



Zero waste



Brighton & Hove environmental education

Might Be Useful: Notes for Teachers

'Might Be Useful' is a delightful story with an environmental message, written for Foundation Stage / KS1 pupils. Stan works at the dump and is appalled to see people throwing away things which he thinks 'might be useful.' In his shed he mends broken items and uses other people's 'rubbish' to make wonderful new objects. Reading and discussing the story will help pupils consider where our rubbish goes when we throw it away and the importance of reusing and mending whenever we can.



Might Be Useful can be downloaded in PowerPoint format from the Brighton & Hove environmental education project website (www.bhee.co.uk/resources). A set of 8 printed copies is available on FREE loan to Brighton & Hove schools. Contact helen.peake@resourcefutres.co.uk for more information.

Using 'Might Be Useful' in the classroom

1. Literacy

'Might Be Useful' is written in simple, repetitive text, perfect for reading with the whole class, small groups or individuals. It can be the starting point for a wide range of literacy activities, and is perfect to support an environmental topic or themed week. Pages 2 to 4 of this document include 3 literacy suggestions: writing Stan's diary, writing a job application to work as Stan's assistant, and responding to a letter from Stan.

2. Design and technology

At the end of 'Might Be Useful' Stan makes a box of musical instruments out of the 'rubbish' that other people throw away. Pupils can be asked to bring clean 'rubbish' from home (cereal boxes, plastic bottles, yogurt pots etc) and use them to design and make their own musical instruments. You may want to provide a range of small items made from different materials to include in shakers e.g., corks, plastic milk bottle lids, buttons. (It is preferable to use waste materials than food such as rice and pasta.) A selection of elastic bands is also useful for pupils who want to make stringed instruments.



3. Music

'Might Be Useful' is the perfect starting point for music activities, using musical instruments made by the children (see above), conventional instruments available in school, or a combination of the two. See page 5 for suggested activities and a song, which could be used in a performance to the rest of the school and / or parents.

Brighton & Hove's waste collections

In 'Might Be Useful', the rubbish from the skips is dumped in a huge hole in the ground i.e. a landfill site. In Brighton & Hove our rubbish is now taken to an Energy from Waste plant in Newhaven, where it is burnt to produce electricity. While the electricity is useful, the materials used to make the items in the rubbish are lost. In environmental terms, reusing and recycling are preferable to burning our waste. If you would like to discuss this with your pupils we recommend a short video on Devon County Council's website: <http://zone.recycledevon.org/videos>

Literacy activity 1: diary writing

Use the text and pictures on pages 5 to 9 of 'Might Be Useful' to write Stan's diary in the spaces below. Add some of your own ideas too. Monday has been done for you as an example.

Monday (see page 5 of 'Might Be Useful')

Today I was annoyed to see a boy and his mum throwing a bike away. I stopped them, of course, and put it in my shed. It only needs a bit of mending and a new coat of paint. It'll be as good as new.

Tuesday (page 6)

Wednesday (page 7)

Thursday (page 8)

Friday (page 9 to the end of the book)

Literacy activity 2: job application

Stan has renamed the dump the 'Household Waste Recycling Centre' and is advertising for an assistant. Fill in the application form and you might be invited for interview!

Application form

Job title: Household Waste Recycling Centre Assistant

Reporting to: Stan Smith

Salary: to be discussed with the successful applicant

Starting date: as soon as possible

Please complete all sections of this form.

Your name	
Question 1: Why would you like to work at the Household Waste Recycling Centre?	
Question 2: What experience do you have of reusing and recycling?	
Question 3: What skills do you bring to this job?	
Signature	
Date	

Literacy activity 3: responding to a letter from Stan

Household Waste Recycling Centre

Greenfield Road

Brighton

24th August 2015

Dear Children

My name is Stan and I work at your local Recycling Centre. It used to be called the dump, but we changed the name because we want people to reuse and recycle as much as possible.

It's a great job and I meet lot of interesting people. However, lots of the things that people throw away could be reused. We have a huge rubbish problem and people don't seem to care!

I have three questions that I hope you will be able to help me answer.

- 1. Why do people in Brighton and Hove throw away broken things instead of mending them?**
- 2. How can we persuade people to reuse things instead of throwing them away?**
- 3. How can we encourage people to recycle more?**

When we have some answers to these questions we can plan a campaign to make less rubbish! I'm really looking forward to hearing your ideas.

Thanks for your help!

Yours sincerely



**Stan Smith
Manager
Household Waste Recycling Center**

Music activity 1: musical narration of the story

Read 'Might Be Useful' and identify parts of the story that make a sound. Some sounds are mentioned in the text (e.g., "lorries took the rubbish...") some are implied (e.g., closing the shed door) while others are suggested by the illustrations (e.g., gasps of amazement when Stan brings things out of the shed.) Decide on how to represent each sound using instruments, voice or body sounds.

Decide who will read the story and who is responsible for the various sounds, then rehearse your story with its musical accompaniment. If possible, perform it to another class, or in an assembly. (See activity 3 for a song you could use with a performance.) For a great end to the musical narration, see activity 2 below.

Music activity 2: cumulative finale

Use page 17 of 'Might Be Useful' (slide 8 in the PowerPoint) as inspiration for a finale for your musical narration of the story, or a stand-alone composition exploring a cumulative musical structure.

Explain that the people watching Stan take it in turns to choose an instrument and join in with the music; your composition will have the same structure, with children joining in one by one. With the children sitting in a circle, give each a percussion instrument. Agree signals for starting and stopping, and practice using these. You may also want to use hand signals for 'loud' and 'soft' to encourage the children to explore different ways of playing their instrument.

Choose a child to start the composition, playing their instrument as they choose; then indicate for each child to join in one by one around the circle, until the whole class is playing. Use your agreed 'loud' and 'soft' signals to vary the volume of the music, then indicate to the first child to stop playing. Indicate for each child to stop playing one by one around the circle, until the last child is playing on their own. Finally stop this child, and your composition is finished.

Variations

1. Divide pupils into groups, and structure your composition group-by-group instead of child-by-child. Groups could be made up of children playing similar instruments or existing groups within the class.
 2. With older pupils, agree a rhythm to use in the cumulative composition. (e.g., the rhythm of the words 'think again it might be useful.')
- Practice the rhythm using clapping / knee slaps before introducing it on the instruments.

Music activity 3: 'Might Be Useful' song

To the tune of 'John Brown's Baby had a cold upon his chest.'

(The underlined syllables fall on each beat as you sing.)

You read a magazine and then you throw it in the bin!

You read a magazine and then you throw it in the bin!

You read a magazine and then you throw it in the bin!

What else can you do?

Think again! It might be use-ful! Think again! It might be use-ful!

Think again! It might be use-ful! Useful for me or you.

You use your shampoo bottle then you throw it in the bin etc

You buy yourself a new hat, throw the old one in the bin etc

Then children suggest their own verses, thinking about things they or their families throw away.

Discuss what you would do with the objects in the song if you did not throw them in the bin, and make a new song based on this.

E.g., You read a magazine and then you give it to your friend