed, following a defined sequence.

After that process, some limitations of the use of storytelling in the English classroom will be exposed and, finally, the main conclusions reached once the research is completed will be drawn by interpreting the differences and similarities of the three stories.

Key words: Comprehension, EFL, pre-telling, post-telling, resources, storytelling, technique, while-telling.

RESUMEN

Con la intención de analizar en profundidad el *storytelling*, así como su uso en Educación Primaria, este proyecto va a enumerar razones por las cuales se debería usar historias en la clase de inglés. A continuación, se van a explicar las características afectivas y cognitivas de los niños de Educación Primaria en las distintas etapas y, finalmente, se distinguirán cuatro factores involucrados en *storytelling*.

Una vez los objetivos y la metodología del proyecto son establecidos, se puede encontrar el análisis organizado y la explotación de tres historias diferentes correspondientes a primer, segundo y tercer ciclo. En este apartado, el análisis está centrado en determinados aspectos de las historias y se proponen actividades basadas en ellas, siguiendo una secuencia concreta.

Después de este proceso, se van a identificar algunas posibles limitaciones del uso de *storytelling* en la clase de inglés, además de plantear las principales conclusiones alcanzadas tras la realización del proyecto, mediante la interpretación de diferencias y semejanzas entre las tres historias.

Palabras clave: Comprensión, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, antes de la lectura, después de la lectura, durante la lectura, recursos, técnica, *storytelling*.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Telling stories has always been an essential part of the human life since children access through the figure of the adult to small narratives, which not only increase knowledge but also strengthen emotional ties. In other words, the act of telling a story is not just a leisure activity, it is a first step in encouraging the children's emotional development.

Narrative has also been recognised as a powerful mean of human communication and as the most common way of organising experience. Because of this, young children will know, implicitly, a lot about stories, what to expect, and how to respond.

It is required to argue that in the English classroom storytelling provides a motivating and meaningful context for language learning. Students usually feel fascinated by stories, and these stories present natural language and foster vocabulary development in context.

As Collie and Slater (1987) pointed out, stories also stimulate oral language and involve the child with the text while exposing him or her to some aspect of the target language. Furthermore, telling stories will promote thinking skills.

For that reason, the main advantage of using storytelling in the classroom is that it succeeds in different levels at the same time, contributing to different areas. Listening and telling stories can reduce stress in the classroom and promote in children speaking and listening skills, at the same time that increase their social and emotional development while they are immersed in an enjoyable activity.

Along this project, a deeper explanation of how storytelling works is given, together with the analysis and exploitation of three different stories, where resources and teacher techniques are suggested.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to understand the development of this project, it is necessary to introduce some theoretical aspects.

2.1. The importance of the use of storytelling in the English classroom.

In the first place, **the importance of the use of storytelling in an EFL classroom** is an essential claim: when teachers use extensive reading of stories, children start enjoying literature. They develop their literary competence, that means, a combination of linguistic, socio-cultural and historical awareness (Brumfit & Carter 1986:18). Consequently, listening to stories in class is a shared social experience. Nevertheless, there are other benefits of telling stories in the English classroom:

On one side, storytelling is an example of input since it helps students to activate and develop their own learning mechanisms. Furthermore, listening to stories allows the teacher to introduce or review grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation in meaningful contexts using gestures, intonation, facial expressions... When they listen a story, students want to know the meaning and what is going on, so they are active participants in the construction of meaning.

On the other side, stories can be used to reinforce conceptual development in children and are a way of getting them to learn for themselves (reinforce thinking strategies, develop strategies for learning English, develop study skills...)

According to Howe and Johnson (1922: 5) storytelling is a powerful way of helping pupils to learn in all areas of the curriculum for the reason that narrative is a universal way of organising events and ideas.

In addition, stories are motivating and create a communication desire in children. When they like a story, they develop positive attitudes, what will end up in a better learning. Books also link fantasy with the real life, so stories can help children to understand the world and to share it.

Finally, listening to stories develops the child's listening skills by using visual or audio aid and trying to get a general knowledge. In this way, primary schooled learners will understand the story and will be motivated for language learning. Tobias (2007) claimed:

Listening to and telling stories develops an awareness of the rhythm and music of language which in turn leads to higher skills. The oral skills of vocabulary

development, expressive language articulate speech, auditory perception and competencies in all literacies are important for the developing child. (p.4)

2.2. Affective and cognitive characteristics in first, second and third cycle.

In the same line, it must be mentioned that students **develop the skills** needed to understand stories at **different ages**. For that reason, in this project it is required to explain some of these differences:

In **first cycle** students have a linguistic construction of their mother tongue and most of them have already had some contact with English as foreign language.

Children at this age show enthusiasm, energy and motivation. Moreover, they feel free to express themselves and are not afraid of speaking in English. According to Pérez Pueyo and Casanova Vega (2009), students at this age are participative and have a great sense of self-esteem.

Regarding relationships, the sense of independence and the attitudes of collaboration and sharing grow in this stage.

Cognitively they are still in the pre-operational stage, but they begin to move to the concrete-emotional stage. Their thinking is intuitive and present magical aspects, and, although students start developing reading skills, they have difficulties to analyse and synthesize.

According to López Rodríguez (2003), the children's capacity for conscious learning of forms and grammatical patterns is undeveloped. That means that when students listen to the story, they start implementing listening strategies that allow them, through practice, to acquire certain abilities: identify the main plot of the story, predicting what will happen, etc.

In **second cycle** students are in the concrete operations stage. Ballesteros and García (2001) argue that children follow certain rules of organization and structure, since logical-concrete thinking is consolidated. In addition, there is a progress in the analysis and synthesis capacity, and learners show interest in expanding their knowledge. On the other side, relationships between equals become stronger and children even develop socio-community values.

In **third cycle**, acquisitions from the previous cycle are consolidated. Students act mentally in a more effective way and their development of the capacity for analysis and synthesis allows them to extract the most important aspects. At this age, features of

puberty start to appear, and children experience changes in the attitudes towards themselves and in the relationships with others, developing a critical sense towards adults.

Finally, it is necessary to explain that from fourth grade to third cycle, learners are able to express ideas and opinions, or to become narrators instead of listeners. They are also developing their ability to appreciate other viewpoints and emotional characteristics that enable them to live in the society where they live in, to become aware of themselves and to cooperate. Children at this age, according to Brumfit, Moon and Tongue (1991) enjoy stories that extend their experiences.

2.3. Factors involved in storytelling

To take advantage of storytelling, four different factors involved in it must be considered as they can determine the success or failure of the storytelling: **the students, the teacher, the context and the story:**

It must be recalled that the **students** are the centre of the teaching-learning process, so the stories presented must be meaningful and close to them. They should also provide learners comprehensible input (Krashen, 2009), in order to create in them new structures that, added to those already acquired, help them to build their own knowledge.

The English **teacher** should use stories as a vehicle for language, that means, facilitate communicate exchange through them. Apart from that, she or he should provide as much input as possible and create a relaxed environment (Krashen Affective Filter Hypothesis, 2009), with a low anxiety level.

English teachers can use a wide variety of **techniques to achieve oral comprehension**. For example, if the story is very difficult to understand, the teacher can modify or simplify it. She or he can also maintain the children's attention by asking them to listen for the gist or when they do not know a word, read slowly, stress letters, or make sounds.

Zaro and Salaberri (1993) present some techniques for storytelling, but each teacher will choose the one that best suits what he/she wants, taking into account the students' needs:

- Appropriate use of voice, gestures, mime, facial expressions...
- Slow and clear narration so that the children can ask or see images of the story.

- Relate it to aspects of their experience.
- Check the children's level of understanding.
- Encourage children's participation in storytelling.

When telling a story in an EFL classroom, it must be considered the difficulty of understanding them, so the choice of the story, the way of narrating it and the visual resources are essential aspects. López Téllez (2003: 183) shows some aspects that the teacher must take into account to achieve good results:

- Select the right story according to the psycho-cognitive needs, previous knowledge of students, the topic to work on and the curriculum.
- Adapt the story when it is necessary.
- Establish a final task: decorating the classroom with attractive images for children, music or activities that are based on motivation.
- Use resources in the classroom for storytelling, such as flashcards, puppets, videos.
- Practice and rehearse the story.

The **context**, as it is mentioned above, should be pleasant and the students should feel comfortable and free to participate in the story. To arouse the learner's curiosity, the teacher can create expectation by contextualizing the story or by using other resources, for example, a story suitcase.

Wright (1995) identified different criteria that can be used for choosing a story: the **story** must be chosen depending on the age and the linguistic level of the pupils. It must be fun, interesting and offers rich language. Moreover, there must be a particular purpose when selecting a story so that it will carry the ideas the teacher wants to focus on.

3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In this section, the **objectives** of the study are going to be discussed, and next, the **methodology** employed in it will be explained.

The **objectives** can be summarized in the following ones:

- Analysing three stories following a specific approach.
- Creating activities to implement a storytelling in three different stories following fixed steps.
- Outlining determined teacher techniques to achieve oral comprehension in three different stories.
- Finding differences and similarities between stories for first, second and third cycle.

The **methodology** used in this project to analyse stories will be a combination of form and content in accordance with the requirements of Salaberri (2001), the beginning, middle and end (BME) methods and the Gergen and Gergen's (1988) plot analysis:

- The story meets the structure in three clearly differentiated parts, that is: introduction (in which his characters are presented, the situation is raised and also, a conflict), development (in which an attempt is made to solve a convoluted situation) and final (in which a solution is given to the initial conflict).
- Words, sentences, sounds and ideas are repeated.
- The conventions such as temporal references, description of places and the use of very marked direct or indirect style in characters are easily recognizable by readers.
- The story produces emotions in the readers. That means understanding the value of the story to the participant.
- Fantasies, desires and wishes are submerged in the story. It involves exploring the implicit and explicit intentions of the author for students. Here, causality can be established, demonstrating narrative consistence.

Telling stories in Primary Education is not a spontaneous act. It requires abundant preparation (the story, the materials, the planned activities...) that will influence the development of L2 competence in students. Experts and authors agree that three steps can be distinguished in storytelling: **pre-telling, while telling and post-telling.**

In the pre- telling stage, as it is mentioned above, the atmosphere should be comfortable for learners. The typology of activities before telling a story must help the teacher introduce content, concepts and language, in order to make the students familiar with them. The teacher must decide before between reading or tell a story using strategies, such a story map.

While telling the story, the main aim is its understanding. For this purpose, there is a wide variety of resources: cards with images, puppets of the characters, drawings, etc. The figure of the storyteller must be highlighted: she or he uses the voice (different voices for different characters and the narrator, the tone, the rhythm, the emphasis) and gestures or facial expressions that are an essential support to achieve understanding. This stage requires an active listening of learners, so it is important that they feel motivated with the story, trying to encourage their participation with different techniques (give them a role during the narration, tell them to repeat verses or elements that appear frequently in the story, asking them questions about what is going to happen...). In conclusion, the activities in this stage should encourage prediction, help students understand, and give children the chance to show their understanding by encouraging participation and production.

According to Wright (1995) there are different objectives in the post-telling stage: showing understanding, helping students to express themselves, helping students to create something and retelling. In this period the design of activities will become important with the purpose of promoting the use of language. For example, tasks that consolidate the learning achieved through the story, or others that can develop the learners' creativity (representation of the story, an adaptation, a new creation, etc.).

4. ANALYSIS OF BOOKS AND THEIR EXPLOITATION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

4.1. First cycle: The very hungry caterpillar

4.1.1. Analysis

The book selected for first cycle is titled *The very hungry caterpillar*, by Eric Carle. (**Appendix I**)

The story is about a little egg that becomes a small and hungry caterpillar. The story emphasizes the amount of days and the amount of food he eats on each of those days. After he spent a lot of days eating inappropriate food, he felt sick. Then, he decided to eat some nice greens, that helped him with this ache. Later, he realized he was not hungry and decided to build a cocoon and stay there for two weeks. Finally, he turned into a beautiful butterfly.

Three clearly differentiated parts can be found:

The **introduction** presents the main and unique character of the story, the caterpillar. Later, the conflict is set with a bubble: *'I'm so HUNGRY!'* (**Appendix II**).

The **development** shows the different attempts made by the caterpillar to solve the problem: he eats fruit, chocolate, ice cream, cheese, cupcakes. sausages... but after that, the caterpillar had a stomachache (another problem for him).

In the **final** can be seen the solution to the two conflicts: the caterpillar ate one green leaf and he started to feel better, becoming a fat caterpillar (**Appendix III**). Finally, the caterpillar turned into a butterfly.

The story **repeats** some words and sentences. For example, the word *caterpillar* and the same structure when the narrator tells the days of the week and the amount of food the caterpillar ate on them: *'On (x) he ate through (x), but he was still hungry'*. The names of the days are also in the same color. It can be seen in **Appendix IV**.

The **plot** is very simple so there are not many temporal references and there are not dialogues. The omniscient narrator tells everything that happens in the story and it is important the presence of illustrations, that attract the children's attention.

In general, it can be said that the **language** used is uncomplicated and well-suited for students in first cycle. The story teaches the following vocabulary in English:

- The colors: red, green, purple, orange, black.
- The fruits: apple, pear, strawberry, orange, plum, watermelon.
- The days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday,
- The numbers: one, two, three, four and five.
- The name of the animals of the story: caterpillar, butterfly.

Students can feel identified with the caterpillar and experiment feelings of hunger or stomachache. If it is not the case, they have felt them ever in their life.

It is remarkable that the story gives a promotion of healthy food and teach the life cycle of the caterpillar. Daniel (2013) proposed using stories as texts or resources for learning **other subjects**. For that reason, the book can be used in the Science classroom by discussing the butterfly cycle or in the Mathematics classroom by additions and subtractions with the food and the weekdays. For example: *‘How much more food did the caterpillar eat on Friday versus Tuesday?’*

However, the story has a **deeper meaning**: understand the journey to growth. If the book is read, it can be found that much of his emotional impact is centered on the central transformation.

Some children are afraid of growing up, but with this story, students can realize that if the caterpillar can become a beautiful butterfly, there is hope for all of us, no matter what we look like. Furthermore, people can always become better, but greed is not the solution: when the caterpillar is greedy, he gets sick, but when he is reasonable, he feels better.

4.1.2. Exploitation

In this section, some activities will be designed following the steps mentioned above:

Pre-telling activities.

Children will be seated on the floor because at this age they usually are familiarized with this routine and love feeling close to their classmates and the teacher.

Next, a caterpillar’s teddy will be shown, the main character of the story (**Appendix V**) and the teacher will ask students: *Do you know what is that? / Have you ever seen this animal?* Finally, they will conclude that it is a *caterpillar*.

After that, the teacher will show the cover of the book and will question: *Does the caterpillar look happy?* They will deduce the caterpillar is *hungry*. The teacher will make the gesture (touching his/her stomach) and students will repeat it.

Then, the teacher will say: *when we are hungry* (gesture), *we eat* (gesture eating), *and we eat different food*. Next, he/she will show learners different flashcards with the food vocabulary that appears in the story (**Appendix VI**). First, students will repeat the vocabulary, and after that, they will play a memory game (**Appendix VII**) to ensure the learning and understanding of these words.

While-telling activities.

First, the teacher will show a big egg (**Appendix VIII**) and will ask students: *Do you know what it is?* When they conclude the object is an egg, the teacher will start telling the story, that begins with the caterpillar's birth (the teacher will open the egg and the caterpillar's teddy will appear)

Next, the teacher will paste on the blackboard seven flashcards that correspond to the days of the week (**Appendix IX**) and will be progressively pasting the food the caterpillar eats each day. Moreover, the teacher will employ the caterpillar's teddy to imagine he is eating the food and will use her/his voice to make the students understand what is happening in the story.

Children will repeat a key sentence of the story, that appears five times: '*But he was still hungry*'. Furthermore, they will repeat the gesture they learnt in the pre-telling stage (gesture touching their stomach).

Finally, the teacher will show a cocoon and inside it, a butterfly's teddy will appear (**Appendix X**)

Post-telling activities.

In this stage, two activities are going to be designed in order to make sure the students have understood the main points of the story:

In the first activity, children will be divided in groups of four. Each group will be given five flashcards with the days of the week and the food the caterpillar has eaten (**Appendix XI**). They will have to order those flashcards according to the story.

In the second activity, each learner will work the life cycle of the main character of the story by completing a worksheet (**Appendix XII**). Children will cut the drawings and will stick them on the right order.

4.2. Second cycle: The smartest giant in town

4.2.1. Analysis

The book selected for second cycle is titled *The smartest giant in town*, by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. (**Appendix XIII**)

George is the scruffiest giant in town. When he sees a new shop selling giant-sized clothes, he decides it is time for a new look: smart trousers, smart shirt, stripy tie, shiny shoes... and he turns into the smartest giant in town. However, on his way home, he meets numerous animals suffering from various disasters. Each of them is helped by one piece of George's new attire, so he ends up as very cold giant. Finally, all the animals he has helped come to his house to thank him with a special gift.

The story is divided into three clearly differentiated parts:

The **introduction** presents George, the main character of the story, as the scruffiest giant in town. Nevertheless, he finds a shop and buys some smart clothes.

The **development** starts when George meets a giraffe who is sniffing because she has cold. The giant gives his tie to her. After that, other animals with other problems appear in the story and George helps them with the smart clothes. Finally, the giant realizes his trousers are coming down and that he is the coldest giant town.

In the **final** can be seen the solution to the George's problem: first, he goes to the shop, but it is closed, so the giant starts to cry. However, he sees his old gown and all the animals he has helped before. The animals give him a beautiful paper crown and a paper that can be seen in **Appendix XIV**.

By one side, the story **repeats** some key sentences that can be used to increase the children's attention in the while telling stage: *Cheer up! / What's the matter?* On the other side, there is a song that George sings when he helps the animals to retell what he has just done. When the giant helps one animal, the song has only one verse, and he adds the other verses when he helps more animals. The song can be seen in **Appendix XV**.

The **plot** is appropriate for children in second cycle. The narrator tells everything that is happening to George, but there some dialogues that make easier the comprehension of

the story. The storyteller can change her/his voice to represent the different characters. Furthermore, the illustrations are very clear and help the students understand that details they do not comprehend listening the story.

The language used is also well-suited for learners in second cycle, but if it is thoroughly analyzed, it can be seen abundance of English aspects that can be taught using the story:

- Vocabulary of animals: mouse, giraffe, fox, goat, dog.
- Vocabulary of clothes: gown, sandals, shirt, trousers, belt, tie, socks, shoes.
- Superlatives: Scruffiest, smartest, coldest, kindest.
- Grammar: first, second and third person + have got; it... to describe activities, places, objects or clothes.

As well as *The very hungry caterpillar*, *The smartest giant in town* has an **interdisciplinary use**:

- In math's, students can make a price list of the giant-sized clothes in the shop and solve some problems.
- In science, children can investigate why boats float or what material would be the best to use as a sail on a boat.
- In arts and crafts, they can use different material to make a new scarf for the giraffe or design some new clothes for the giant to wear on different occasions (dinner parties, sporting, events, etc.)
- In geography students can make a map of the town that shows the places in the story.
- In music children can sing George's song or compose a new tune to accompany his words.

As can be read in the theoretical framework, at this age the relationships between their partners become stronger, so they surely have experienced situations in their life where they made some effort to help someone and vice versa.

George cannot see the other animals suffering, so he generously gives away his new clothes to help them. The **message** of the story is that it is not what you have that matters, but what you do for other people that really counts.

For that reason, it can be said that *The smartest giant in town* is about being kind and generous to others. It is also interesting imagine how different items of clothing can be used in different ways.

In conclusion, this story could be a springboard for exploring topics of friendship, clothes, animals and sharing.

4.2.2. Exploitation

Pre-telling activities.

In order to introduce the story, the teacher will create interest about it by bringing a suitcase with ‘giant’s’ clothes (**Appendix XVI**): *Here I got a suitcase from my friend, the giant / How do you think a giant is? / Ok, let’s look what can we found in it!*

Next, the children will discover that the suitcase is full of clothes and the teacher will ask questions to make sure students remember the clothes vocabulary: *What is that that I can put in my feet?*

In the first activity, the teacher will give them sticks with two colors (**Appendix XVII**), one that represents ‘scruffy’ and another one which represents ‘smart’. After that, the teacher will show different pictures with scruffy and smart clothes (**Appendix XVIII**) and the students will have to show the right color. (The teacher will give two examples to make students understand the activity)

With the aim of contextualize more the story and the vocabulary that appears on it, the teacher will prepare an activity in which students will match a picture with its definition: they will be given a paper with an animal definition, that can be seen in **Appendix XIX** (giraffe, goat, mouse, dog and fox) and they will have to move to the corner where the picture of this animal is. Moreover, to correct the activity the teacher will use a Power Point presentation (**Appendix XX**).

While-telling activities.

To tell the story, the teacher will be in the center of the classroom and the students will be seated around him/ her. He /she will use puppets of the different characters (**Appendix XXI**)

First, the teacher will make an initial question to introduce the telling by showing the cover page: *Do you think these shoes are smart or scruffy? / What animals can you see in the picture? / Now, I am going to tell you the story of The smartest giant in town.*

While telling the story, the teacher will read slowly and clearly, making eye contact with the children and changing the volume and the tone as he/she is telling the story to engage students.

Furthermore, the teacher will ask questions to check comprehension and understanding (*And the goat used the shirt for what? / Why did the mice need the shoe?*) and to foster motivation and curiosity with prediction (*What animal do you think is going to be the next? / How could the mice use the shoe? / Let's see then*).

To encourage student's participation, they will repeat key sentences in the story: *What's the matter? / Cheer up* (The teacher will make a gesture and they will repeat it when the sentence appears again). He/she will also focus attention by saying: *Look at the picture!*

Finally, another important aspect of the story is the song, a resource that children at this age usually love. The teacher will sing or will play the song and will also project the lyrics in a Power Point presentation on the whiteboard (**Appendix XXII**) so that students can read and sing.

Post-telling activities.

In this stage, the teacher will give a worksheet where students have to match each animal with the piece of clothes they needed in the story (**Appendix XXIII**). This activity is intended for children to demonstrate whether they have really understood the story.

In the second activity, the teacher will show in the Power Point presentation different pictures related with characters that are familiar for children. Students will have to decide which character is kind and which character is cruel. (**Appendix XXIV**).

To end the exploitation of this story, children will be given a worksheet in which appear different pictures of George. They will describe each giant by choosing the correct word between two according to the story (**Appendix XXV**). He/she will correct the activity by projecting the sentences and the answer on the whiteboard (**Appendix XXVI**).

4.3. Third cycle: Teeth

4.3.1. Analysis

The story selected for third cycle is titled *Teeth*, by Jamie Keddie. Unlike the stories explained above, *Teeth* is not a physical book, it is an adaption of the short silent film

Teeth, directed by Ruairi O'Brien and John Kennedy in 2007. The text of the story can be seen in **Appendix XVII**.

The story is about two old men who are fishing in a lake, John and Rob. Suddenly, John sneezes and his false teeth fly out of his mouth, sinking to the bottom of the lake. Rob starts laughing uncontrollably and, after an hour, he catches a fish. Inside the mouth of the fish are some false teeth and John puts them into his own mouth. However, they do not fit, so John throws them over the side of the boat. The story ends with this sentence: *Poor Rob!*

Despite it is a different story than the ones explained before, it can be divided into the three most common parts:

The **introduction** presents the two characters of the story, John and Rob, and the location where the it takes place, a lake. The introduction gives also details about the characters (they are old and friends), about how they are sited and what they are doing (they sit facing each other in silence and they have fishing rods in hand).

The **development** starts when John sneezes and his false teeth fly out of his mouth. Rob thinks that is very funny and laughs at John. Later, Rob catches a fish with false teeth and taps John on the shoulder to show him what he has got.

When the reader thinks John has found his false teeth, an unexpected **final** takes place: John puts the teeth into his own mouth, and they do not fit. Because of that, he throws them, and they sink to the bottom of the lake.

As well as in *The very hungry caterpillar* and *The smartest giant in town*, the *Teeth* **repeats** some sentences and structures, and particularly makes use of literary figures in order to make the narration stronger. For example: *Two old men in a boat in the middle of a lake. John and Rob. Old friends* (It appears two times in the story) / *They sink to the bottom of the lake* (It appears two times in the story) / *John sneezes. He sneezes hard. He sneezes so hard that his false teeth fly out of his mouth.*

The **plot** seems to be simple so there are not many temporal references or dialogues and the narrator tells everything that happens in the story. Furthermore, the plot may seem silly. However, in this story is more important what is not said: When Rob catches the fish, he takes of his false teeth and puts it in the fish's mouth. When John tries to fit the teeth in his mouths and they do not fit, he throws them, and that is because at the end of

the story appears the sentence *Poor Rob!* So finally, both, Rob and John lose their false teeth.

The **language** used in *Teeth* is well-suited for students in third cycle. Some formal aspects can be worked with the story:

- Fishing vocabulary: boat, lake, fishing road, catch, sink, fish, feel a pull, throw something over.
- Present continuous to talk about what the two characters are doing.
- The topic of practical jokes or friendship.

Each student in the classroom will imagine the story in a different way and for most of them *Teeth* will not make sense. For that reason, the teacher will try that everyone in the classroom understand the meaning of the story.

Teeth has an economical simplicity since the story is reduced to the essential ingredients. The lack of spoken dialogue forces students to work with the narrative, that will allow them to explore some fundamental issues of what it is to be human: friendship and justice, wrapped up in one delightful comedy.

4.3.2. Exploitation

Pre-telling activities.

In this stage the teacher will introduce the topic of friendship, the deeper meaning of the story: the aim is teaching students about the concept of positive and healthy friendship, considering the reasons for what it is important to have good friends and allowing them to think about their own criteria for healthy friendships.

To achieve that, the class will discuss about friendship. The teacher will encourage students to participate frequently during the discussion since their input on this topic is very important. He/she will ask different questions:

- What is a friend? Students will speak about having similar interests, about people who care about them and people they can trust.
- What kind of things can we do to begin and keep friendships? Learners will give options such as find way to spend time with friends, talk about yourself, talk on the phone, write messages...

-Why is it important to have good friends? They will speak about supporting one another, listening to each other, giving advice...

-What kinds of things do you like doing with your friends? They will say playing videogames and sports, hanging out, having lunch together, watching movies, using the computer...

-Finally, the teacher will ask them how can they be good friends and will write on the blackboard a list with the students' ideas: share our interests, trust and be honest, share our thoughts and feeling, respect each other's opinions and beliefs, accept each other for who they are, encourage and support each other...

After that, students will play the Friendship Spotlight Game. The teacher will put in three different places of the class three signals: one green (it represents good signs in a friendship), one yellow (it represents warning signs in a friendship) and one red (it represents bad signs in a friendship). The posters can be seen in **Appendix XXVIII**.

The class will be divided in three groups of five people, and each group will be given five flashcards with different situations that will have to place in the correct stoplight (**Appendix XXIX**)

While-telling activities.

The teacher will start telling the story by creating a relaxed atmosphere. The tables and the chairs of the children will be in U form and the teacher will read the story seated in a chair in the centre.

He/she will stop in the sentence 'John is not amused. Next, she/he will divide the class in groups of four. They will have to think what is going to happen after the false teeth of John sink to the bottom of the lake. After that, each group will have to tell and represent what they have thought.

Next, the teacher will read the rest of the story and finally, he/she will ask students what they think about the end of the story, or what has happened.

Post-telling activities.

In this stage, the teacher will project on the whiteboard the short film, that can be seen in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87AkeWNgwU>

After that, they will complete a worksheet in groups of three (**Appendix XXX**) to reflect about the John's and Rob's behaviour. Finally, they will discuss the answers with the teacher and the other classmates.

4. LIMITATIONS OF THE USE OF STORYTELLING IN THE EFL CLASSROOM.

Along this project reasons for using storytelling have been given, together with the selection of three different stories and their exploitation in the EFL classroom. Nonetheless, in the course of this work, as well as in a bibliographic research, some limitations of the use of storytelling have been noticed.

The main drawback of using storytelling is that it may take some time to implement or, as Woodhouse (2008) argued, it is ‘time-consuming’.

That is also related to the fact that students may need directions and guidance at various stages of storytelling. For that reason, the level of students is an important aspect, because it is important that they get the meaning while and after listening a story.

One additional disadvantage of storytelling may not be related to the students but to the teller. It is very difficult to create and tell a good story successfully and the teacher needs practice to improve their gestures and expressions. It is also essential that he or she does not use storytelling only for teaching grammar and vocabulary because children would not be so motivated. Consequently, the storyteller should be creative with the objective of achieving challenging and innovating stories for their students.

That explained above means that the lecturer must use a wide variety of resources to engage children in the story and, as Weimer (2002) pointed out, he or she should be an entertainer. Otherwise, if he or she is monotonous and does not allow them being part of the story, they could feel bored, engendering passive listeners.

Another point to bear in mind is that storytelling requires a safe environment for students and some topics may challenge personal values, becoming threatening for them (Woodhouse, 2008). This was also highlighted by Fairburn (2002), who uses storytelling as a way of exploring morality. He pointed out that this technique challenges students’ values and may cause them to feel uncomfortable. For this reason, it is extremely important the existence of a good relationship between the storyteller and the learners.

Another drawback is represented by how often storytelling is used. It means that if this teaching technique is used too frequently, students can find it discouraging at a certain point.

Davis (1993) also advised against using long stories. Throughout this project it has become a problem when trying to select stories for third cycle: most of them were long books which were impossible to tell in class if the teacher wants to follow the main goals of storytelling.

Finally, it is important to know the group of students the teacher is going to work with in order to know if their characteristics correspond to the type of students that the story requires and to the type of activities that he or she wants to propose.

In addition, notes of aspects that did not go well must be taken, together with problems in the development of storytelling and a proposal for improvement. In the same way, it is important to think about the most appropriate time to work on storytelling and collaborate in various activities and share ideas with the rest of lecturers.

5. CONCLUSION

As stated in the beginning, the purpose of this project has been revealing the significance of storytelling used as a teaching technique, as well as designing different activities and resources and exposing contrasting methods to implement them.

The comparison between the three stories allows analyzing the existing differences, whose diversity of factors must be considered. For that reason, after having analyzed the stories intended for the three cycles of Primary Education, some conclusions can be drawn:

- In the stories selected for first and second cycle, the three main parts (introduction, development and final) can be easily differentiated. Nevertheless, in *Teeth*, these parts are harder to delimit and are not crucial for understanding the story.

- In first and second cycle, the stories contain the repetition of words and key sentences to capture the children's attention when the story is being told. In addition, in second cycle, when the students are more familiarized with the English language, the story proposes a song, which they can sing in their second language, feeling they are participants of the story. Conversely, the story of third cycle includes some repetitions but these ones do not facilitate the story comprehension or intend the students' participation, they are part of the story's aesthetic.

- The plot is very simple in *The very hungry caterpillar* and *The smartest giant in town*. However, the first one does not contain dialogues, while the second does. On the other hand, both plots are repetitive in order to achieve a better understanding of them (in *The very hungry caterpillar* some sentences are repeated while in *The smartest giant in town* are the scenes).

- The language employed is well-suited for first, second and third cycle. Furthermore, the three stories can be used to learn English language contents and to teach contents of other subjects or, in other words, they have an interdisciplinary use.

- Finally, it must be mentioned that a deeper meaning is submerged in the three stories. In any case, are the teachers who must decide and consider if it is appropriate make the students understand it or not.

As can be read above, to exploit the three stories, different strategies and resources have been proposed. In general, the main conclusions drawn are the following ones:

-In first cycle the teacher should bring and prepare resources the students can feel, and visual images are essential, as well as repetitions. While telling the story it is important the storyteller's facial expression and that he or she makes easy gestures and sounds.

-In second cycle visual images and real objects are also crucial to help the learners' comprehension of the story. Furthermore, while telling the story it is crucial the children's participation: they can repeat key sentences, sing a song... but also show that they are understanding the story by answering the storyteller's questions (*what has happened?/ what do you think is going to happen?...*)

-In third cycle, especially in sixth grade, students start their adolescence and, for this reason, real objects, gestures or songs are not the best resources for them: first, because in general, their level of English is enough to understand the words and the grammar of the story, and secondly, because they will think gestures and songs are stupid and suitable for children of six years old, not for them.

That is why in this project the exploitation proposed for *Teeth* has been centered more in the students than in the storyteller: at this age they are able to imagine and create their own story, and, why not, to represent it. Moreover, it has been in this cycle when investigating the deeper meaning of the story has been suggested, since it is at this age when children can reflect about friendship, and what is more, do it in English.

After the analysis and exploitation of stories, it can be said that creating and narrating a story is an activity that fosters an affective approach and the knowledge of the world. To achieve this, the actions of the storyteller, the appropriate atmosphere, the contact with the story and the development of suggested activities that correspond to the environment where it is carried out, must be considered.

As has been argued in the previous section, using storytelling in the classroom has some limitations if factors mentioned above are not considered. Along this project, selecting a story and designing activities for children between ten and twelve years old, has been a difficult aspect. For that, teachers usually prefer using storytelling with young learners. However, it represents a beneficial technique to teach various skills and can be advantageous and efficient not only in children, but also in adults.

In conclusion, it can be claimed that stories exercise imagination and it is also a way of helping pupils to learn in all areas of their curriculum. Nonetheless, it is not an easy

activity: the teacher must develop different skills to improve their storytelling and, on their part, learners must develop their concentrating and listening skills.

To achieve that, it is necessary to design activities with which students work autonomously but also which promote cooperation among pupils and, consequently, the student-student interaction.

Regardless, storytelling is a motivating activity, and despite the teachers are not forced by the Government to execute it, there are considerable reasons to use stories in class.

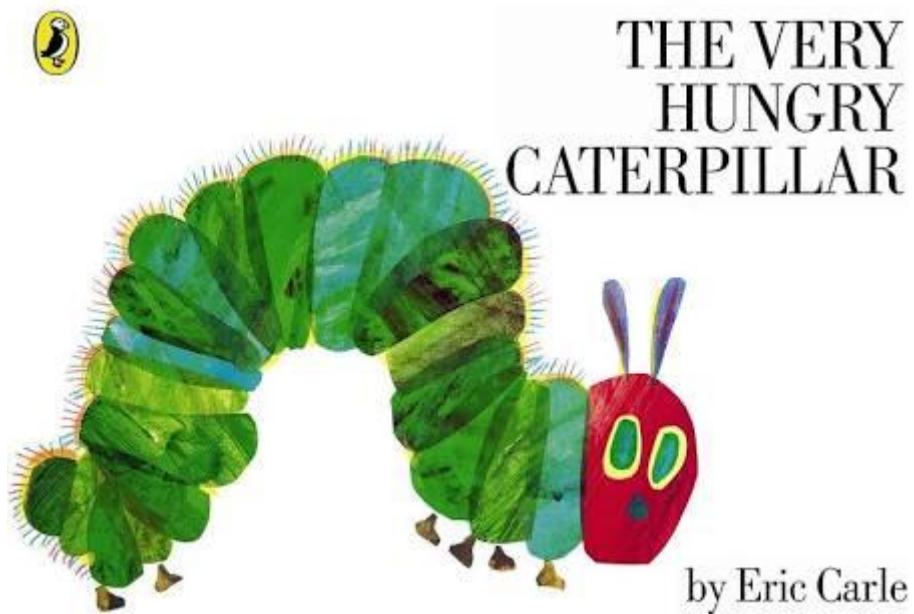
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APPENDICES

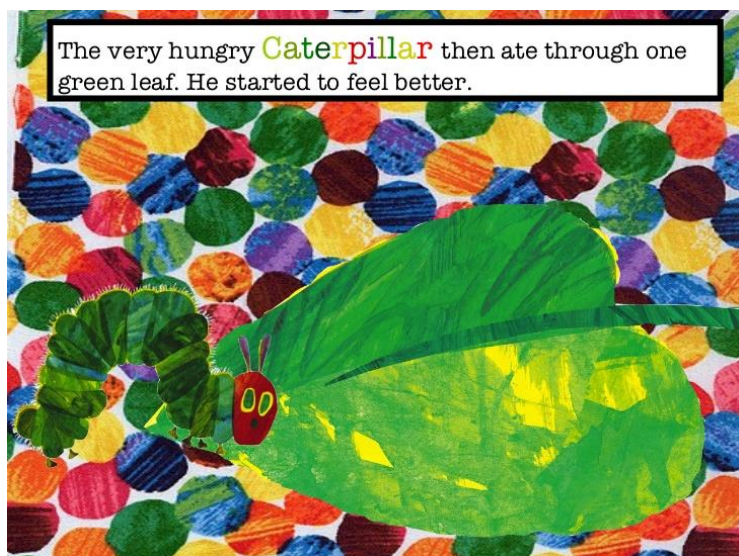
Appendix I: Cover of The very hungry caterpillar book



Appendix II: Presentation of the conflict



Appendix III: Solution to the conflicts.



Now, the caterpillar was no longer small. He was a big, fat, caterpillar.



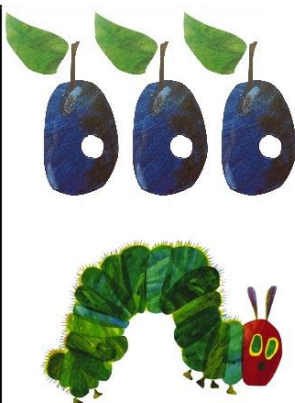
little



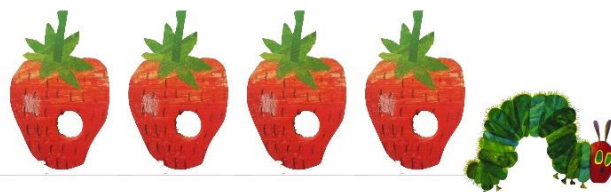
BIG

Appendix IV: Repetitive structure

On **Wednesday** he ate through **3** **plums**, but he was still hungry.



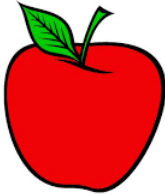
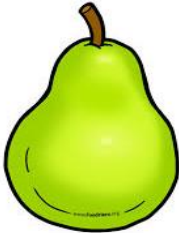





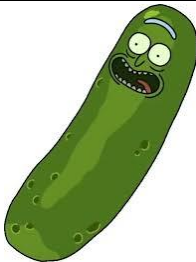
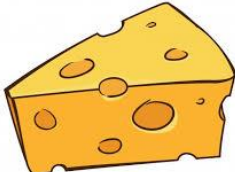



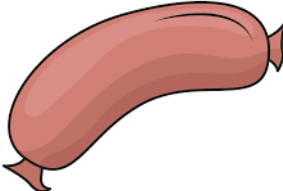

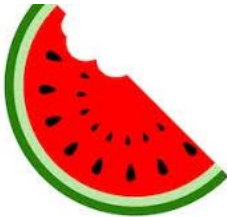
On **Thursday** he ate through **4** **strawberries**, but he was still hungry.



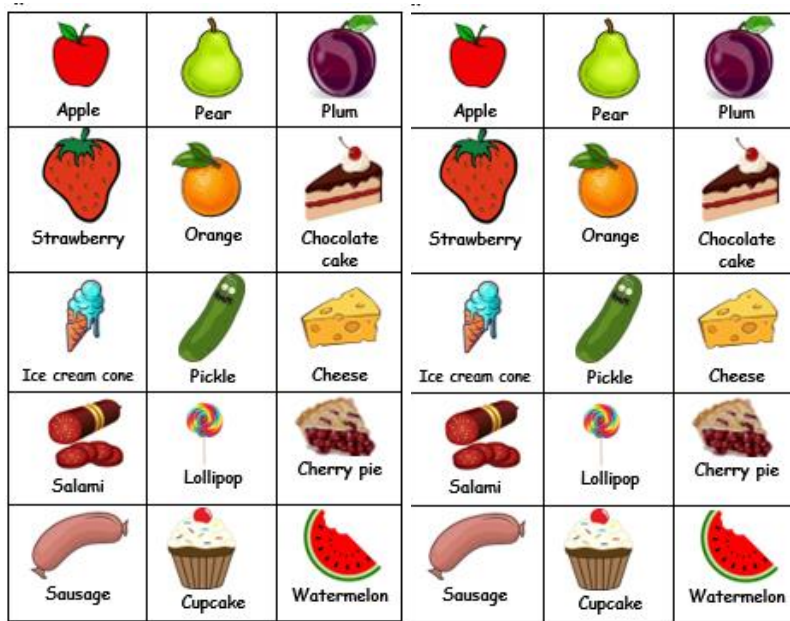
Appendix V: Caterpillar's teddy



Appendix VI: Food flashcards

 Apple	 Pear	 Plum
 Strawberry	 Orange	 Chocolate cake
 Ice cream cone	 Pickle	 Cheese
 Salami	 Lollipop	 Cherry pie
 Sausage	 Cupcake	 Watermelon

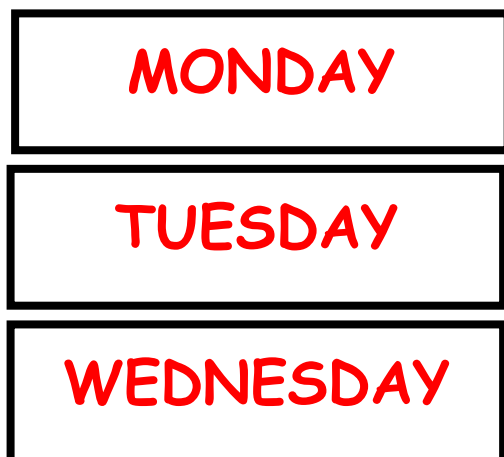
Appendix VII: Memory game



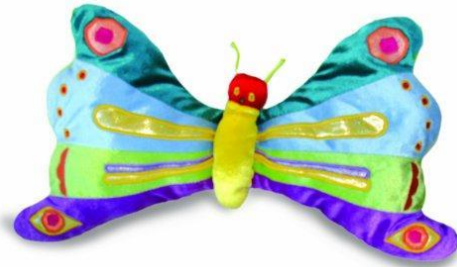
Appendix VIII: Egg



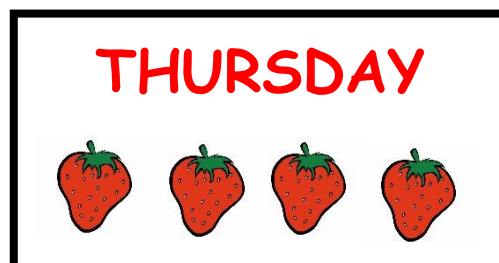
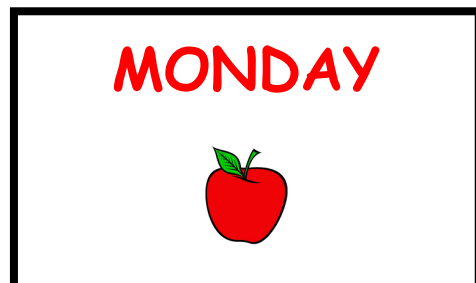
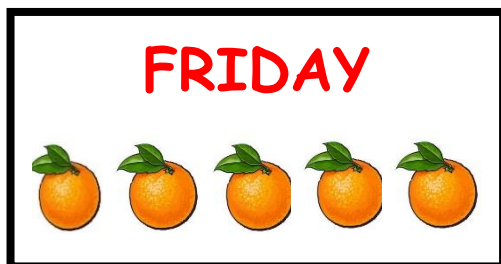
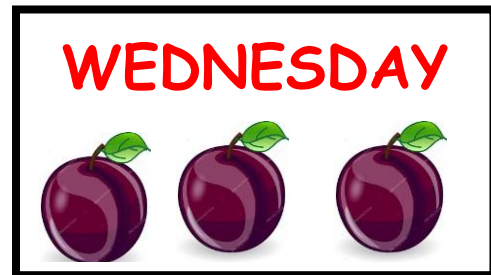
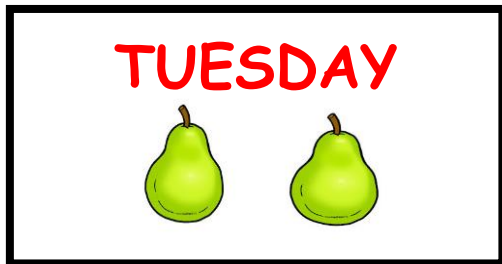
Appendix IX: Days of the week flashcards.



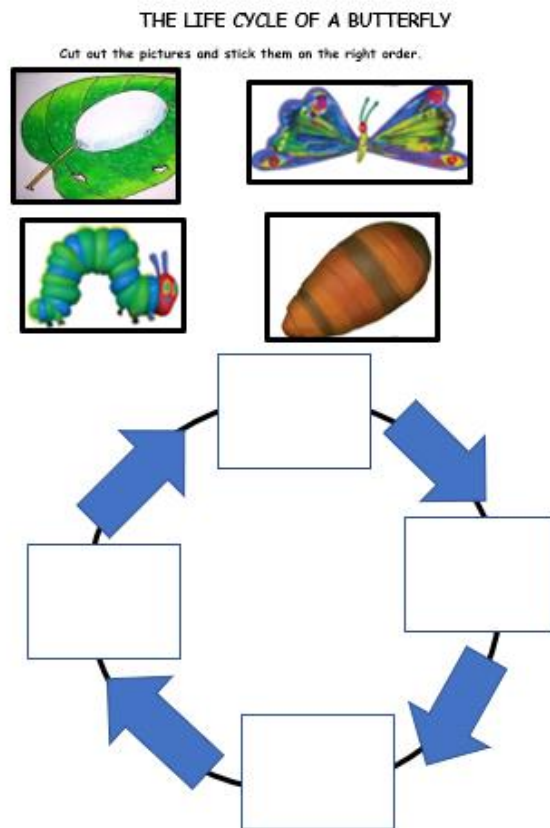
Appendix X: Cocoon and butterfly.



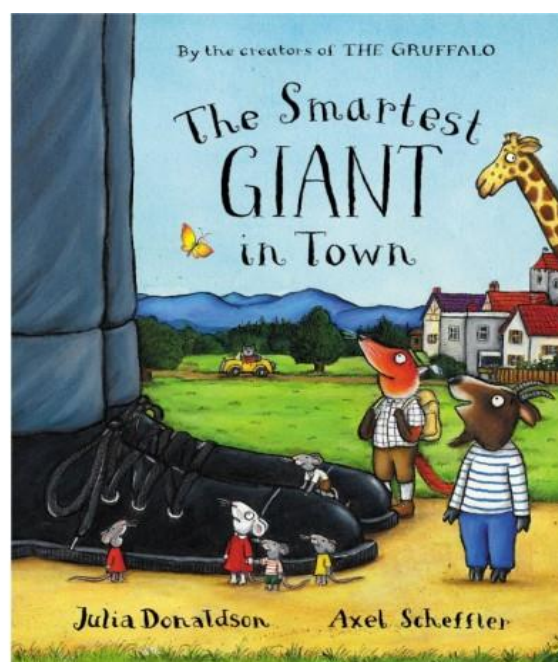
Appendix XI: Flashcards used for the first activity.



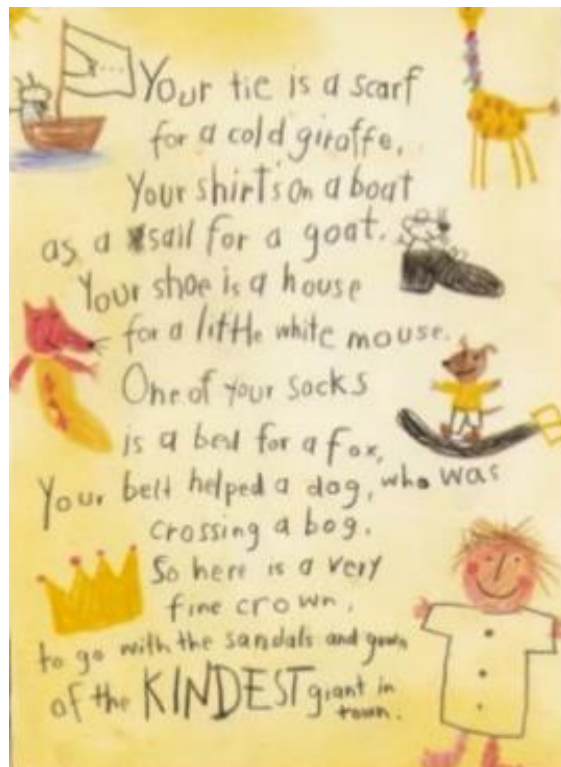
Appendix XII: Butterfly's life cycle worksheet.



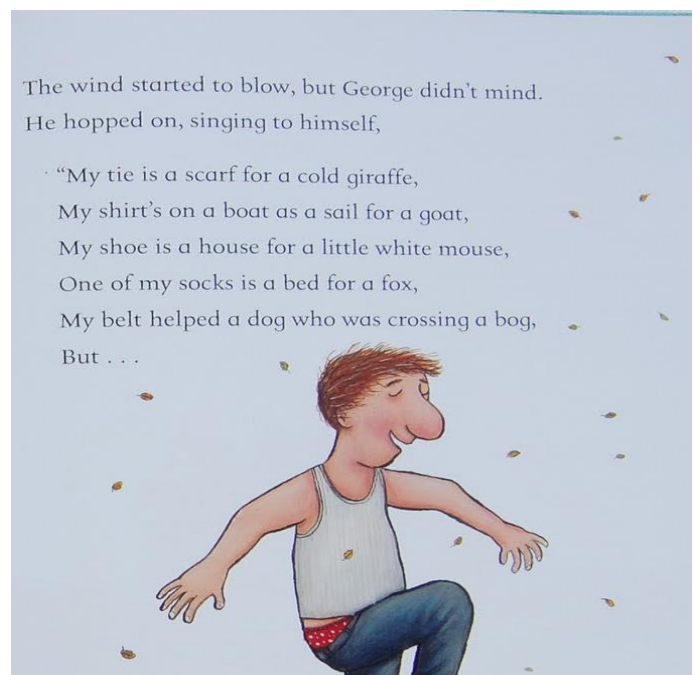
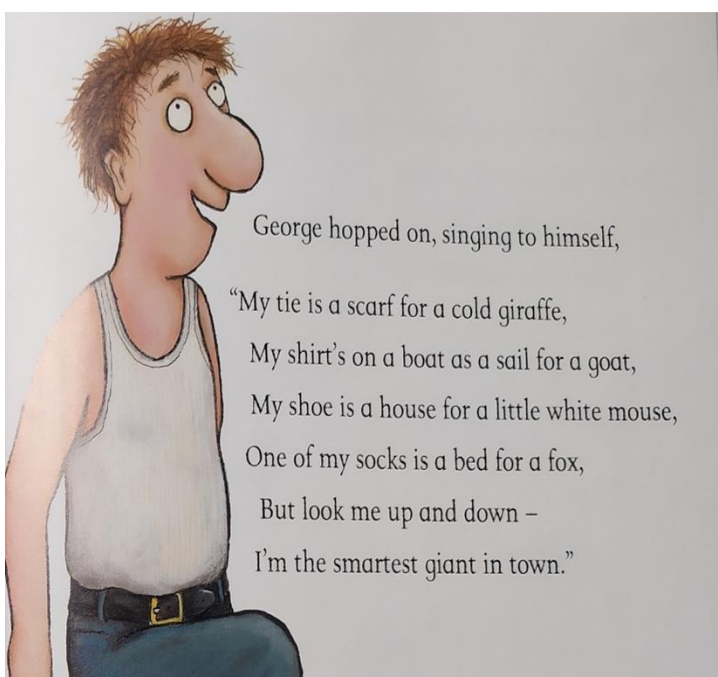
Appendix XIII: Cover of The smartest giant town



Appendix XIV: The paper the animals gave to George



Appendix XV: The song George sings during the story.



Appendix XVI: Suitcase with giant's clothes



Appendix XVII: Sticks to tell between smart and scruffy



Appendix XVIII: Pictures to tell between smart and scruffy

ACTIVITY 1



SMART

SCRUFFY

ACTIVITY 1



SMART

SCRUFFY

ACTIVITY 1



SMART

SCRUFFY

ACTIVITY 1



SMART

SCRUFFY

Appendices XIX and XX: Definitions and solutions

ACTIVITY 2



It is tiny, squeaky and loves cheese



ACTIVITY 2

MOUSE



ACTIVITY 2



It is yellow and its spots are brown. Its long neck helps it to eat



ACTIVITY 2

GIRAFFE



ACTIVITY 2

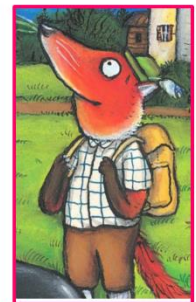


It is orange and very clever



ACTIVITY 2

FOX



ACTIVITY 2



It's got two horns and usually lives in the mountains



ACTIVITY 2

GOAT



ACTIVITY 2



It is men's best friend



ACTIVITY 2

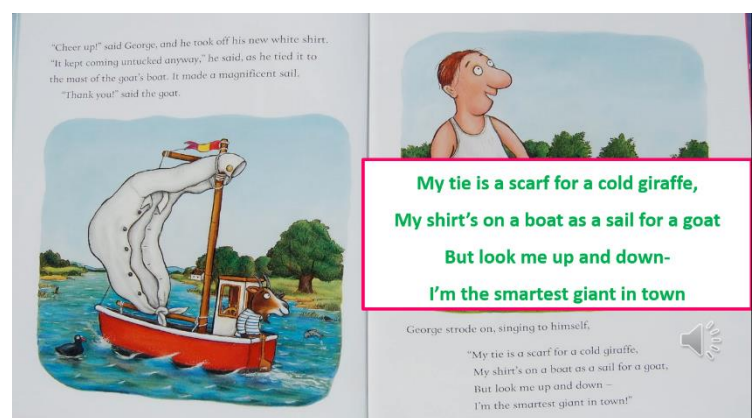


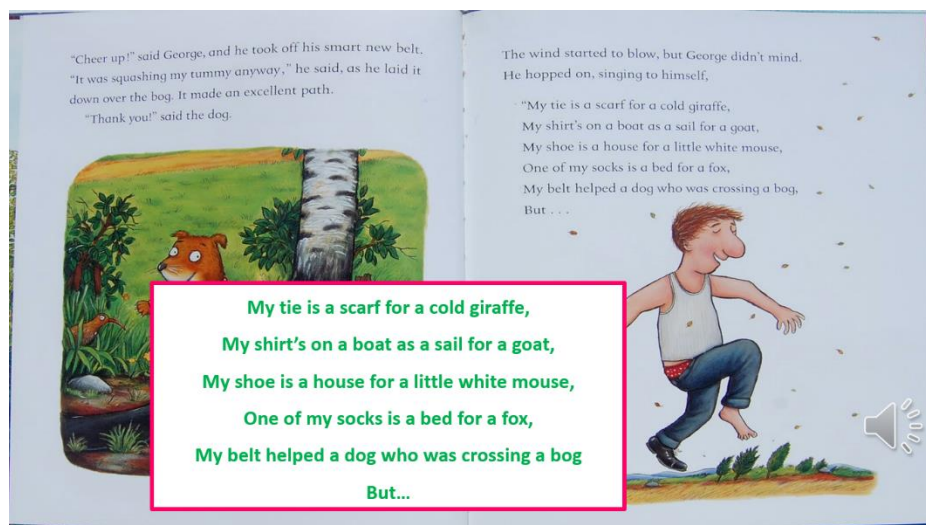
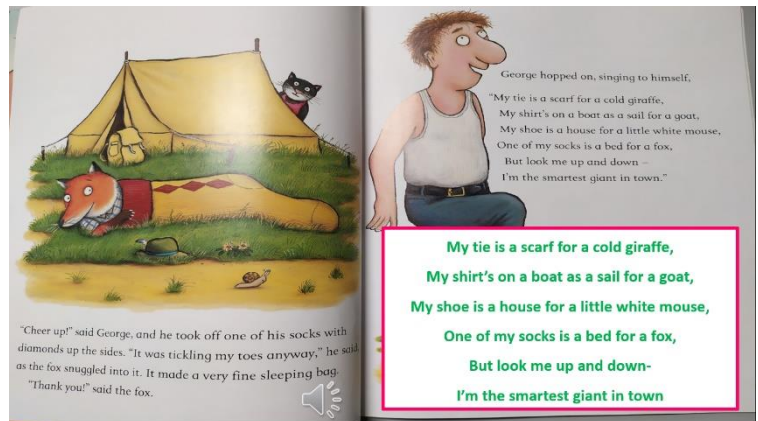
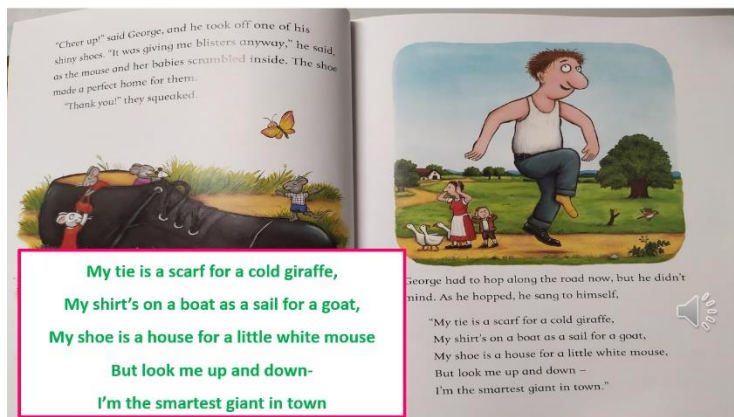
DOG

Appendix XXI: Puppets

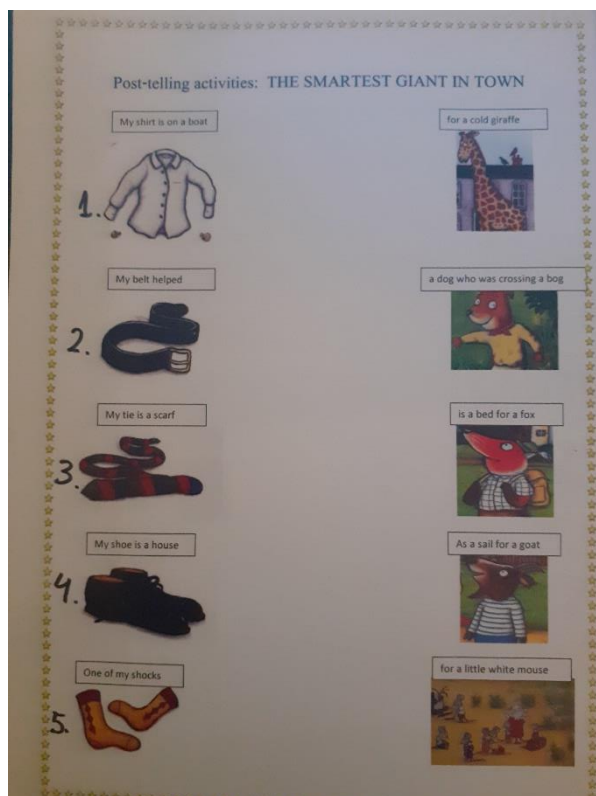


Appendix XXII: Passages of the song

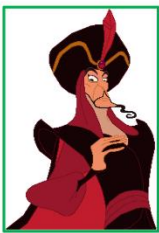







Appendix XXIII: Worksheet to remind the story



Appendix XXIV: Pictures to tell between kind and cruel

 <p>ACTIVITY 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> KIND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CRUEL</p>	 <p>ACTIVITY 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> KIND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CRUEL</p>
 <p>ACTIVITY 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> KIND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CRUEL</p>	 <p>ACTIVITY 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> KIND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> CRUEL</p>

Appendix XXV: Worksheet to describe the giant

Follow-up activities-THE SMARTEST GIANT IN TOWN

Describe the giant, the main character of the story by choosing the correct option.

- 

The giant is *short/tall*. He has *curly/straight* hair and a *big/small* nose.

The giant is *happy/sad* because he's wearing *scruffy/smart* clothes. He is the *smartest/scruffiest* giant in town.
- 

Now, the giant is wearing *scruffy/smart* clothes:

He is wearing a *black/white* shirt a smart pair of trousers, a smart tie with *stripes/diamonds* and a pair of smart *shoes/belts*.
- 

The giant is wearing a *crown/hat*. He looks very *surprised/happy* now because he is the *kindest/smartest* giant in town.

Appendix XXVI: Slides used to correct Appendix XXV

ACTIVITY 5

DESCRIBING THE GIANT:
Choose the correct option

1.



The giant is short/tall. He has curly/straight hair and a big/small nose.

The giant is happy/sad because he's wearing scruffy/smart clothes. He is the smartest/scruffiest giant in town.

2.



Now, the giant is wearing scruffy/smart clothes:

He is wearing a black/white shirt a smart pair of trousers, a smart tie with stripes/diamonds and a pair of smart shoes/belts.

3.



The giant is wearing a crown/hat. He looks very surprised/happy now because he is the kindest/smartest giant in town.

Appendix XXVII: Text of the story.

Two old men in a rowing boat in the middle of a lake.

John and Rob. Old friends.

They sit facing each other.

In silence.

Fishing rods in hand.

They haven't caught anything yet.

Suddenly, John sneezes.

He sneezes hard.

He sneezes so hard that his false teeth fly out of his mouth.

They go over the side of the boat and: Plop!

They sink to the bottom of the lake.

Rob thinks that this is the funniest thing he has ever seen.

He laughs uncontrollably.

John is not amused.

An hour passes.

Two old men in a boat in the middle of a lake.

John and Rob. Old friends.

They sit back to back.

In silence.

Fishing rods in hand.

Suddenly, Rob feels a pull.

He's got one; he's caught a fish.

He reels it in; he lands it; it's a big one.

But surely not! Can it be true?

That inside the mouth of the fish are some false teeth – John's false teeth?

Rob taps John on the shoulder to show him what he's got.

John takes the teeth out of the fish's mouth and puts them into his own mouth. Unfortunately, they don't fit.

Apparently these are not John's teeth after all.

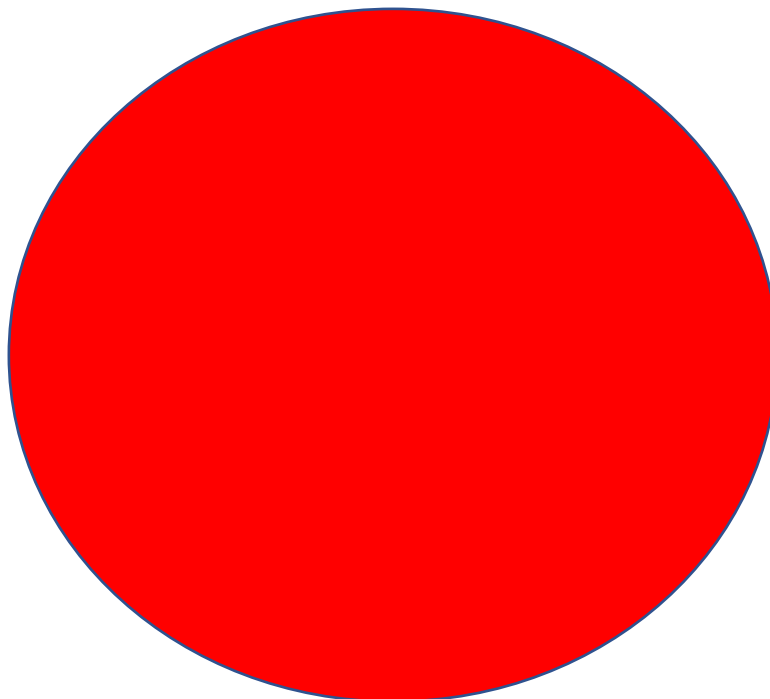
John throws them over the side of the boat.

They sink to the bottom of the lake.

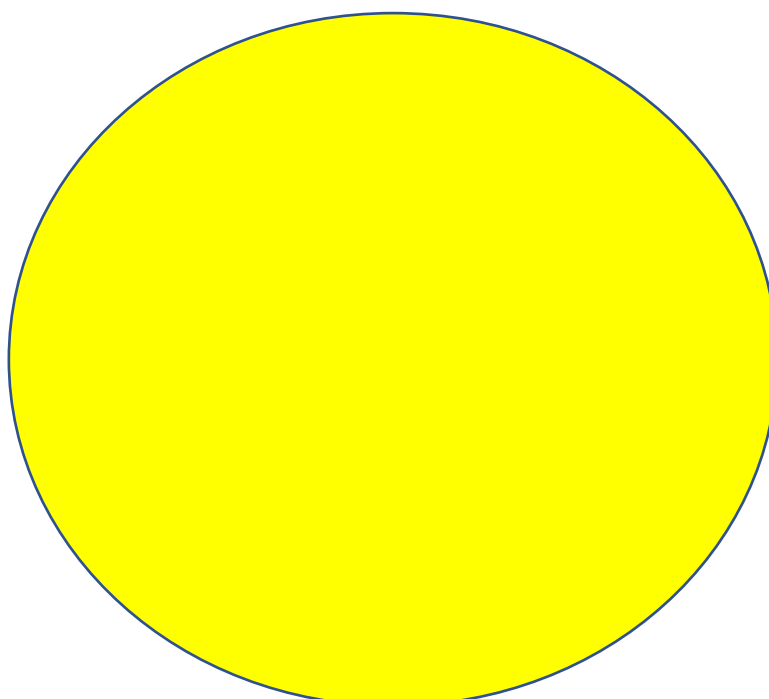
Poor Rob!

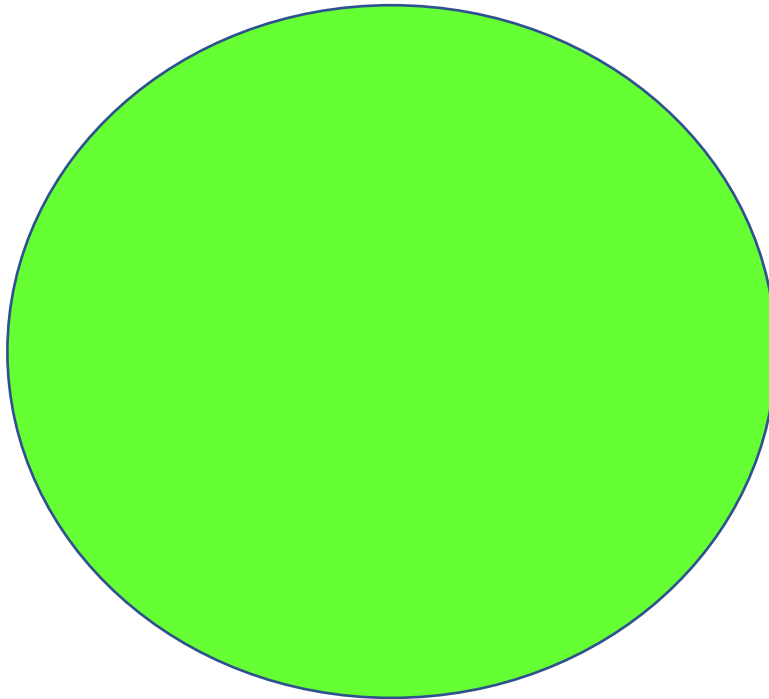
Appendix XXVIII: Spotlight posters

STOP! THESE ARE BAD SIGNS IN A FRIENDSHIP



CAUTION! THESE ARE WARNING SIGNS IN A FRIENDSHIP!



GO! THESE ARE GOOD SIGNS IN A FRIENDSHIP!

Appendix XXIX: Flashcards with situations

RED LIGHT: These are unhealthy/ bad signs in a friendship

**You are afraid
of your friend's
temper.**

**Your friend criticizes
you or people you
care about.**

**Your friend
threatens to hurt
you.**

**Your friend
bullies and makes
fun of you.**

**Your friend pressures you
to do things you do not
want to do.**

YELLOW LIGHT: These are warning signs in a friendship.

You are nervous that if you tell your friend something personal, she/he will tell other people at school.

Your friend sometimes makes fun of you.

You rarely get to plan what the two of you will do together.

Your friend tells you not to hang out with certain people.

You are afraid they won't be your friend anymore if you disagree.

GREEN LIGHT: These are healthy/ good signs in a friendship

You usually feel happy when you are with this person.

Your friend is happy when good things happen to you.

Your friend talks to you about his/her feelings.

Your friend respects your feelings and your opinions.

You enjoy being with this person, but you also enjoy spending time with other friends.

Appendix XXX: Worksheet to reflect about the story.

TEETH

Discuss with your partners and write:

1. Do you think Rob is a good friend? Why?

2. If you were Rob, would you act in the same way? What would you do?

