



## Oxford Level 2

# A Den in the Wood

Written by Paul Shipton and illustrated by Nick Schon, based on the original characters created by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta.  
Teaching notes written by Liz Miles.

Text type: fiction

Topic: animal homes

## Synopsis

Mum and the children go for a walk in a wood and Floppy finds a fox cub. The children want to take the cub home but Mum tells them it must stay in its den. They all hide and watch as the cub's mother comes back and licks her cub clean.

There is a topic-linked non-fiction book to partner this title, which is called *Dens and Nests*.

## Group/Guided reading

### Introducing the story

- ➔ Write the word 'den' onto a piece of paper and ask: *What animals do you know that live in dens?* If necessary, prompt the children by suggesting foxes and bears.
- ➔ Look together at the cover and read the title with the children. Say: *I wonder what sort of animal lives in the den in the wood.* Encourage the children to make predictions.
- ➔ (*Questioning*) Ask the children to think of some questions to ask Biff and Chip about the den. You could model this for them by saying: *I wonder how they spot the den.*

### Vocabulary check

- ➔ As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *f-o-x, l-i-ck*.
- ➔ This story includes many decodable words, providing lots of opportunities for children to practise the skill of sounding out and blending new words. There are also some high frequency tricky words used in the book. These words are common but may not conform to the phonic teaching that children will have learned at this point. Support the children with reading these words, explaining that they are tricky but common and useful. If necessary, simply read the word for them:

**he she we me was you they all**

- ➔ There are a number of story words used in this book. These include words that may be familiar but do not conform to the phonic teaching that children will have learned at this point, and subject-specific vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to children. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list and their definitions. Explain to the children that these words may be challenging but they are important for the topic. Read these words for the children if necessary, to help build familiarity before they read the story.

**wood home vixen bath**

## Reading the story

- ➔ Ask the children to read the story aloud and help where necessary. Praise and encourage them as they read. Where necessary, encourage the children to re-read sentences to focus on meaning.
- ➔ *(Predicting)* After reading p2–3, point to the picture on p3. Say: *I wonder where Floppy is running to.* Encourage the children to make predictions. Point to the word ‘sniffing’ on p2. Ask: *What might Floppy be able to smell?*
- ➔ *(Questioning)* After reading p7, ask the children to think of some questions to ask Biff about the fox cub. Model thinking of questions by saying: *I wonder what Biff thinks might happen to the cub.*
- ➔ On p14, help the children to read the tricky word ‘she’. Ask: *Who does Mum mean when she says ‘she’?* Ensure the children understand that ‘she’ is the vixen and that the vixen is the cub’s mother.
- ➔ After reading p16–17, point out the words in italics (‘This’ and ‘not’). Model how to read these words with emphasis. Ask the children to re-read the sentences with expression, adding emphasis to the words in italics.
- ➔ *(Summarizing / Predicting)* Staying on p17, ask the children to explain how each character might feel at the end of the story, and why. Ask: *Did they enjoy the walk in the wood?*

## Returning to the story

- ➔ *(Summarizing)* Ask the children to choose their favourite part of the story and retell it to a partner. Encourage them to explain why they enjoyed that part of the story.
- ➔ *(Clarifying)* Re-read p6-7 and talk about the characters’ expressions. Ask: *How do you think Floppy is feeling? How is Biff feeling?* Ask the children to read Biff’s speech with expression.
- ➔ *(Clarifying)* Focus on the picture on p11 and ask the children to describe the foxes’ den. Ask the children to describe any animal homes they have seen in the wild. Ask: *What sort of home was it? What were the animals doing?*
- ➔ *(Summarizing)* Turn to p18 and encourage a child to explain how the story began by describing what is happening in the first picture. Ask another child to take over and explain what is happening in the next picture. Ask: *What happens next?* Continue in this way to the end.

## Independent reading

- ➔ Introduce the story as in the Introducing the story section above.
- ➔ Encourage the children to read the story as independently as possible. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise.
- ➔ As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *h-i-d, c-u-b.*
- ➔ Support the children with reading high frequency tricky words.
- ➔ This book also contains a number of story words, which children may need more support with at this stage, but which enrich the story. You can look together at the inside front cover for a list and their definitions. If a word is too difficult, simply read the word for them.
- ➔ Remind the children to use the pictures to support them when reading the text.
- ➔ For suggestions of questions to ask the children after they have read the story to check comprehension, please refer to the Look Back, Explorers page in the book.

## Speaking, listening and drama activities

- ➔ Ask the children to work in groups to think of some questions they would like to ask either Mum, Biff, Chip or Kipper about what they saw in the wood.
- ➔ Either put yourself in the hot seat or ask children to take turns in the hot seat. Hot-seat each of the characters from the story and ask the rest of the group to ask the questions they thought of.
- ➔ Encourage the children in the hot seat to think carefully about how the character they are in role as might respond.

## Writing activities

- ➔ Challenge the children to write thought bubbles for the animals in the story.
- ➔ Turn to p4 and model this for the children to begin with. Say: *I wonder what Floppy is thinking. Perhaps he doesn't know what a fox is. He might be thinking: That is a funny dog.* Then add the text to a thought bubble.
- ➔ Ask the children to discuss what the cub and vixen might be thinking on p9–13. Ask the children to choose one picture and to write a thought bubble for one of the foxes.
- ➔ Encourage the children to make phonetically plausible attempts to spell some words and act as a scribe where necessary.

## Cross-curricular activity

### Understanding the world

- ➔ Encourage the children to find out more about foxes, what they eat and how they behave. Provide books or other sources to help their investigations, then share their discoveries as a class.

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## Curriculum links and assessment

### Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale

- Can retell familiar stories with growing confidence. (R) (ORCS Standard 1, 12)
- Is beginning to blend adjacent consonants in words in a range of combinations: CVCC CCVC. (READ) (ORCS Standard 1, 13)
- Can read words with consonant digraphs: ch, sh, th, ng. (READ) (ORCS Standard 1, 15)

### Letters and Sounds: Phase 3

Explore with Biff, Chip and Kipper titles are designed to support children with the transition from phonic readers to richer reading with highly decodable fiction and non-fiction. These titles tell a complete story or cover a non-fiction topic using natural language, with a high proportion of phonically decodable words and a selection of high frequency tricky words. Each book also has a limited number of non-decodable but achievable words to enrich the language and expand children's vocabularies and knowledge.

### ENGLAND Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage

	Early Learning Goals	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>ELG 03 Speaking</b>	Children use past, present and future forms accurately when talking about events that have happened or are to happen in the future. (ELG03.2)	Check the children use the correct tenses when retelling the story and when planning thought bubbles for the animal characters.
<b>ELG 01 Listening and attention</b>	Children listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions. (ELG01.2)	Check the children explain how the characters are feeling at various points in the story.  Check the children listen carefully to the questions they are asked when in role in the hot seat, and respond appropriately.
<b>ELG 02 Understanding</b>	Children answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories or events. (ELG02.2)	Check the children are able to give suggestions for where Floppy is running to and what he may have smelled.
<b>ELG 09 Reading</b>	Children use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words. (ELG09.2)	Check the children can blend letter groups such as 'ng' and 'ck' accurately ('giving' and 'lick').
	Children demonstrate understanding when talking with others about what they have read. (ELG09.3)	Check the children are able to retell their favourite part of the story, and that they can use the pictures on p18 to explain what happened in the story.
<b>ELG 10 Writing</b>	Children write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others. Some words are spelt correctly and others are phonetically plausible. (ELG 10.2)	Check the children make phonetically plausible attempts to spell some words during the writing activity (this includes sounding out words for you to scribe for them).

## SCOTLAND Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English experiences and outcomes, Early Level

	Experiences and outcomes	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Listening and talking</b>	As I listen and take part in conversations and discussions, I discover new words and phrases which I use to help me express my ideas, thoughts and feelings. (LIT 0-10a)	Check the children use words and phrases relevant to the story when retelling the story and planning their thought bubbles.  Check the children explain how the characters are feeling at various points in the story.  Check the children listen carefully to the questions they are asked when in role in the hot seat, and respond appropriately.
	To help me understand stories and other texts, I ask questions and link what I am learning with what I already know. (LIT 0-07a / LIT 0-16a / ENG 0-17a)	Check the children are able to give suggestions for where Floppy is running to and what he may have smelled, using their existing knowledge of dogs to help them.
<b>Reading</b>	I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I can use what I learn to help me as I read and write. (ENG 0-12a / LIT 0-13a / LIT 0-21a)	Check the children can blend letter groups such as 'ng' and 'ck' accurately ('giving' and 'lick').
<b>Writing</b>	I enjoy exploring and playing with the patterns and sounds of language and can use what I learn. (LIT 0-01a / LIT 0-11a / LIT 0-20a)	Check the children make phonetically plausible attempts to spell some words during the writing activity (this includes sounding out words for you to scribe for them).

## WALES Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework, Reception

	Framework objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Oracy</b>	use appropriate, increasing vocabulary in and through play activities (YR_OracSpea.5)	Check the children use the correct tenses when retelling the story and when planning thought bubbles for the animal characters.
	talk about things from their experience and share information (YR_OracSpea.3) contribute to role-play activities using relevant language (YR_OracSpea.7)	Check the children explain how the characters are feeling at various points in the story.  Check the children listen carefully to the questions they are asked when in role in the hot seat, and respond appropriately.
	answer 'Who?', 'What?', 'Where?' and open-ended questions relating to own experiences, stories or events (YR_OracList.8)	Check the children are able to give suggestions for where Floppy is running to and what he may have smelled, using their existing knowledge of dogs to help them.
<b>Reading</b>	recognise that words are constructed from phonemes (sounds) and that phonemes are represented by graphemes (written letters): – orally blend combinations of known letters (YR_ReadStrat.5i)	Check the children can blend letter groups such as 'ng' and 'ck' accurately ('giving' and 'lick').
	retell familiar stories in a simple way using pictures to support (YR_ReadComp.1)	Check the children are able to retell their favourite part of the story, and that they can use the pictures on p18 to explain what happened in the story.
<b>Writing</b>	orally compose and dictate a sentence describing events, experiences and pictures to communicate meaning (YR_WritMean.4)	Check the children rehearse their speech bubbles orally before writing anything down.

## NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Primary Level 1

	Levels of progression	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Talking and listening</b>	use vocabulary from within their experience to describe thoughts and feelings (L1_com_talk.3)	Check the children use the correct tenses when retelling the story and when planning thought bubbles for the animal characters.  Check the children explain how the characters are feeling at various points in the story.  Check the children listen carefully to the questions they are asked when in role in the hot seat, and respond appropriately.
	ask and answer questions for specific information (L1_com_talk.2)	Check the children are able to give suggestions for where Floppy is running to and what he may have smelled.
<b>Reading</b>	understand that words are made up of sounds and syllables and that sounds are represented by letters (L1_com_read.2i)	Check the children can blend letter groups such as 'ng' and 'ck' accurately ('giving' and 'lick').
	talk about what they read and answer questions (L1_com_read.5)	Check the children are able to retell their favourite part of the story, and that they can use the pictures on p18 to explain what happened in the story.
<b>Writing</b>	write words using sound-symbol correspondence (L1_com_writ.4i)	Check the children make phonetically plausible attempts to spell some words during the writing activity (this includes sounding out words for you to scribe for them).

## CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL Primary English Curriculum Framework: Level 1

	Learning objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Speaking and listening</b>	Speak confidently to a group to share an experience. (1SL5)	Check the children can confidently describe their own experiences of animals in the wild.
	Answer questions and explain further when asked. (1SL4)	Check the children are able to give suggestions for where Floppy is running to and what he may have smelled.
	Talk about events in a story and make simple inferences about characters and events to show understanding. (1Ri2)	Check the children are able to retell their favourite part of the story, and that they can use the pictures on p18 to explain what happened in the story.
<b>Reading</b>	Use phonic knowledge to read decodable words and to attempt to sound out some elements of unfamiliar words. (1R06)	Check the children can blend letter groups such as 'ng' and 'ck' accurately ('giving' and 'lick').
<b>Writing</b>	Use knowledge of sounds to write simple regular words, and to attempt other words including when writing simple sentences, dictated by the teacher, from memory. (1W04)	Check the children make phonetically plausible attempts to spell some words during the writing activity (this includes sounding out words for you to scribe for them).