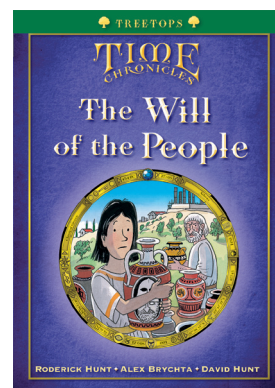


Stage 12+

The Will of the People

Written by David Hunt and illustrated by Alex Brychta

Teaching notes written by Gill Howell



Historical background

- This story takes place in Ancient Greece in the 5th Century BC, when the city of Athens was beginning to be rebuilt after the occupation by the Persians.
- At this time, all decisions relating to the running of the country were decided by democratic vote. Neena and Wilf find themselves searching for a Viran who wishes to create chaos by getting the people to turn against Pericles, a popular figure on the Athenian Council, hoping that this will begin the downfall of the Greek democracy.

Group/Guided reading

Introducing the book

- Look together at the illustration on the front cover and read the title. Ask the children to suggest where and when the story is set.
- Turn to the back cover and read the blurb. Were their suggestions correct? Ask them what they already know about the Ancient Greece. Turn to pages 46 and 47 to familiarise them with the historical background to the story.
- Ask the children to suggest why rebuilding the Parthenon was important to the Athenian council.
- Before beginning to read the story, ask the children to turn to page 44 and read the glossary together to help fluent reading.

Reading the book

- Ask the children to read the story independently, pausing occasionally to discuss what they have read.
- At the end of Chapter 1, invite the children to say what the councillor thought the smashing of the pots meant. Take a moment to talk about what 'a sign' is and why people used to believe in them.
- At the end of Chapter 3, ask the children who they think the potter really is. Ask: *How do they think he might be able to stop 'the so-called will of the people'?*
- At the end of Chapter 7, ask the children what they think has happened to the money. Ask: *Do you think holding a vote about Tektos' guilt or innocence is a fair way to decide?*

Returning to the book

- Ask the children to say if and when they first suspected that the potter Bedros was really a Viran. Ask them to find the page in the text.
- Ask the children if it was a good idea for the Neena and Wilf to get work helping to rebuild the Parthenon. Ask them to say why or why not.
- Turn to page 42. Ask the children why the name *Mortlock* had such an effect on the Viran. Ask: *What might have happened if Neena hadn't used the name? Would the ending be different?*

Speaking, listening and drama

- Hold a role-play session to decide on Tektos' guilt or innocence. Allocate roles among the children, i.e. prosecutors and defenders, to put forward arguments from their viewpoint and ask the rest of the children to vote at the end.
- Ask a volunteer to sit in the hot seat as Bedros. Ask him to describe his life in Athens and why he inwardly curses the Greeks.
- Ask the children to read page 48, *A voice from history*. Ask the children to work in groups of three or four and discuss whether they agree or disagree with the speaker's views. Encourage them to come to a consensus of opinion. Tell the groups to agree on a spokesperson and to give their group's opinions and reasons for them to the rest of the class.

Writing

- Discuss the plot of the story with the children and draw up a story map together. Work out how many times the story moves to a different place. (Eight) Ask the children to list the characters in the story.
- Explain that they are going to write a playscript for the story. Discuss whether all the scene changes are necessary. Ask: *How could you reduce the number to three or four, e.g. by omitting the scene in Mortlock's history lesson, or by beginning the play when Neena and Wilf arrive in Ancient Greece?*
- Remind them about the conventions of writing playscripts, such as a cast, stage directions, lack of speech punctuation etc. Ask the children in pairs first to plan their play and then write it independently.
- Alternatively, allocate a scene to pairs of children and ask them to focus just on their own scene. Collect the scenes and ask them to read the whole play.

Links to the wider curriculum

History

- Research Pericles and his role in Ancient Athens. Ask the children to draw up a fact file about his life.
- Ask the children to find out about the Parthenon, where it was and what its purpose was.

Art

- Ask the children to look at the pictures and descriptions of the Greek pottery in the book. Provide them with paper cups and ask them to decorate them in the Ancient Greek style.

PSHCE/Geography

- Ask the children to research which countries around the world are run as a democracy and what alternative methods are used. Ask them to discuss which systems they think work best and why.



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