

Year 2 stories

The Magic Brush

Long, long ago in China there lived a poor boy called Chang. Although he loved drawing, Chang was too poor to have a paintbrush so he used a stick. He would draw in the sand or scratch marks on walls.

Early one morning Chang saw a large, silver fish trapped in the reeds by the riverbank. The fish was struggling to get free. Because Chang felt sorry for the fish, he helped to release it.

Later that day Chang was sleeping. In his dream a man dressed in a silver cloak spoke to him. 'You are a kind boy Chang. I am giving you a magic brush. Use it to help the poor.' Chang woke with a start and lying beside him was a paintbrush.

So Chang painted the shape of a butterfly and it changed into a real butterfly and flew away. Chang was amazed with his gift and ran straight back to the village to see how he could help the poor people.

First, he painted a donkey for the young mother to help her carry her goods. Next he painted an ox to help the farmer pull his plough. After that he painted a hoe for the old lady to weed her garden. Everyday he found a new use for the paintbrush.

Unluckily, the emperor heard of Chang and his magic brush. He sent for Chang and ordered him to paint a field of gold. Chang didn't want to obey the greedy emperor so he drew a sea with a tiny island in the distance.

'Where is my field of gold?' shouted the emperor, angrily.

'Just here,' replied Chang drawing a tiny field on the island.

'Paint me a boat so that I can travel to the island,' snarled the emperor. So Chang painted a boat. The emperor climbed onto the boat. Chang drew the north wind blowing towards the island.

'I'm going too slowly,' roared the emperor. 'Paint stronger wind.'

So Chang drew a storm. Suddenly, the waves grew rougher until the boat capsized and the emperor disappeared. The Chang drew a white horse so that he could ride home and tell his friends what had happened to the emperor who wanted too much for himself.

Year 2 stories

The Magic Brush Story Card

Long ago there lived
called
although
draw/drew/paint
early one morning
when
saw
trapped/struggling
free/rescue/release
because
helped
later that day
dream
magic
help the poor
lying beside
changed
real
amazed
first/next/after that/everyday
unluckily
ordered
island
distance
where/there/here
angrily/slowly/quickly/greedily/suddenly
what had happened
who

The Magic Brush – ideas and innovations

Ideas

- This is a Chinese story – where is China – what do we know about it? Dress up as the emperor. Use paintbrush as a prop.
- What other stories are there in which someone is kind and gets a reward (3 wishes, the magic porridge pot). Read these and discuss similarities.
- What other ‘good deeds’ could Chang do with his brush?
- What good deeds do we do?
- If we had Chang’s brush what would we do?
- Helping others – charity.
- Gossip – people in the village talking about what has happened.
- Role-play the emperor receiving news about Chang.
- ‘Thoughts in the head’ – what in the emperor thinking?
- Hot seat the characters – freeze frame key scenes.
- Write in role – letter, diary or news report.
- Does the emperor deserve his ending?
- Paint some of the scenes that Chang paints for display.
- Learn and perform the story.

Innovations

I love this story – it has all the elements of a good tale – helping the poor, kindness, magic and a real baddie who needs to be put firmly in his place. Start with a simple substitution and add in description. Try then moving on to changing the setting so that the story has a different location. What might happen if Chang used the brush for mischievous acts – playing tricks on people? What other creature might Chang rescue? In my version, he saves a fish – there is another story that I tell in key stage 2 in which a poor fisherman also rescues a fish and is granted one wish.

Long, long ago in Wales there lived a poor boy called David.

Although he loved drawing, David was too poor to have a paintbrush so he used a stick. He would draw in the earth or scratch marks on walls.

Early one morning when David was walking to school, he saw a golden eagle trapped in the brambles. The golden eagle was struggling to get free. Because David felt sorry for the eagle, he helped to release it.