

Level
4

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Summary of the story

The Pied Piper of Hamelin is set in medieval Germany, in a small town, Hamelin. The town is plagued by rats when a stranger, the Pied Piper, comes to town and offers to get rid of them if they Mayor will pay him. The stranger is the Pied Piper. He plays bewitching music on his pipe which causes the rats to follow him. He leads the rats to the river and they drown. The Mayor breaks his promise and refuses to pay the Piper. The Piper responds by taking away the pupils of Hamelin.



Background to the story

The Pied Piper is a legendary character from the 13th century. His story has been told by many authors including Robert Browning, the English poet (1812–1889) and Goethe.

Topics and themes

Friends. The story can be used to introduce discussion on promises, justice and fairness.

My town. The story can be used as a springboard to talking about the way people lived. The description of the Pied Piper could be used a starting point for work on description of people.

Numbers. The story makes several references to large numbers of rats. It could be used as a way of introducing and/or practising big numbers

Colours. Use the opportunity to revise colours, mentioning the concept of 'pied'.

Clothes. How are they the same as today's clothes? How are they different?

Travel. From horses and carts to aeroplanes. Did the horse come before the cart?

Environment. Fountains for supplying the town, or for decoration. How would we deal with rats today? Do we have problems that medieval towns didn't have (e.g. car pollution)?

Making use of the Reader

Grammar. The story includes a lot of use of prepositions of place, ON, IN, UNDER and of movement, INTO, OUT OF, ONTO. Those pictures which show many rats in different places can be used to illustrate and contextualise these prepositions.

Drama. This story has plenty of action suitable for dramatization with this age-group.

Pre-reading

Hiding the rats. Make a life-sized rat out of card. Pre-teach or revise prepositions by placing the rat in different places in the room - ON, IN, UNDER, BEHIND - the table, shelf, television, chair etc. Ask one student to go outside. Ask another pupil to hide the cardboard rat under a book or behind a piece of furniture. Ask the pupil to come in from outside and to have three guesses as to where the rat is. Or, the pupil asks 'is it here'? or asks 'am I hot or cold'? as clues.

House dictation. Ask the pupils to draw a square and divide it into four. Ask them to label the 4 squares, KITCHEN, BEDROOM, LIVING ROOM, BATHROOM. Ask them to draw objects from each room. Those who finish quickly could use a picture dictionary to help label the furniture in the rooms. (After reading the book, they could add rats into the picture, in bowls etc.)

Hunt the... From the book, can the pupils find: a musical instrument, crutch, water, bridge, magic door.

Inside or outside? The pupils should have a piece of paper with two columns on it. One is labelled outside, one inside. When you say a word they have to write it down in one of the columns. Words used are all from the book: kitchen, church, hall, town hall, mountain etc.



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Post-reading

These ideas for extension work are best done once the pupils have read the story several times.

Group reading. Read the story out loud. As and when characters come up, ask volunteers to stand up and be those characters. Where there is dialogue, those playing the characters can repeat it. All pupils should be involved at some stage of the story. Those who do not play the main characters can play the parts of the town's people, the rats and the pupils.

Role play. Pick out one scene (let the pupils choose it), to act out with their own dialogue. Here are some examples, the crowd scene with the mayor; discussion with the Pied Piper when he first appears (where do you come from; when the people first realize all the rats have gone; the pupils behind the magic door and many others.

Using the accompanying video and audio cassette

Watching or listening for specific information / post-reading/ whole class.

Before watching or listening to the cassette (if the pupils have already read the book) elicit the names of the main characters from the story and write them on the board. Tell the pupils to, for example, stand up when they see the Pied Piper or when he speaks, to clap, and so on. This will result in very energetic and active viewing or listening. Or ask half the group to stand up for the Pied Piper, half for the mayor.

During watching and listening – whole class prediction. Play the video or audio cassette story through. Play it through a second

time but this time, stop just before a dramatic event in the story (such as the Pied Piper playing in the street after the mayor has refused to pay him) and ask the pupils to tell you what happens next, then view or listen to see if they were right.

Simultaneous reading and listening in groups will help the pupils with pronunciation and intonation.

Music is an important element of the story. Ask the pupils to think about the kind of music that rats might follow, or what it was about the music that made the pupils follow the piper. Can they make their own noises to make rats follow them?

Notes to the activities in the factsheet

Activity 1. This is a version of a game which is often called 'Battleships'. Pupils play in pairs. One pupil draws 10 rats in the squares on his/her grid. The other has to say a letter and a number to identify the square. The first player then says YES or NO to indicate if there is a rat in that square or not. The pupil who is guessing has 10 chances and has to find as many rats as possible. The pupils then change roles.

Activity 2. Pupils read and draw. The rat can be very simply drawn as this is not a drawing exercise. It could be a triangle for the head, oval body, long tail, whiskers and ears.

Activity 3. This is a simple comprehension activity. Pupils read the question, then circle the correct answer.

Activity 4. The pupils break up the line of letters to make words. They could use different colours to underline the words.

Answers to the activities

In the back of the Reader

Before you read.

Chimney, roof, window, door.

After you read. There is a rat in the bowl. The rats are under the cart. The rats are on the roof. The rats are in the street. 1. The name of the town was Hamelin. 2. Pied Piper's clothes were red and yellow. The rats' favourite food was chicken. 4. The Pied Piper wanted one thousand pieces of gold.

In the factsheet

Activity 3. True, False, False, False, True, False.

Activity 4.

River/rats/music/stranger/pipe/children/mayor.



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Name.....

Activity 1

Draw ten rats in the boxes. Ask a friend to guess where your rats are.



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
a									
b									
c									
d									
e									
f									
g									
h									
i									

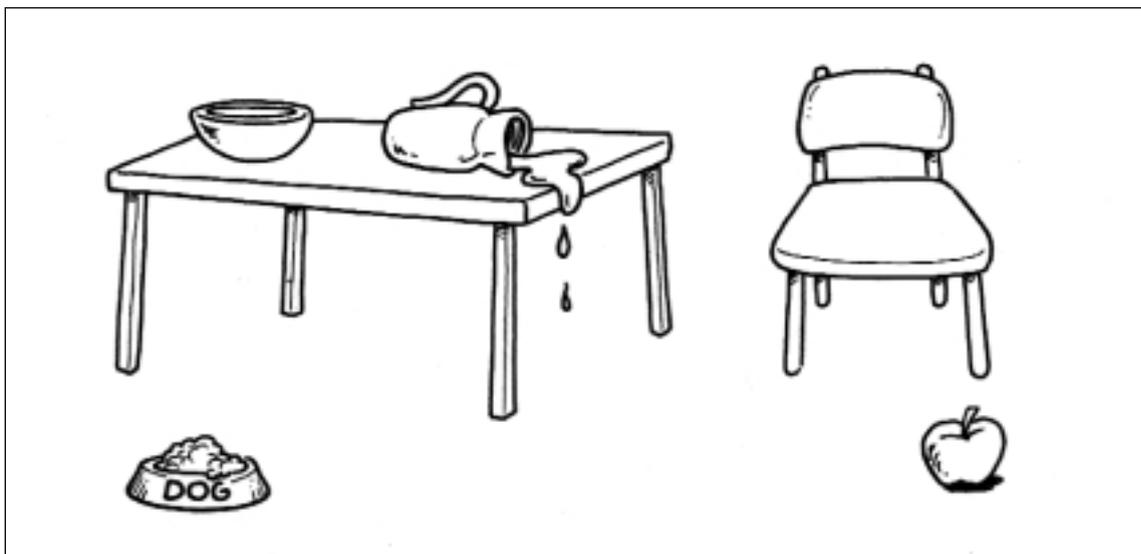
Activity 2

Read and draw.

There is a rat on the table. There are two rats under the chair.

There is a rat in the bowl. One rat is eating the apple.

Another rat is drinking the milk. Two rats are eating the dog's food.



The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Name.....

Activity 3

Look at the book and decide if these sentences are true or false.

- | | | |
|---|------|-------|
| 1. The Pied Piper did not live in Hamelin. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 2. The Mayor of Hamelin kept his promise. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 3. The Pied Piper played a guitar. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4. The cats killed all the rats. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5. The Piper asked for one thousand pieces of gold. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 6. The pupils did not follow the Pied Piper. | TRUE | FALSE |

Activity 4

Find the following words: river, rats, music, stranger, pipe, children, mayor.

