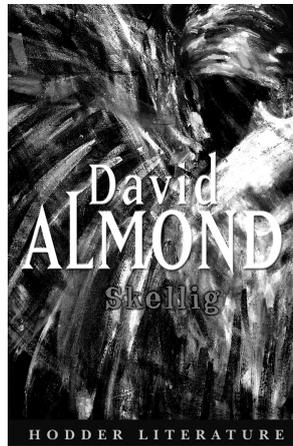


# Skellig



TEACHER'S RESOURCE  
John Catron and Jean Moore

H O D D E R L I T E R A T U R E

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# Introduction to *Skellig* Teacher's Resource

This book is an excellent choice of novel for a Year 7 class, dealing as it does with a central character, Michael, and his spiritual journey through the days at a new home when his baby sister is seriously ill. The sense of both realism and magic are maintained, as Michael meets the strange creature in the old garage and keeps his discovery secret to all except his new friend, Mina.

The novel provides many opportunities for reading activities, so that the dialogue and description are fully appreciated. The lessons here offer suggestions for a variety of ways of reading: pupils reading aloud the words of the characters, whole class dramatised readings, and pair/group reading. Speaking, listening and writing activities also evolve naturally from the content of the various chapters as the novel is read. The use of symbolism throughout also becomes a strong focus for the students' scrapbooks, which are used to chart their own reading journey through the novel. They collect pages of words and images relating to the central characters, themes and symbols, settings and their significance, and (inspired by their reading) begin to plan their own stories.

The lesson plans are meant as guides for teachers, but should be adapted according to the class or teacher's needs. They are not meant to be prescriptive. Similarly, the Resource Sheets offer suggestions for teachers to use with their classes, often providing a type of writing frame to aid thinking and recording.

# Guided Sessions

There are five proposed lessons where guided work (called Guided seminars) takes place: Lessons 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11. In these lessons it is suggested that the teacher works with one group for approximately 20 minutes, guiding them as they work on a specific task. The tasks and the groups can, of course, be adapted according to the various levels of ability in the class, but in this unit the five guided sessions are directed at five distinct groups of pupils of similar abilities: two lower, two middle and one upper.

<b>Lesson 3</b>	Teacher guides a lower ability group.	It is important to assist this group at an early stage to get them started on the type of task that will take them through other lessons. Here they study three main characters.
<b>Lesson 5</b>	Teacher guides a middle ability group.	This group works with the teacher, studying the way language is used in speech.
<b>Lesson 7</b>	Teacher guides the upper ability group.	This group plan and begin to write parallel narratives.
<b>Lesson 9</b>	Teacher guides a different lower group.	The teacher guides this group to continue developing their narrative structures.
<b>Lesson 11</b>	Teacher guides any group in need of assistance.	The groups are guided through the final stages of their presentations to the class: explaining and showing their scrapbooks, communicating their ideas about the significance of symbolism in <i>Skellig</i> , and sharing some of their narratives.

It is important to view this only as a suggestion; classes vary too much for there to be only one way of planning guided sessions. It would be possible to use the planned activities for small groups of mixed ability, letting the pupils choose together which task they wish to pursue. Some classes may have fewer or more upper or lower groups, and work and guided seminars would need to be adapted accordingly.

In these lessons the Resource Sheets are structured to assist the groups not guided by the teacher, giving them a specific task (in *Mission Impossible* style!) and leading them through the stages. A Guided seminar plan also provides the teacher with a framework for working with the chosen group.

# Outcomes

The rationale behind this resource is that pupils should read, and have read to them, a text which provides enjoyment and inspiration while also encouraging them to challenge their own thinking.

The activities described here are therefore designed to promote enjoyment and fun as well as depth of thought, so that pupils respond to the reading in a variety of ways: teasing out their own conclusions about character and feeling from clues in the text, transferring their knowledge and understanding to create other forms of writing, and beginning to look beyond the story at the writer's craft.

## Speaking and Listening

- Read aloud – dramatised readings, pairs, small groups and silently.
- Listen to readings – by teacher or other pupils.
- Discuss ideas and responses in small and large groups.
- Take part in role play.
- Take part in a class presentation.

## Reading

- Begin to analyse what happens in the reading process.
- Gather and use textual evidence to understand character.
- Use various media to do research.
- Look for patterns and links within the text.
- Understand how themes underpin the novel.

## Writing

- Record responses to their reading and related research, in the form of notes, comments and various pieces of artwork.
- Make notes on characters, setting, plot and themes.

## Key themes

The novel's themes provide many opportunities for reflective thought and discussion:

- Growing up – times of change and transition.
- Tolerance – understanding those who are strange or different to us.
- Belief in the power of love and hope.
- Considering the magical possibilities of evolution of a species and the links between all forms of life.

Short-term planning for *Skellig* by David Almond

<p><b>Year 7</b></p>	<p><b>Aims and rationale:</b> To provide an innovative, creative and structured approach to the reading of David Almond's <i>Skellig</i>, pursuing the following objectives:</p> <p><b>Objectives:</b> Word 14 – define and deploy words with precision, including their exact implication in context S &amp; L 17 – extend their spoken repertoire by experimenting with language in different roles and dramatic contexts Reading 8 – infer and deduce meanings using evidence in the text, identifying where and how meanings are conveyed</p>				<p><b>Possible cross-curricular links:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RE</b> – angels, the power of faith and love</li> <li>• <b>Science</b> – birds, bone structures, skeletons, evolution</li> </ul>
<p><b>Term</b> _____</p>	<p><b>Objectives (cont):</b> Reading 15 – trace the way a writer structures a text to prepare the reader for the ending, and comment on the effectiveness of the ending Writing 5 – structure a story Writing 7 – use a range of narrative devices Writing 9 – make links between their reading of fiction, plays and poetry and the choices they make as writers</p>				<p><b>Homework/Extension/Research</b></p>
<p><b>Week</b> _____</p>					
<p><b>Teacher</b> _____</p>					
<p><b>Lesson</b></p>	<p><b>Word and Sentence objectives – integrated approaches</b></p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p>	<p><b>Development (including Guided work)</b></p>	<p><b>Plenary</b></p>	<p><b>Homework/Extension/Research</b></p>
<p><b>1</b></p>	<p>Teacher copies and then cuts out quotations at the top of RS 1, hands out to pupils, who read them aloud. Class asked to jot down impressions and ideas.</p>		<p>A drama activity is set up to explore the symbolic setting of the entrance to the garage, and Michael standing at the door. This is done before the reading actually begins. Ch.1–3 are read.</p>	<p>Discussion about why Michael tells no one.</p>	<p>Class asked to read Ch.4 and 5, and use RS 2 to record their answers to the questions.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p>Homework orchestra: class asked to select a sentence from their homework. A volunteer then 'conducts' the presentation.</p>	<p>Teacher introduces the idea of the scrapbook and how this will be used and developed as the students read through the novel. Ideas are gathered. Ch.6–9 are read and the pupils begin to trace the 'journeys' made by Michael, the baby and Skellig himself.</p>		<p>Their reading is summarised by reminding them of the meaning of the word 'theme' and pairs being asked to consider the themes of this book. This is 'orchestrated' as for the starter.</p>	<p>Each pupil asked to create a double page entitled 'Mind' and write up their first impressions to add to their scrapbooks.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p>Each pupil asked to choose one sentence from their homework and to mill about to find someone else with a similar idea. Groups form, and then read out their ideas.</p>	<p>The independent groups are set up and given their instructions. The 'rules' are explained and outcomes made clear, so that the teacher can work closely with one group only for 20 minutes.</p>	<p>The groups will be reading Ch.10 and recording their responses by preparing additional pages for their scrapbooks. Teacher conducts Guided seminar with one lower ability group.</p>	<p>Each group presents examples of their observations to the whole group.</p>	<p>Read Ch.11–13 and add to their scrapbook pages.</p>
<p><b>Sharing Scrapbooks (Guided)</b></p>					

Short-term planning for <i>Skellig</i> by David Almond					
Year 7	Aims and rationale:	Objectives (cont):	Possible cross-curricular links:	Homework/Extension/Research	
<b>Term</b> _____	To provide an innovative, creative and structured approach to the reading of David Almond's <i>Skellig</i> , pursuing the following objectives:	<b>Reading 15</b> – trace the way a writer structures a text to prepare the reader for the ending, and comment on the effectiveness of the ending <b>Writing 5</b> – structure a story <b>Writing 7</b> – use a range of narrative devices <b>Writing 9</b> – make links between their reading of fiction, plays and poetry and the choices they make as writers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RE</b> – angels, the power of faith and love</li> <li>• <b>Science</b> – birds, bone structures, skeletons, evolution</li> </ul>		
<b>Week</b> _____	<b>Objectives:</b> <b>Word 14</b> – define and deploy words with precision, including their exact implication in context <b>S &amp; L 17</b> – extend their spoken repertoire by experimenting with language in different roles and dramatic contexts <b>Reading 8</b> – infer and deduce meanings using evidence in the text, identifying where and how meanings are conveyed				
<b>Teacher</b> _____					
Lesson	Word and Sentence objectives – integrated approaches	Introduction	Development (including Guided work)	Plenary	Homework/Extension/Research
<b>4 Themes, Ideas and Symbols</b>	Plot, character, setting. The class are reminded of the meanings of these words, and on small whiteboards or paper each pupil writes down an important event from the three chapters read for homework.	Next something about a character is written, then an aspect of setting. Each is held up for the teacher to see, and individuals asked to explain some of their choices.	The class are now asked to prepare the pages for their scrapbook entitled 'Themes, Ideas and Symbols'. Each group is given a different idea to trace through the book so far, and are asked for their ideas before being given some that could also be used.	Each pupil is asked to reflect quietly on the chapters just read. Michael's world has become a frightening place in so many ways.	
<b>5 Making Sense of the Surreal (Guided)</b>	Who says this? A quick 'quiz' to remind the class of the speech of characters and the different voices.	Teacher reminds the class of the points in the story when Michael spoke to the being in the garage. Some of RS 13 is read aloud. The independent groups are set up and given their instructions. The 'rules' are explained again and outcomes made clear, so the teacher can work closely with only one group for 20 minutes.	The groups will be studying these snippets of conversation and looking at the way the voices are created and feelings expressed. Teacher conducts Guided seminar with one middle ability group.	A plenary will be held after the group work, to feed back the ideas in a formal way. Each group reports on their findings by putting a quotation on the board and writing around it.	The class are asked to add to their scrapbook pages, basing their comments and drawings on the chapters just read and using RS 16.
<b>6 Real Magic</b>	A quiet atmosphere needs to be established to aid reflective thought. Teacher asks for 1 minute of silence, when the class close their eyes and count their breaths or simply listen to as many faraway sounds as possible.	They are then asked to find the 'Themes, Ideas and Symbols' page in their scrapbook and, using only one page of a chapter they have read recently, to add to this page.	Teacher reads Ch.23-27, pausing after each chapter to ask pupils to reflect quietly before expressing their views about what is happening and how they feel about it. Teacher focuses the discussion on key areas. The phrase 'magic realism' is explained and RS 17 used to explore the idea.	Teacher selects six pupils to share their initial ideas, and decides on the order they will speak. Each pupil then shares the first story ideas without interruption from the teacher.	Teacher asks the pupils to continue to complete the three Journeys pages in their scrapbooks, for each of the three characters.

Short-term planning for <i>Skellig</i> by David Almond					
Year 7	Aims and rationale:	Objectives (cont):	Possible cross-curricular links:	Homework/Extension/Research	Plenary
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<b>Week</b> _____					
<b>Teacher</b> _____					
Lesson	Word and Sentence objectives – integrated approaches	Introduction	Development (including Guided work)	Plenary	Homework/Extension/Research
<b>7 Making Magic</b> (Guided)	Pupils explore the impact of opening lines in a variety of novels. Pupils explore and discuss their own emerging parallel narratives.		Pupils structure their own narratives and scrapbooks. Guided seminar on writing a parallel sequence – upper group.	Discussion of work-in-progress and skills acquisition.	Read Ch.28–31.
<b>8 Angels</b>	What exactly are angels? Pupils read some quotes and give their own views/anecdotes.	Improvised drama exploring the relationship between Mina and Michael – inner feelings versus outer constraints.	Comparing some of the themes in the poetry of Blake with those within the novel.	Whole class discussion on links between Blake and pupils' own narratives.	Read Ch.32–36.
<b>9 Endless Night</b> (Guided)	Analysis of opening paragraph of Ch.37 – 'An endless night.'	Group reading of Ch.37 – active reading techniques.	Group work on scrapbook and narratives. Guided seminar with lower group, on narratives.	Whole class discussion on work-in-progress on narrative structures.	Complete reading of Ch.37–41. Writing own narratives.

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<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Aims and rationale:</b> To provide an innovative, creative and structured approach to the reading of David Almond's <i>Skellig</i> , pursuing the following objectives:	<b>Objectives (cont):</b> <i>Reading 15</i> – trace the way a writer structures a text to prepare the reader for the ending, and comment on the effectiveness of the ending <i>Writing 5</i> – structure a story <i>Writing 7</i> – use a range of narrative devices <i>Writing 9</i> – make links between their reading of fiction, plays and poetry and the choices they make as writers	<b>Possible cross-curricular links:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RE</b> – angels, the power of faith and love</li> <li>• <b>Science</b> – birds, bone structures, skeletons, evolution</li> </ul>		
<b>Term</b> _____					
<b>Week</b> _____					
<b>Teacher</b> _____					
Lesson	Word and Sentence objectives – integrated approaches	Introduction	Development (including Guided work)	Plenary	Homework/Extension/Research
<b>10 Skellig</b>	Pupils explore the symbolism of <i>Skellig</i> .	Oxymoronic nature of bodies – strength versus fragility.	Artistic response to reading – links to scrapbook. Active reading of final chapters.	Pupils discuss their ideas for the presentations in next lesson.	Read Ch.42–46.
<b>11 Polishing the Prose</b> (Guided)	Teacher explains the presentation session.	Final preparation time.	Presentations.		
		Guided seminar for groups needing support on presentation.			
<b>12 Relating Magic</b>	Presentations.		Self-review and target setting.	Pupils discuss and share achievements and targets.	