



 **Oxford Level 4**

## A Dress for Biff

Written by Paul Shipton, based on the original characters created by Roderick Hunt and Alex Brychta. Illustrated by Alex Brychta.  
Teaching notes written by Catherine Baker.

Text type: fiction

Topic: costumes and clothing

### Synopsis

Biff is cross when she has to wear a dress to sing at the summer fair. She really doesn't like dresses! But when the magic key takes the children back in time to a grand palace, she discovers that sometimes dresses can be useful and that maybe wearing a dress isn't so bad after all.

There is a topic-linked non-fiction book to partner this title, which is called *Dressing Up*.

### Group/Guided reading

#### Introducing the story

- ➔ *(Predicting)* Look together at the cover picture and read the title. Ask: *How do you think Biff might feel about wearing a dress like the one in the cover picture?*
- ➔ *(Predicting)* Say: *I don't think I've ever seen a picture of Biff wearing a dress. Ask: Do you think she would like to wear a dress, or do you think she prefers to wear trousers?*
- ➔ Ask: *Have you ever had to wear something that you didn't really want to wear? What was it? How did it make you feel?*

#### Vocabulary check

- ➔ As they read, encourage the children to sound out and blend new words, for example *f-air, g-ar-d-e-n*.
- ➔ 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:  
**said have do like come what one there out**
- ➔ 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.  
**palace boy clothes girl guards**

## 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.
- ➔ After reading p7, ask: *Why do you think the girl in the pink dress says she likes the children's 'odd clothes'? What might she like about them? Why does the boy think they are odd?*
- ➔ On p9, check that the children know what the boy means by 'up to no good'. Ask: *Why do you think he feels Biff and the others are up to no good? Is he being fair?*
- ➔ *(Questioning)* On p10, ask the children to think of a question they would like to ask the boy who calls for the guards. Prompt them by saying: *I'd like to ask the boy why he is so cross with Biff, Chip, Kipper and Anneena that he wants to call the guards.*
- ➔ *(Predicting)* After reading p13, say: *I wonder why the girl in the pink dress is following the children.* Encourage the children to make predictions.
- ➔ *(Predicting)* After reading p17, ask: *Where you think Chip and Kipper are hiding?*
- ➔ On p20, ask the children to share how they think Biff feels about wearing a dress now.
- ➔ *(Summarizing)* When the children have finished reading the story, ask them to describe the character of the boy who calls the guards.

## Returning to the story

- ➔ *(Questioning)* Look again at the picture on p6–7. Ask the children to think of some questions to ask the children at the palace about their clothes. Prompt them by saying: *I wonder what the children like and dislike about their clothes.*
- ➔ *(Summarizing)* Ask the children to explain, in their own words, how the girl in the dress helped the children escape from the guards.
- ➔ Ask: *Why do you think the girl in the pink dress helped the children? What might have happened if she hadn't helped?*
- ➔ Ask the children to look at the story map on p22. Invite them to spend a minute or two using the story map to retell the story in their own head, and then ask them to team up with a partner and take turns to use the map to retell the story aloud.

## 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 *d-r-e-ss*, *r-o-bb-er-s*.
- ➔ Support 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 it 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

- ➔ Organize the children into small groups. Ask one child in each group to take on the role of the girl in the pink dress and sit in the hot seat.
- ➔ Explain that you would like the other children in the group to ask the girl questions to find out more about why she helped Biff, Chip, Kipper and Anneena.
- ➔ For example, they could ask the girl: *How did you feel when the guards started looking for Biff and the others? What made you decide to help them? Would you have liked to have swapped clothes and worn trousers like Biff?*
- ➔ Choose a different child to sit in the hot seat and ask them to take on the role of the boy who called the guards in the story.
- ➔ Explain that you would like the other children in the group to ask the boy questions to find out how he felt when Biff, Chip, Kipper and Anneena turned up, and why he called the guards.
- ➔ For example, they could ask the boy: *Why did you call the guards? Why didn't you like Biff and the other children? What did you want the guards to do?*

## Writing activities

- ➔ Ask the children to think of an item of clothing such as a dress, a pair of trousers, a jumper or a pair of shorts. They should write a short list of good and bad things about their chosen item of clothing – e.g. for shorts they might write:
  - ⇒ Good things: shorts are easy to run in; they don't get dirty or torn easily; they keep you cool in the summer.
  - ⇒ Bad things: sometimes shorts make your legs cold; they don't look very smart.
- ➔ Ask the children to talk with a partner about what they are going to write in their lists before they write anything down.
- ➔ Encourage the children to re-read what they have written to check it makes sense.

## Cross-curricular activity

### History

- ➔ Encourage the children to use books or child-friendly sites on the Internet to find out more about what children wore in the past. They could research clothes from the 18th century (when this adventure is set) or link their research to a current history topic.

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## Curriculum links and assessment

### Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale

- Reads familiar words with growing automaticity. This includes the YR and some of the Y1/2 high frequency words which are easily decodable and some common exception words. (ORCS Standard 2, 2)
- Can talk about texts, expressing opinions about things they like and dislike in stories, poems and non-fiction texts. (E) (ORCS Standard 2, 3)
- Can retell known stories, including significant events/main ideas in sequence. (R) (ORCS Standard 2, 8)

### Letters and Sounds: Phase 4

*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 The National Curriculum in England: English Programme of Study, Year 1

	National Curriculum objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Spoken language</b>	Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas (SpokLang.7)	Check the children can ask appropriate questions and answer in role as a character from the story in the hot seat activity.
<b>Reading: Word reading</b>	Read accurately by blending sounds in unfamiliar words containing GPCs that have been taught (Y1 ReadWord.3)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge and skills to sound out and blend the sounds in less familiar words.
<b>Reading: Comprehension</b>	Making inferences on the basis of what is being said and done (Y1 ReadComp.2iv)	Check the children are able to discuss and make inferences about why characters act as they do, e.g. explaining why the boy in the story calls the guards.
<b>Writing: Composition</b>	Re-reading what they have written to check that it makes sense (Y1 WritComp.1iv)	Check the children re-read their list of pros and cons of their chosen type of clothing, and make changes, if necessary, to ensure that it makes sense.

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

	Experiences and outcomes	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Listening and talking</b>	When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can exchange information, experiences, explanations, ideas and opinions, and clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more. (LIT 1-09a)	Check the children can ask appropriate questions and answer in role as a character from the story in the hot seat activity.
<b>Reading</b>	I can use my knowledge of sight vocabulary, phonics, context clues, punctuation and grammar to read with understanding and expression. (ENG 1-12a)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge and skills to sound out and blend the sounds in less familiar words.
	I can share my thoughts about structure, characters and/or setting, recognise the writer's message and relate it to my own experiences, and comment on the effective choice of words and other features. (ENG 1-19a)	Check the children are able to discuss and make inferences about why characters act as they do, e.g. explaining why the boy in the story calls the guards.
<b>Writing</b>	Throughout the writing process, I can check that my writing makes sense. (LIT 1-23a)	Check the children re-read their list of pros and cons of their chosen type of clothing, and make changes, if necessary, to ensure that it makes sense.

## WALES Curriculum for Wales: Foundation Phase Framework, Year 1

	Framework objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Oracy</b>	Show understanding of what they have heard by asking questions to find out more information (Y1_OracList.10)	Check the children can ask appropriate questions and answer in role as a character from the story in the hot seat activity.
<b>Reading</b>	apply the following reading strategies with increasing independence – phonic strategies to decode words (Y1_ReadStrat.5i)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge and skills to sound out and blend the sounds in less familiar words.
	Explore language, information and events in texts (Y1_ReadResp.2) look for clues in the text to understand information (Y1_ReadStrat.12)	Check the children are able to discuss and make inferences about why characters act as they do, e.g. explaining why the boy in the story calls the guards.
<b>Writing</b>	Write words, phrases and simple sentences and read back own attempts (Y1_WritMean.5)	Check the children re-read their list of pros and cons of their chosen type of clothing, and make changes, if necessary, to ensure that it makes sense.

**NORTHERN IRELAND** Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Primary  
Level 1/2

	Levels of progression	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Talking and listening</b>	Use a general vocabulary to express thoughts, imaginings and opinions (L2_com_talk.3)	Check the children can ask appropriate questions and answer in role as a character from the story in the hot seat activity.
<b>Reading</b>	Use visual clues to locate information (L1_com_read.3ii)	Check the children look at and use the pictures to help them understand the story, e.g. spotting clues that clarify how characters are feeling.
	understand that words are made up of sounds and syllables and that sounds are represented by letters (L1_com_read.2i) use a range of reading strategies (L2_com_read.2)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge and skills to sound out and blend the sounds in less familiar words.
<b>Writing</b>	talk about what they are going to write and how they will present their writing (L2_com_writ.1)	Check the children talk about what they are going to include in their lists before they write anything down.

**CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL** Primary English Curriculum Framework: Level 1

	Learning objectives	Book-related assessment pointers
<b>Speaking and listening</b>	Talk about events in a story and make simple inferences about characters and events to show understanding. (1Ri2)	Check the children can ask appropriate questions and answer in role as a character from the story in the hot seat activity.
<b>Reading</b>	Talk about events in a story and make simple inferences about characters and events to show understanding. (1Ri2)	Check the children are able to discuss and make inferences about why characters act as they do, e.g. explaining why the boy in the story calls the guards.
	Use phonic knowledge to read decodable words and to attempt to sound out some elements of unfamiliar words. (1R06)	Check the children can use their phonic knowledge and skills to sound out and blend the sounds in less familiar words.
<b>Writing</b>	Develop strategies to build vocabulary. (1W06)	Check the children talk about what they are going to include in their lists before they write anything down.