

# Media in Teaching Literature to Young Learners

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**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU**  
**UČITELJSKI FAKULTET**  
**ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE**

**PETRA GUTIĆ**  
**DIPLOMSKI RAD**

**MEDIA IN TEACHING LITERATURE**  
**TO YOUNG LEARNERS**

**Zagreb, rujan 2019.**

**SVEUČILIŠTE U ZAGREBU  
UČITELJSKI FAKULTET  
ODSJEK ZA UČITELJSKE STUDIJE  
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## **SAŽETAK**

Tehnologija svakim danom sve više napreduje, dok današnji učitelji konstantno traže nove načine kako bi mlade učenike potaknuli i zainteresirali za učenje stranog jezika. Učitelji se vode smjernicama propisanim Kurikulumom za nastavu engleskog jezika prilikom planiranja nastavnog sata, no isto tako trebaju uzeti u obzir učenikove potrebe i interese. Ovaj rad naglašava važnost korištenja slikovnica, pa tako i njihovih prednosti, te integraciju digitalnih medija u nastavu stranog jezika. Rad također predlaže na koji način organizirati i provesti projekt temeljen na slikovnici, a određene aktivnosti projekta povezane su s upotrebom novih medija. Projekt je osmišljen u svrhu razvoja učeničkih jezičnih vještina, strategija učenja, medijske pismenosti i kreativnosti.

Ključne riječi: mladi učenici, učenje stranog jezika, mediji, slikovnice, projekti

## **SUMMARY**

Living in a world of advanced technology, today's teachers are in a constant search for finding new ways of stimulating and engaging young learners into foreign language learning keeping in mind their needs and interest, but also following the curriculum guidelines. This thesis emphasizes the importance and benefits of using picturebooks, and adequately integrating digital media into a foreign language classroom. It also provides ideas for organizing and running a project based on appropriate, authentic picturebook connected with the use of new media. The project focuses on developing children's language skills, learning strategies, media literacy, and creativity.

Keywords: young learners, foreign language learning, media, picturebooks, projects

## INTRODUCTION

Education is hugely important. Its purpose is helping learners to face different challenges and overcome obstacles, learning values, encouraging children to fulfil their dreams by acquiring useful skills, giving children the opportunity to become a productive member of society. A good education is worth the time, and lays a foundation for a better tomorrow. It seems, unfortunately, that schools fail to achieve the aims of good education. In Croatia, a new program for schools (*Škola za život*) that focuses on preparing children for adult life has been adopted, and starts in schools this fall. But what majority keeps forgetting is that education itself is a part of life (Dewey, 1897). What children experience outside the classroom should be connected with what they learn in school. Education and life should be linked together. We might have the new curriculum, but that is not enough. Changes are necessary, and they should start with teachers because, without them, there would be no education.

One of the most important aspects of human life are relationships. In order to form and sustain good relationships, one has to communicate with others. Language classes offer learners the opportunity for developing their communicative skills. The need to master multiple languages has been increasing. Furthermore, many research suggest that children should start acquiring a foreign language at an early age because of its numerous positive outcomes. There was a survey on language competences conducted in Croatia, which has proved that early exposure to a foreign language is beneficial in the long run (Culej, 2013). Foreign language teachers have a significant role in children's language development, and the development of learning strategies; therefore, they have a huge responsibility.

Many children today learn how to use computers, tablets, smartphones, and other technological devices even before they learn how to read or write as a result of high exposure to technology from an early age. The use of digital media in schools and classroom digitalization has become the subject of debate in Croatia due to the new educational reform and curriculum. While some people, including teachers, support the use of different digital tools, others think it interferes with the teaching process and learners' concentration. Not only it is very important to address the question whether their use in the classroom has a positive, or negative impact on children's development, but also consider whether digital media can be effectively integrated into lessons, and in what way.



It is advisable for teachers to use diverse teaching materials in the classroom. Regarding English foreign language (EFL) classroom, picturebooks have been recognized as a useful tool with many advantages (see Birketveit, 2015; Narančić Kovač, 1999; 2016; Mourão, 2015). EFL teachers should devote their time to selecting appropriate, authentic picturebooks which they plan on using in the classroom because “storybooks need to be analysed carefully so they can be used to their full potential” (Ellis and Brewster, 2014, p. 14).

This thesis provides a number of activities in the form of a project which can be conducted in the EFL classroom with young learners. The project is based on an authentic picturebook providing learners the English language in its natural environment. The project also demands a different way of planning and organizing lessons which can be easily connected to other school subjects. In that way, children acquire English through various interesting topics. Planning and running a project takes time, and teachers have the opportunity to show their creativity and competence. That being said, a great number of books has been published to help teachers organize and create projects based on picturebooks in their foreign language classrooms (e.g. Backus, Evans, & Thompson, 2002, or McCleaf Nescepa & Reeve, 2003). This thesis also provides some ideas for making learning and teaching a foreign language interesting, fun and enjoyable for both teachers and young learners. It should be noted that the focus of this thesis is on young EFL learners in lower primary grades.

## **YOUNG EFL LEARNERS**

A learner is a person acquiring an array of different skills, knowledge, behaviour, etc. whether in school, or any other educational institution. Arnold, Bradshaw & Gregson (2019) say that young learners are “children between the ages of six and sixteen years learning English, at primary (elementary) and secondary (high school) levels” (p. 288). For the purpose of this work, young learners are children between the ages of six and eleven years. Yildirim and Pinar Torun (2014) state that young learners belong to a specific learning group because of the period in which they face constant changes, and that is why they have different interests, needs, and ways of learning from other, older learners. Young learners pay limited attention because they can get easily distracted, have a lot of energy, an excellent ability to imitate sounds around them, and are not afraid to experiment. All these characteristics can be useful in acquiring and learning a foreign language if pointed in the right direction.

Young English foreign language (EFL) learners are pupils who learn English as their foreign language at a young age in a country where English language is not the first language, and is not used in everyday communication. EFL learners in Croatia usually learn English in schools, but they can also learn it in other educational institutions that provide English language programmes. The English language has been used more and more for communication between people who speak different mother tongues. Communication is an important part of humanity, and thus one of the most important things in education. Language classes provide different opportunities for the development of communication skills, and one of those classes are foreign language classes. Children are eager to share their interests, ideas, experiences, etc. and foreign language teachers are here to enable them to share their thoughts on another language using various number of strategies and interesting activities.

### **Early language learning**

Being able to communicate in another language, besides one's mother tongue, contributes to individual's personal and social development which is the reason why learning and teaching the English language is aimed at motivating learners and developing their interest in foreign languages. But what is language? Here is one of many definitions:

“At the crudest level of description, we may say that a language associates sound and meaning in a particular way; to have command of a language is to be able, in principle, to understand what is said and to produce a signal with an intended semantic interpretation” (Chomsky, 2002, p. 102).

Many recent research (see Nikolov & Mihaljević Djigunović, 2006; Vilke, 1976; 1993) suggest that children should start acquiring a foreign language at a young age, i.e. the younger, the better, because of the numerous positive outcomes. For example, a survey conducted on individual language experience in Finland has shown that brain's response to novel non-native speech is stronger if foreign language acquisition occurs in early childhood, i.e. brain's electrical activity becomes higher. Therefore, the process of coding information becomes faster which is later transferred in adulthood (Kimppa, Kujala & Shtyrov, 2016).

As far as Croatia is concerned, *Kurikulum nastavnog predmeta Engleski jezik za osnovne škole i gimnazije* (2019), i.e. English language curriculum for primary and secondary schools, has set aims for learning and teaching English language, such as: training a learner to autonomously use English in speaking and writing, understanding and respecting other cultures including its own, taking responsibility for personal growth, working in global society, etc. In Croatia, children start learning the English language from the first grade, but also a fair number of kindergartens provide English language programmes. During first four grades, i.e. lower grades, pupils have two English language lessons per week, meaning 70 lessons per year. One lesson lasts 45 minutes. This is the amount of time EFL teachers spend with just one grade to accomplish all the aims and objectives prescribed by the curriculum that consists of three main domains: communicative language competence, intercultural communicative competence, and autonomy in language proficiency.

From a research conducted in Croatia (Mihaljević Djigunović, 2015), and based on a mixed-method approach, findings suggest a relationship between young EFL learners' age, language proficiency, and affective processes. When it comes to age, in comparison to older beginners, younger beginners are more motivated and more decisive in choosing the best arrangement. However, they do prefer controlled and structured learning environment. Generally speaking, young learners need order, peace, and teacher control. Regarding the young learners' language proficiency, it

depends on learners' motivation and enjoyment when learning English. The higher motivation, the higher concentration and engagement into foreign language learning, which then leads to better language proficiency. Young learners have to deal with many affective processes; language development is not the only focus of foreign language learning. The author Mihaljević Djigunović (2015) thus emphasizes the role of teachers' awareness of these rapidly changing affective processes so learners' language learning process can be both effective and seen as a positive experience.

### **Developing language skills and learning strategies**

While acquiring a foreign language, children develop their language skills. Teachers play an important role in children's language development by selecting appropriate activities to teach different aspects of language what goes hand in hand with understanding purpose and focus of specific activities (Ellis & Brewster, 2014). If possible, they should adapt the activity to learners' age and language level, or instead choose another activity that best suits their abilities. Teachers should always keep in mind the main aims and objectives of the lesson, and prepare the activities accordance.

However, teaching children to develop their learning skills is not enough. Children should be taught how to learn, how to develop their own learning strategies, and metacognitive awareness. When talking about metacognitive awareness, the focus is on knowing oneself as a learner. This term incorporates language, cognitive, social, cross-cultural, and intercultural awareness in story-based lessons. In addition to this, learning to learn includes "a wide variety of activities designed to develop metacognitive awareness and learning strategies" (Ellis & Brewster, 2014, p. 42). The focus is on teaching how and what to learn in order for children to become more effective and independent learners. It should be noted that all this can contribute to the global development of the child. Picturebooks can serve as a valuable and helpful tool for such types of lessons which will be later discussed in the thesis. Moreover, developing a positive attitude toward learning English and creating a pleasant atmosphere is a huge advantage. Children need motivating and fun environment.

Furthermore, children use different learning strategies. Sometimes they use them without even realising it, and sometimes they use them consciously. Overall, learning strategies imply what a learner does to learn something. Ellis & Brewster

(2014) have divided learning strategies into two major groups: metacognitive, which in foreign language classroom regulate language teaching, and cognitive, which manipulate the language in order to be learnt. Nonetheless, strategies developed by collaboration and co-operation among learners are equally relevant for their language progress. Those learning strategies are socio-affective strategies, and can be developed through learners' group work, project work pair work, surveys, etc.

Developing learners' language skills and learning strategies is not as easy as it may seem. But it does not mean it cannot be stimulating and empowering. As has been stated earlier, teacher's role is crucial in child's language development, as well as in other learning aspects.

### **The teacher's role**

The teacher's role is not just important in the education system, it is crucial. Teachers are the ones working with children, stimulating and motivating them by using various teaching materials, encouraging them to do their best, helping them achieve their dreams, and find their own place in this hectic world.

Teachers have to refer to the aims and objectives prescribed by the curriculum while planning and organizing a lesson. They follow specific guidelines which help them in their preparation for the lesson. Teachers are free to use different teaching materials, but which ones they choose depends on the aims and objectives that are set beforehand.

Not only teachers play an important part in children's education, but in raising them. In Croatia, young learners during the first four years of primary education spend at least four hours a day with their classroom teachers, and some even more if they stay in school after class. When it comes to a foreign language, they have two lessons per week. The teacher's role in the foreign language lessons is to enable young learners the development of language skills, learning strategies, and communicative skills which will help them to acquire a target language, and express their thoughts. Those skills will be useful in the future too. Teaching language is not just about providing knowledge through fun activities. When teaching young learners, the teacher needs to

connect with the children. Young learners should feel that the teacher likes them, and cares for their education.

Children often see their teachers as role models. For this reason, teachers also play an important part in their life, and in their personal development. Teachers should try to get to know their pupils in order to understand their needs, interests, capabilities, and what to expect from each learner, especially today when more and more children have learning disabilities. The lessons should be adapted so these pupils can also enjoy them, learn, and not feel excluded. Teachers have to understand children's differences. Every pupil is unique in their own way. Moreover, teachers collaborate with other school personnel such as educational rehabilitators, psychologists, and pedagogists, but also children's parents and the school administration.

Teaching is a beautiful and humane profession. Teachers exist to inspire and motivate young learners, but also children sometimes inspire them. Teachers help children to cope with failure and overcome their fears and obstacles. It is of great importance that teachers believe in themselves and their teaching competences. They should be more respected and valued because they teach children, and children are our future.

## **MEDIA**

It seems that media have become so widespread in today's society that they are almost impossible to be avoided in any environment, including schools. For this very reason, the idea of using media in the classroom appeared. Media are neither harmful nor useful, but then again, can be both. There is no reason why media could not be viewed as a useful source of information and entertainment, although the public is more focused on the dangers of the media such as excessive violence, pornography, stereotypes, etc. The negative aspects of the media will be more often heard and discussed than the positive ones. Regardless, they both have an effect on the individual (Zgrabljic Rotar, 2005). Because of the encouragement of using media in classrooms, it is necessary to at least try to discover their negative and positive aspects. While some teachers still fear, or struggle with the use of media in the classroom, others have already discovered their potential.

### **Definition of media**

There are several definitions of media. It could be said that media are mediators through which information is transmitted (Bognar & Matijević, 2005). Media can also be defined as "the main ways, such as television, newspapers and the Internet, that are used to communicate information and provide entertainment to large numbers of people" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary of Academic English Online).

Furthermore, in the handbook prepared by Grgić, Gergorić, Radanović & Brakus (2016) there is a division of media into public media service, commercial, alternative, and mass media. Mass media might have the most in common with the previously provided definition. However, the Internet does not fit the category of mass media; the reasons are its products which are not intended for sale, and its interactive communication.

Velički and Topolovčan (2017) define media as "an integrative part of social reality; they are a part of family's and school's everyday lives" (p. 173). Authors claim that media "have a potential impact on forming a person's life in early childhood in such manner that education within family and in school is under much deeper and direct effect than ever before" (p. 173). Media truly have become co-educators. Almost

every child is in possession of a smartphone, iPad, tablet, or any other modern technological devices from the moment they enrol in a school, or even before.

But can all media be put in the same basket? The distinction between print media and new digital media is obvious and should not be neglected. Thus, International Revenue Service (2014) divides media into two categories: traditional media and social media. Traditional media include radio, television, newspapers, magazines, newsletters, tax press and other print publications, whereas social media imply the new generation of digital and communication technologies which take different forms including Internet forums, blogs, wikis, podcasts, picture-sharing, music-sharing, video-sharing, and various applications.

### **Media literacy**

Even without the attempts to encourage, or promote it, children today can easily develop media literacy. Claims about today's young people being more literate than the ones twenty years ago are often made, but according to Buckingham (2005), that information is still unknown. There are no available criteria for measuring or assessing one's media literacy.

Velički and Topolovčan (2017) refer to the new generations of children as the net-generations because of the specific characteristics they have due to the strong influence of media on their lives since birth. As the world and technology change, the need for developing new competences arises. As a result of three main factors, children are required to develop competence in handling the media: their overall level of cognitive, emotional and social development; their experience of the world in general; and their specific experience of the media (Buckingham, 2005). However, teachers are also expected to be media competent because they are the ones who help children in acquiring and developing different skills.

The question that still remains unanswered is what exactly media literacy is, and who may be considered as a media literate person? This question has been discussed at the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy in 1992 where Patricia Aufderheide provided the explanation that was accepted by other participants, and later noted in the 1993 report:



“A media literate person and – everyone should have the opportunity to become one – can decode, evaluate, analyze and produce both print and electronic media. The fundamental objective of media literacy is critical autonomy in relationship to all media. Emphases in media literacy training range widely, including informed citizenship, aesthetic appreciation and expression, social advocacy, self-esteem, and consumer competence” (Aufderheide, 1993, p. 1).

As already stated, in order to become media literate individual, a critical understanding of the media content is required. Grgić, Gergorić, Radanović & Brakus (2016) have singled out critical thinking as one of the most important elements when it comes to media literacy. By thinking critically, one is able to make an independent judgment regarding certain media content.

The young learner should have the ability to locate appropriate media content and manipulate technology, know what to do with it, and “write”, i.e. produce. Thus, there are three dimensions of media literacy: access, understanding, and creation (see Buckingham, 2005). The interrelation between the three elements needs to be further researched. Questions about children’s use of knowledge they acquire as consumers in their experiences as producers, and vice-versa have been raised. Likewise, it is uncertain if today’s media-saturated society requires competence to a given level in all media, or just in ones that individual wishes to do so.

### **The use of media in EFL classroom**

Based on the fact that today’s life without social media and technological devices would be hard to imagine, it makes sense adapting the foreign language classroom, and teaching materials, to modern pupils and their habits (Hanžić Deda, 2019).

In terms of foreign language teaching, the importance of digital media is found precisely in the field of motivation, communication and interculturality. Digital media enable direct contact with native speakers of a target language, or so-called authentic communication, which has a significant impact on acquiring language skills, familiarising learners with other cultures’ values, raising awareness and developing tolerance towards someone else’s and one’s own culture and language (Matijević &

Toplovčan, 2017). To make authentic communication possible, teachers can use, for example, school computers or laptops.

According to Šimunić (1995), “computer is not constructed as an educational medium which will replace the teacher or language laboratory” (p. 89). Although, integrating them into lessons could contribute to the enhancement of children’s attention and achieving diversity. Computers can be used in various manners, pupils get instant feedback, they help in developing reading, writing skills, and listening skills, etc. Many teachers use it for PowerPoint presentations. In addition, the author claims that computers offer different exercises which other media cannot accomplish.

Furthermore, Hanžić Deda (2019) suggests that individual writing tasks could be done on computers and later sent to teachers via e-mail, or shared using applications like Dropbox or Google Drive. Another benefit of computers is they can be used for solving different tasks, quizzes and playing digital language games such as memory game, crosswords, games that involve sorting into categories, etc. with the help of a projector. However, the same activities can also be carried out using tablets or mobile phones.

“Digital media provide numerous opportunities in foreign language learning and teaching, acquiring grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, translation, etc.” (Matijević & Toplovčan, 2017, p. 179). The authors state that digital media offer digital, simultaneous and multimodal storage, transfer and presentation of information; enable digitally mediated communication; enable learning by exploring, collaborative learning, task solving, individualization of work, project learning, action centred learning, and learning by games. In interaction with other factors, digital media can contribute to the optimal achievement of learning outcomes and should not be considered as a crucial factor in the process.

There are many ways to incorporate different digital tools in the EFL classroom. For instance, using websites designed for English language learning and acquirement such as Learn English Kids or Games to Learn English, websites that provide a great amount of video content such as YouTube or Vimeo, website StoryBird designed for creating and writing picturebooks, poems, etc., programs for smartboards, websites and mobile phones applications for solving playful tasks such as Kahoot! and Duolingo, and many more (see Hanžić Deda, 2019).

The usage of different materials and activities is pivotal for increasing and maintaining the interest, and especially the attention of young learners throughout English language lessons. Incorporating technology into teaching has its positive outcomes. Technological devices “not only maintain contextualization and variety but also help to support and facilitate comprehension” (Yildirim & Pinar Torun, 2014, p. 58). Although digitally advanced foreign language classroom has its benefits, the maintenance and high costs of gadgets create a problem for some schools.

## PICTUREBOOKS AND PROJECTS

Working in a modernized education system, today's teachers are constantly searching for new ways of planning and organizing a lesson that will follow the curriculum guidelines, but also satisfy pupils' interests and needs. Besides, teachers have to take into account learners' age, the level of their knowledge and the level of their language proficiency.

The Croatian English language curriculum (2019) does not prescribe the exact content, or the course books, but teachers do have the liberty to choose what materials they will use in their classrooms. Unfortunately, many of them end up following the course book instead of using a variety of different materials in order to break monotony and attract children's attention. "Rather than relying on the course book as the sole teaching material, teachers should supplement and enrich their classroom practices by using materials appropriate for YLs." (Yildirim & Torun, 2014, p. 58). Art and literature are effective forms of expression and combined together adequately they contribute to better understanding. The visual and the literary art form that engages young readers is what makes picturebooks so unique and recognizable as a useful tool in the classroom.

Picturebooks gained acceptance in 1937 when the Caldecott Medal was created to honour the nineteenth-century English illustrator Randolph J. Caldecott, creator of the images in the most distinguished picturebook of that year. The Caldecott Medal, alongside the Newbery Medal, is awarded annually by the American Library Association to the artist of the most distinguished American picturebook published the previous year (American Library Association, 1999). Over time, the definition of children's picturebook has changed and the categories of picturebooks have enlarged.

Ellis and Brewster (2014) use the term "storybooks" for picturebooks. Although in publication picturebook titles are indeed picture storybooks, they are more than just stories. Picturebooks vary in form including books in prose, books in verse, big books, little books, ABC books, counting books, fiction, non-fiction, pop up books, board books, cloth books, books with moving parts and wordless picturebooks (Mourão, 2009). Diversity of picturebooks makes it harder to come up with and agree upon with only one definition.

American Literary Association (1999) provides its own description of a picturebook as having “a collective unity of story-line, theme, or concept, developed through the series of pictures of which the book is comprised” and in this way making a distinction from illustrated books and decorated books. Furthermore, the way the text and the illustrations relate to each other make the essence of the picturebook. Sipe (1998) uses the term “synergy” to define picturebooks, indicating that pictures and text “have a synergistic relationship in which the total effect depends not only on the union of the text and illustrations but also on the perceived interactions between these two parts” (pp. 98-99).

Wolfenbarger and Sipe (2007) define a picturebook as a book in which the picture and the text are equally important. Both illustrations and texts wonderfully intertwine to provide more than either can do on their own which Sipe (1998) so wonderfully stated: “In a picture book, both the text and the illustration sequence would be incomplete without the other” (p. 98). However, illustrations do not always tell the same story as the text. Sometimes their stories are even contradictory, whether this is something intended or not (Fang, 1996). “It is this dissonance that catches the reader’s attention. Readers work to resolve the conflict between what they see and what they read or hear” (Wolfenbarger and Sipe, 2007, p. 274).

Apart from the inter-animation of pictures and words, picturebooks consist of another, usually neglected element, and that is design. Probably the most widely and frequently used definition of a picturebook, combining all its elements, is the one written by the author of *American Picturebooks from Noah's Ark to the Beast Within*, Barbara Bader:

“A picturebook is text, illustrations, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historic document; and foremost, an experience for a [reader]. As an art form it hinges on the interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page. On its own terms its possibilities are limitless” (Bader, 1976, p. 1 cited in Mourão, 2015, p. 199).

A picturebook is a final product which consists of different parts put together and its main purpose is sale. What children first see are book covers, not the inside of a book. Although saying says “Don’t judge a book by its cover”, many children select

picturebooks based on their covers. The stranger and more colourful, the better. The work put into design is quite significant, even more than people might think.

The great thing about picturebooks are exactly their limitless possibilities. Therefore, they can easily be used for projects and creating different activities. According to Phillips, Burwood & Dunford (1999) “a project is a recognizable unit of work with a beginning, middle, and end” (p. 6). Projects consist of a series of linked activities, and “require independent research into a topic and results in a product” (Arnold, Bradshaw & Gregson, 2019, p. 288).

Usually, multiple people are involved in the project work over an extended period of time which gives children different opportunities to contribute to the project depending on their capabilities. When an individual’s work is valued, children’s confidence is boosted. The use of projects in the classroom, regardless of the school subject, has its benefits. Projects educate the whole child including the development of their intellectual, physical/motor and social skills, and learner independence; they integrate language knowledge and skills through experiential learning; they encourage learner independence, cater for mixed-ability classes, and allow flexibility within the curriculum (Phillips, Burwood & Dunford, 1999).

Alongside the advantages come disadvantages. What can be considered as a problem with the project work is its length, and sometimes it takes more time for completing the project than expected. Also, projects are not that easy to implement in large departments, neither evaluate. Not all learners are always equally interested in working on a project, so teachers have to be careful when picking the topic, or in this case, a picturebook and activities.

### **Importance of using picturebooks**

Before children even learn to read the text, they know how to “read” the pictures. Domination of the visual in children’s early ages is used as a medium for communication and discovering new things. By exposing young learners to quality literature increases the chances of them becoming readers. The best way to start is reading picturebooks to children while they listen to the story and look at the illustrations. Birketveit (2015) puts an emphasis on teaching and practising learners’

ability to read images and points out picturebooks as “exciting and engaging texts for developing visual as well as verbal literacy” (p. 25). As it has been stated earlier, picturebooks are useful tool for teachers. Thus, there are many reasons why using picturebooks in a classroom has its benefits.

Ellis and Brewster (2014) emphasize the importance of developing children’s visual literacy, as well as the development of observation skills and the ability to decode various types of artwork. Encouraging discussion about the illustrations not only develops children’s visual literacy, but also appreciation of art by giving it an important role alongside the text. Fang (1996) claims that “illustrations in picturebooks are meant to delight, to capture attention, to amplify or tell a story, to teach a concept, and to develop appreciation and awareness in children” (p. 140).

Except developing children’s visual thinking, picturebooks are also considered as a valuable resource for adding to literacy skills and development of children’s critical thinking, oral language ability and literary understanding by allowing pupils to process both pictures and text, and engage them in classroom discussion (see Roche, 2014). Similarly, Kochiyama (2016) states that “appropriate follow-up activities, discussion or writing on theme-related topics led by teachers can enhance students’ intercultural awareness and critical thinking skills” (p. 42).

On the other hand, Tan (2001) sees picturebooks as a continuation of “playful inquiry” from childhood and using them to find significance and meaning in ordinary experiences through imagination. Some people, including older learners, may believe picturebooks are created and intended only for the younger audience which is not the case. There is no reason why both children and adults would not be able to enjoy reading picturebooks.

Picturebooks can also support the acquisition of language skills in the very young learner. The rhyme, rhythm and repetition found in picturebooks are great for practising the sounds of a language and encouraging learners to read aloud improves their speaking ability (Kochiyama, 2016). An encounter with literature can provide to children its cultural background, help in the development of reading and writing skills, practising pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm of a spoken language. Nevertheless, many activities have been suggested in favour of using good literature in the classroom (see Narančić Kovač, 1999).

Another advantage of picturebooks is that they can be used as a connection between the foreign language and other subjects using CLIL, i.e. “a dual-focussed approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (Maljers, Marsh & Wolff, 2007, p. 8). Many books and handbooks have been written regarding this topic in order to help teachers with lesson planning and maybe inspire them to come up with some of their own ideas (see McCleaf Nespeca & Reeve, 2003).

According to Mourão (2015) picturebooks “provide affordances for authentic L2 use through interpretation of the books’ pictures, words and design, as these elements come together to produce a visual-verbal narrative...” (p. 203). A reader can re-read a picturebook many times, and what is interesting, he or she can still find something new. Picturebooks can enrich the curriculum and evoke children’s interest in reading through discussion and proper guidance.

### **Selecting the right picturebooks**

Bearing in mind that a great number of picturebooks are being published every year, sometimes it is hard to decide which ones are worthy for teaching and might actually have the potential to attract pupils’ attention and develop their interest in reading.

When it comes to selecting appropriate literature for teaching pupils, having a clear purpose and a well thought out plan is quite significant for teachers. They also “need to think about the book’s meaning in relationship to themselves, and the possibilities of relationships that the children will discover, based on their backgrounds” (Weih, 2015., p. 3). Learners’ age, language level, and interest are elements that should be taken into account too. According to Vardell, Hadaway & Young (2006) this task is very complex because of children’s individual differences such as their maturity, family and cultural background, and language knowledge. Some learners may be more exposed to English, or are native speakers, while others are not in touch with it at all.

Teachers usually introduce good literature to young learners through reading fictional stories with direct, linear plot lines, and clear and concrete language which



are easier to comprehend than those containing flashbacks (Vardell, Hadaway & Young, 2006). Besides, stories that are adventurous, mysterious, nonsensical, that deal with fitting in, being different, family and friends, etc. are appealing to young learners. Thus, Ellis and Brewster (2014) propose the use of authentic storybooks. Authentic picturebooks, or as they used to be called “real” books, are not adapted or simplified books. Their targeted audiences are native speakers of the language in which the picturebooks are written. At times, these books can be criticized for being used in the foreign language classroom because of their, so-called complex language. However, children have the ability to understanding the story even without knowing the meaning of each word; they rely on illustrations as it was mentioned earlier. In rare cases, when picturebook is too complicated for children, teachers should try to adapt it according to learners’ abilities without reducing its value, or changing the original story. If not, they can always choose another book which is more preferable.

One of the criteria provided for selecting picturebooks imparts five major objectives: linguistic, psychological, cognitive, social, and cultural (see Ellis & Brewster, 2014). There are also some questions that should be addressed, such as if the length of the story is appropriate, is its content capturing and interesting enough, is it already familiar to learners, does it contain onomatopoeia or repeated grammatical structures, rhyme and rhythm, are illustrations clear, and provide good visual support, etc. Except for the learners, the teacher should as well enjoy the story because the lack of his or her enthusiasm will be visible to pupils what might reduce children’s interest and motivation, and therefore attention and concentration.

When a teacher selects the book, he or she can also submit it to the process of further evaluation of narrative books, i.e. books written in a story format, including fiction and nonfiction. The criteria created to guide an individual through the process of thorough evaluation of the written content of a book are the setting, the problem or conflict, the plot or events of the story, and the characters (see Weih, 2015).

In most cases, selecting just-right picturebooks is a critical factor for a learner’s successful reading and growth as a reader. Kosaka (2012) claims that this kind of critical skill is possible to be learnt not just by teachers, but also by young readers in the foreign language classroom. Therefore, EFL teachers should involve pupils in discussions about choosing the right books and help them throughout the process.

Pupils can become active readers if given the opportunity to choose books which will contribute to joint growth.

As Vardell, Hadaway & Young (2006) state, “the goal is always selecting quality literature that is well written and illustrated” (p. 735). Fortunately, teachers are blessed with a rich source of existing quality literature to choose from, although not all books are easily accessible to every teacher, in this case EFL teacher, which is also one more factor to think about. To help them with selection, teachers can use a broad number of brochures containing authentic, highly praised and awarded picturebooks, that will give them the opportunity to choose the books that best fit their learners (see Odean, s.a.).

### **Project-based classroom**

When preparing a project, the first step is selecting a topic, or in this case, a picturebook. A teacher can choose the picturebook by himself, or together with pupils. As it was emphasized previously, the picturebook should be authentic, age-appropriate, and chosen according to learners’ English language level, but also motivating and interesting to learners. The next step is to think about project’s aims and objectives, and in what way it can be integrated into the curriculum. The teacher should know the purpose of his or her project, and decide how long approximately the project will last. It would be a good idea if the teacher reads the picturebook one more time before determining project’s aims and objectives. How to use the picturebook’s potential to the fullest? The activities based on the picturebook, and achieving predetermined aims and objectives are an important factor for successful project and productive learners. Activities should be appropriate for young learners, and satisfy their interests and needs. Shorter activities are preferable, but if some take more time to finish because of their complexity, pupils should at least be paired up, or in groups. If materials such as worksheets are included in certain activities, they should be made beforehand. After creating activities, the teacher plans how to carry out the project in the classroom, e.g. arrange the activities throughout the expected period of time.

When the process of preparation is over, it is time to bring the project into the classroom and present it to young learners. They deserve to know what they will do, and what is expected of them. For example, Phillips, Burwood & Dunford (1999)

propose discussing the project's purpose, "the skills they will be practising, the way they will be monitored and assessed, the choices they will have" (p. 14). It is also recommended to establish some ground rules for better classroom management and maintaining discipline, especially if activities include artwork or group work. For young teachers it is advisable to plan the lessons very carefully so they do not forget and can be sure what learners should do at each stage. During the project, giving short and clear instructions is crucial. When children work in groups, the best thing to do is split the roles among learners so every group participant can contribute to the project. Monitoring learners' work and progress is important too, whether they work in groups, pairs, or individually.

When the project reaches its end, the evaluation takes place. Evaluation is beneficial for both the teacher and the pupils. "Ongoing evaluation raises the children's awareness of how they learn and is part of the important process of helping them become more independent learners" (Phillips, Burwood & Dunford, 1999, p. 15). The evaluation also helps children to appreciate their own work and the work of other pupils. While the teacher was running the project, he or she could have taken short notes about how each activity was done, were the aims achieved, and were the learners productive. The teacher also could have taken notes for each learner and his or her performance. Regarding the group work, the best way is to evaluate group work, and individual work of each group participant separately. Of course, the teacher might not have the time to capture every single thing, but that is what learners are for. They should be encouraged to self-evaluate, and say if there were any problems while working in groups or pairs. Young learners are usually honest and will report if there was any problem. The teacher at the end makes the final grade which can be either numerical, or descriptive, or both.

## **PROJECT BASED ON THE PICTUREBOOK *IF YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE A DINOSAUR***

The importance of using different kinds of materials in the classroom has been emphasized and discussed in this thesis, as well as using authentic picturebooks and selecting the right ones. This chapter describes a project based on an authentic picturebook *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur* written by Linda Bailey and illustrated by Colin Jack.

The picturebook is essentially intended for children between the age of three to seven who are native speakers of English language. Since the purpose of the project is to use the picturebook in the EFL classroom, the age group to which the picturebook is originally intended does not match the age of EFL learners. Although the picturebook itself could be understood among young learners of first three grades of primary education because of its clear illustrations that take up the whole page, particular proposed activities might be too hard for many of them. For this reason, the project is appropriate for children who are in their fourth year of learning English in school, whether they have learnt English before enrolling in school, or not.

The project has been carefully thought-out, whereas children's interests and needs have been taken into account while planning the project. Activities are connected to the picturebook so its full potential could be used. The activities were created and based not just on the picturebook, but also on the Croatian curriculum. It was also, thought of skills that will be helpful in the future. A certain number of activities includes the use of different media.

### **Linda Bailey and Colin Jack: *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur* (2014)**

Linda Bailey is a Canadian author who has written more than two dozen books for children. She has received multiple awards for her work, including the Silver Birch Award, the Arthur Ellis Award, the California Young Reader Medal, the Georgia Picture Storybook Award, the Atlantic Hackmatack Award for English Nonfiction, and many others. She is also a member of Canadian Society of Children's Authors, Illustrators, and Performers, Children's Book Centre of Canada, Society of Children's

Book Writers and Illustrators, Writers' Union of Canada and Vancouver Children's Literature Roundtable (Encyclopedia.com).

Bailey claims that she is probably best known for her books about a dog called Stanley. Many of her books have been translated into different languages and have travelled the world just like she has. Since she was a child she liked to read and was a daydreamer, characteristics she finds important and believes are great preparation for becoming a writer (Bailey, s.a.).

With the unique style, Bailey effortlessly draws young readers into her stories and arouses their curiosity. Her warm sense of humour and imaginative way of telling stories provide fun and satisfying reading experience. Children feel as if they are a part of the story while reading or listening to it. The use of vivid, yet simple and expressive language allows both young and old readers to enjoy her stories (Books In Order).

Colin Jack is an extremely talented Canadian illustrator of numerous books for children, including the *Galaxy Zack* series, *I Zany Zoo*, *Dragons from Mars* and many more. He also has been involved in animated film productions such as *Hotel Transylvania*, *Grossology*, and *Ed, Edd n Eddy*. Jack currently works as a story artist and character designer at DreamWorks. (HarperCollins Publishers; *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur Activity Guide*, 2014).

*If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur* is a picturebook about the advantages and disadvantages of having a dinosaur. Both the illustrations and the text complement each other. Although there is no actual, linear storyline, the picturebook is still engaging and invites learners to be a part of it. Each page contains different set of characters who are unique in their own way. The whole picturebook is silly, and a little bit nonsensical what makes it perfect for stimulating children's imagination and developing creativity.

It was actually one of Jack's sons who gave him the idea of a dinosaur as an umbrella, and that exact drawing served Bailey as an inspiration for the book *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur* (*If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur Activity Guide*, 2014).

## **Purpose of the project**

### **Aims (overall):**

- A) Linguistic: revising and expanding vocabulary related to animals, body parts, food, numbers, the picturebook; learning new vocabulary related to the picturebook; revising adjectives; practising grammar, pronunciation, and spelling
- B) Functional (communicative): listening, reading, writing, singing, observing, predicting, describing, comparing, discussing, memorizing, recognizing, deciding, guessing, thinking critically, role-playing, presenting, expressing opinions, and likes and dislikes
- C) Educational: creating stimulating, motivating and positive atmosphere in the classroom; developing positive attitude towards English language through singing, artwork, music, games, inventing stories and conversation, making comics, flyers, and videos; promoting working with hands, developing learners' confidence while speaking, singing, and reading in English; having fun; promoting group work and pair work; encouraging cooperation, developing respect for the work of others, promoting fair game, promoting the use of media and technology, developing media literacy

Outcomes: Students will be able to use all four language skills throughout the project.

Interaction patterns: lockstep, group work, pair work, individual work

Teaching aids and media: computers, picture-cards, smartphones, worksheets, game board, handouts, tablets, different applications and games

Teaching material: Bailey, L. & Jack, C. (2014). *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur*. Toronto: Tundra Books.

## Project activities

### PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

#### 1. A mysterious animal

A teacher says to pupils that he or she has a very interesting picturebook about an unusual animal. The teacher opens a PowerPoint to play a *Picture Reveal* game with pupils. Pupils ask questions about the animal and the teacher answers their questions only with YES or NO. They can ask about the animal's body parts, size, living environment, physical abilities, etc. When the teacher answers YES, he or she randomly reveals one part of the picture. Now pupils can try to guess the animal with the help of little parts that have been revealed, or to continue forming their questions.

Note: if there is a smartboard in the classroom, pupils can come in front of the smartboard and choose a part of the picture they want to reveal instead of the teacher.

Questions:

*Is it \_\_\_\_\_ ? (big/small, etc.)*

*Has it got \_\_\_\_\_ ? (wings/a tail/a long neck/ears/two eyes, etc.)*

*Can it \_\_\_\_\_ ? (fly/swim/run/jump, etc.)*

*Does it \_\_\_\_\_ ? (live in a forest/eat fish, etc.)*

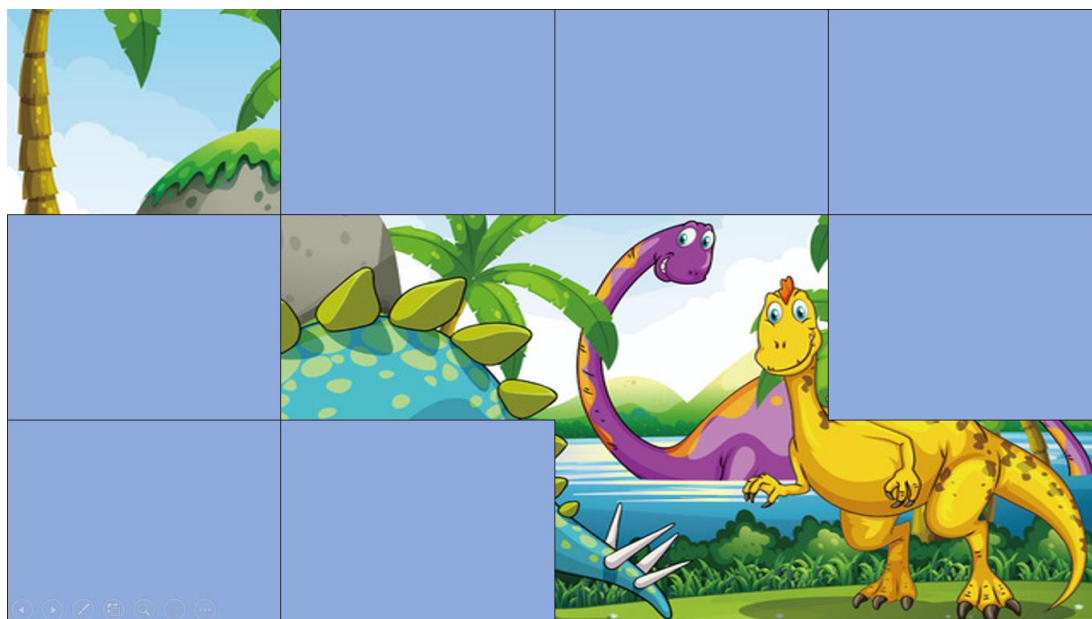


Figure 1. PowerPoint Picture Reveal game

The objectives of this activity are:

- to motivate young learners for reading the picturebook
- to revise numbers up to 20
- to revise animals
- to revise body parts
- to revise and practice asking questions using the following grammatical structures: *Is it*, *Has it got*, *Can it*, and *Does it*
- to stimulate learners' critical thinking based on the teacher's positive or negative answers
- to develop learners' observation skills
- to create a stimulating and positive atmosphere in the classroom

## 2. Judging a book by its cover

The teacher shows pupils the picturebook cover and reads its title. Pupils try to predict what the picturebook might be about by only looking at its cover. Each pupil has to write up to three predictions on a piece of paper. Later, pupils discuss their predictions in pairs.

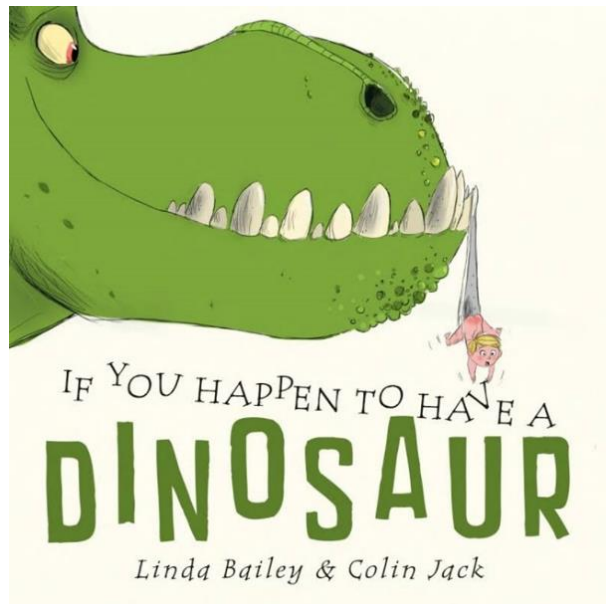


Figure 2. The picturebook cover



The objectives of this activity are:

- to interest learners in the picturebook
- to stimulate learners' imagination
- to develop their observation skills
- to enable learners sharing their predictions in pairs
- to encourage communication in the English language

### 3. Vocabulary

Before reading the picturebook, the teacher goes through the vocabulary that learners will encounter in the picturebook, but also in some of their activities. A part of the vocabulary might be familiar to children, the other not. For this activity, the teacher uses *BookWidgets* desktop application to play *PairMatching* game. The game is projected on a panel using a projector so everyone can see the game. The pupils' task is to match words to pictures. When a pupil chooses one picture and one word to match, he or she first has to explain the reason why; do they know the word from before, or is it a pure guess. The game is similar to the memory game, but in this game, all cards are visible the entire time. If there is a match, both word-card and picture-card take on the same colour. Every match is in a different colour. Those words that pupils do not know can try to match using the elimination method by looking at all the pictures and deciding which one fits best for each word. For example, pupils might not know what a snowplow is, but it does contain a word "snow" in it, so based on that they look for pictures that contain snow, or something connected to the snow. All the pictures in this game are not from the picturebook; the teacher can easily download them from the Internet. Pictures of objects can be as they appear in reality, or cartoon versions. In the end, the teacher goes through all the vocabulary together with pupils at least two times.

Note: If there is a smartboard in the classroom, pupils come in front of the board and independently pick their match.

Vocabulary: a baby, a burglar, a can, coffee, a kite, a picnic basket, tomatoes, a tree, an umbrella, a snowplow, a diving board, a pillow.



Figure 3. BookWidgets application – PairMatching game

The objectives of this activity are:

- to revise familiar vocabulary
- to introduce new vocabulary
- to match words with pictures
- to promote the use of computers and *BookWidgets* application
- to create a motivating and positive classroom atmosphere

#### 4. Association game

To help pupils with their predictions, each pair gets one picture from the previous game and has to think about how it is connected to dinosaurs. Pairs write their mutual predictions on the papers they already have from the second activity.

The objectives of this activity are:

- to interest learners in the picturebook
- to stimulate learners' imagination
- to encourage communication in the English language

## WHILE-READING ACTIVITIES

### 5. Comparing predictions

The teacher is sitting in a circle and reading the picturebook *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur* so everyone can see the pictures. Pupils listen to the teacher and look at the pictures. They pay attention because they have to compare their individual predictions about the book with the actual plot. During the reading they mark whether they were right or wrong; they put a tick next to their predictions if they were right, and an “X” if they were wrong. After the first reading pupils share if they managed to guess what the book was about and say their initial ideas that they have previously written and discussed in pairs.

The objectives of this activity are:

- to listen to the teacher’s reading actively
- to mark predictions according to the picturebook plot
- to compare predictions
- to develop learners’ confidence while speaking in English
- to encourage communication in English

### 6. Action story

Pairs have their picture-cards which they had received for the *Association game*, and sit next to one another in a circle. During the second reading, pupils have to pay attention to the pictures and listen carefully in order to hear their word. When pairs hear their word, they stand up, pronounce the word, and explain the connection to a dinosaur.

The objectives of this activity are:

- to listen for the information, i.e. word
- to pronounce the word correctly
- to listen to the teacher’s reading actively
- to promote pair work

## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

### 7. Appropriate adjective

The teacher writes down the word *DINOSAUR* in a *MindMeister* application on his or her computer which is visible on a panel or a smartboard in the classroom. It is an online application used for mind mapping. It also allows its users to visualize, share and present their thoughts via the cloud. Every pupil should have a tablet or a smartphone for this activity. The teacher shares the mind map with all the pupils, so they can work on it together in real-time. Their task is to write a maximum three adjectives to describe dinosaurs from the picturebook. Every pupil has to write at least one adjective. From the moment pupils start writing their adjectives, they are instantly visible to everyone in the classroom and above every adjective there is a name of a pupil who wrote it. This is a great way of avoiding repetition of adjectives. In addition, pupils can check their own spelling – if they write an adjective incorrectly, a red line appears under the adjective so pupils can try to correct it by themselves. When they finish the task, pupils comment on their adjectives and correct the ones they were not sure of with the help of the teacher. A good thing is that the map can be saved, and pupils can re-access it at any time.

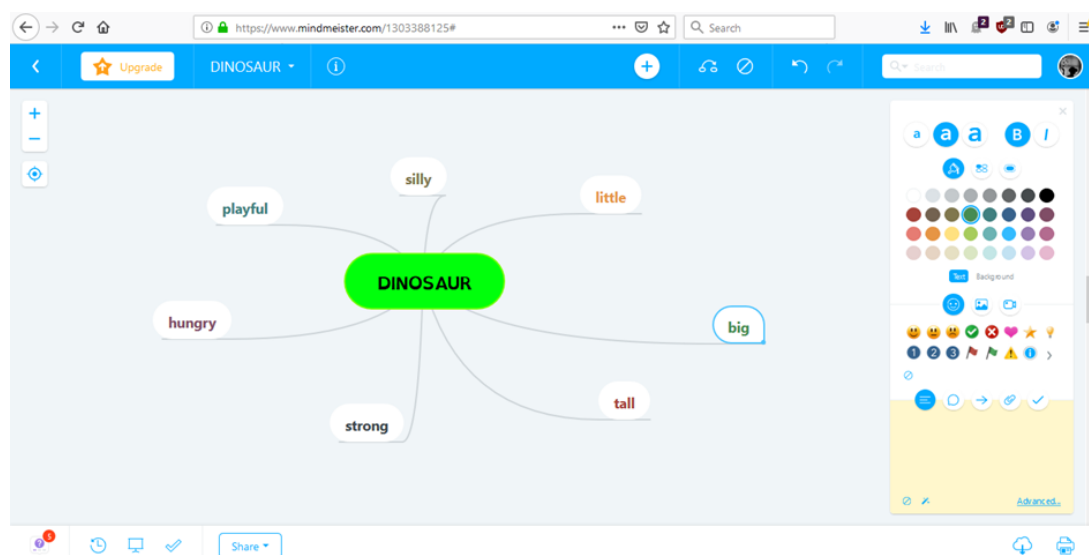


Figure 4. MindMeister mind map

The objectives of this activity are:

- to revise and discuss adjectives
- to practice spelling
- to encourage self-correction
- to promote individual work
- to promote the use of tablets and *MindMeister* application
- to develop media literacy
- to create a motivating learning environment

## 8. The Dinosaur Pet Guide

In this activity, pupils have to make a guide for people who would like to have a dinosaur as a pet. Their task is to create the pet guide in groups of six while the teacher monitors their work and progress. Each pupil gets a thick coloured paper (blue, red, orange, pink, green, or yellow). On red, orange and pink papers it says *Caution*, and on blue, green and yellow papers it says *Favourable*. Depending on the paper they have, pupils choose one thing to be cautious when having a dinosaur, or one thing that is favourable to do with a dinosaur. When pupils finish the task, the teacher helps them to make a booklet with the title *The Dinosaur Pet Guide*. Later each group presents their guides in front of the classroom.

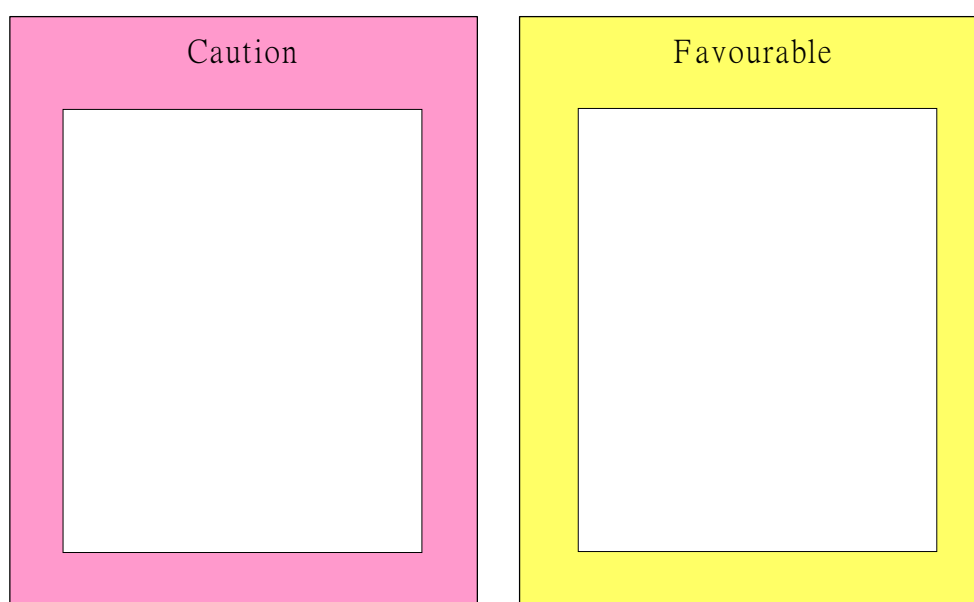


Figure 5. An example of colored papers

The objectives of this activity are:

- to remember and recognize the dinosaurs' advantages and disadvantages
- to stimulate learners' creativity through artwork
- to promote group work

## 9. The flyer

In order to promote their guides, each group has to make a flyer using *Adobe Spark* application. In this way, pupils can show their creativity and a sense to attract people's attention by using striking graphics and snappy titles. Pupils will also experience how it is to work and make decisions as a team. For this activity, it is necessary for each group to have a tablet in the classroom.

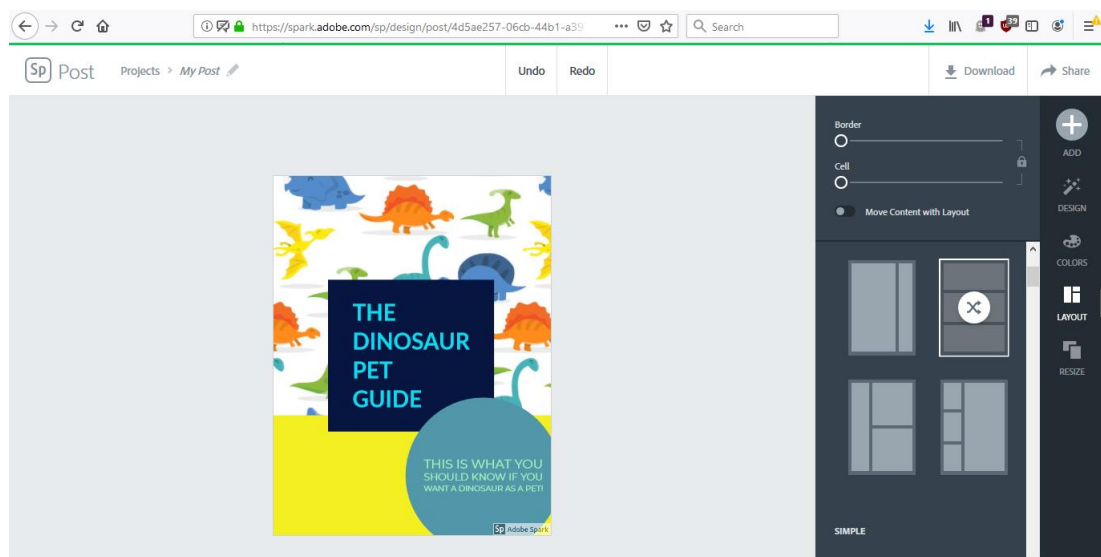


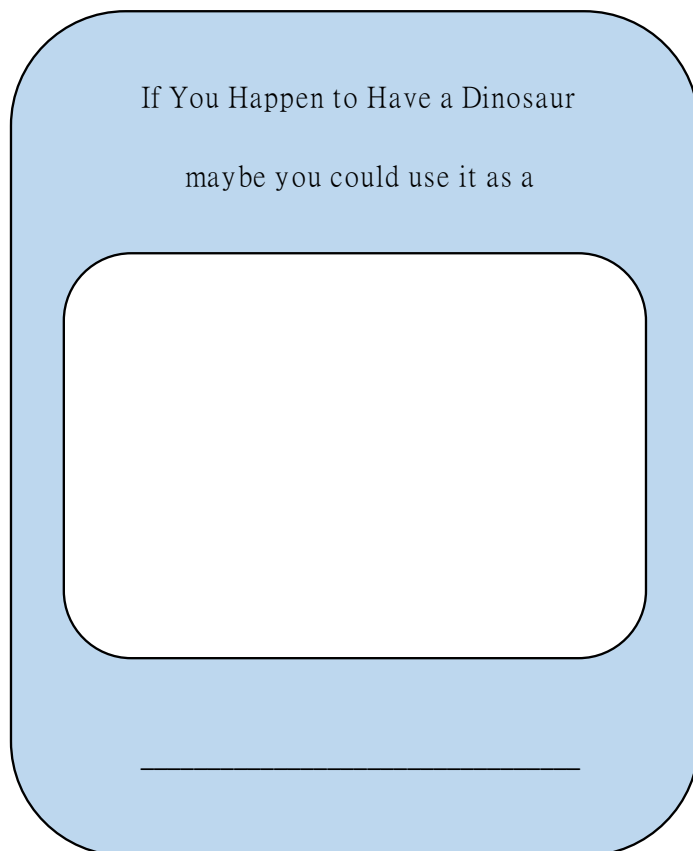
Figure 6. Adobe Spark application for making flyers

The objectives of this activity are:

- to stimulate learners' creativity
- to develop learners' design/aesthetic sense
- to promote group work and mutual cooperation
- to promote the use of tablets and *Adobe Spark* application
- to develop learners' media literacy
- to create a positive and motivating learning environment

## 10. If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur

Every pupil gets a handout on which they have to write one more thing a dinosaur could be used as besides the examples from the picturebook. There is a space for their drawings as well. When all pupils have finished the task, they put their handouts on a poster or a pinboard in the classroom so everyone can see their work. Pupils who wish so can comment on others' work and creativity.



*Figure 7. A handout*

The objectives of this activity are:

- to encourage learners' imagination
- to encourage their creativity through artwork
- to promote individual work
- to develop learners' self-esteem
- to develop respect of others' work

## 11. Word Search

For this activity pupils' task is to find words from the list below the instructions. The activity should not be hard, and pupils will encounter the words from the book again so they can easily remember them. Pupils work individually and later check the answers with one of the students from the classroom. On each worksheet, the teacher writes one number and students with the same number pair up in order to compare and check the answers.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur**

B	Q	B	O	W	L	W	R	O	O	F	S
N	U	T	C	R	A	C	K	E	R	H	N
P	U	P	D	I	N	O	S	A	U	R	O
O	E	F	G	A	R	D	E	N	H	P	W
Y	P	O	P	C	O	R	N	L	R	G	P
U	R	B	O	O	K	M	A	R	K	J	L
B	A	B	Y	S	I	T	T	E	R	R	O
S	D	F	O	O	T	S	T	O	O	L	W

Find the following words in the puzzle.  
Words are hidden → and ↓ .

NUTCRACKER	SNOWFLOW	BOWL
BABYSITTER	BOOKMARK	ROOF
FOOTSTOOL	POPCORN	
DINOSAUR	GARDEN	

*Figure 8. Word Search worksheet*

The objectives of this activity are:

- to develop learners' observation skills
- to recognize numbers
- to promote individual and pair work
- to encourage and promote checking answers in pairs



## 12. Dinosaurs & Ladders

For this activity, pupils are divided into groups (4-5 pupils) and play the game called *Dinosaurs & Ladders*, a variation of the game *Snakes & Ladders*. All the words on the board are from the picturebook *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur*.

Rules:

Players take turns to roll a dice and move along the number of rectangles rolled. To be able to move players have to pronounce the words correctly in the right order and if they don't know how, they stay on the rectangle which has the last word they pronounced correctly. If a player lands on a rectangle which has the base of a ladder or a baby dinosaur upon it then they automatically advance their position by moving up to the top of the ladder or following dinosaur's footsteps. If a player lands on a rectangle which has the dinosaur's eggs or a sleeping dinosaur upon it then the player must automatically follow down the dinosaur's footsteps thereby losing their position. The winner is the player who is first to land on rectangle number 64. The player must roll the exact number needed to land on rectangle 64.

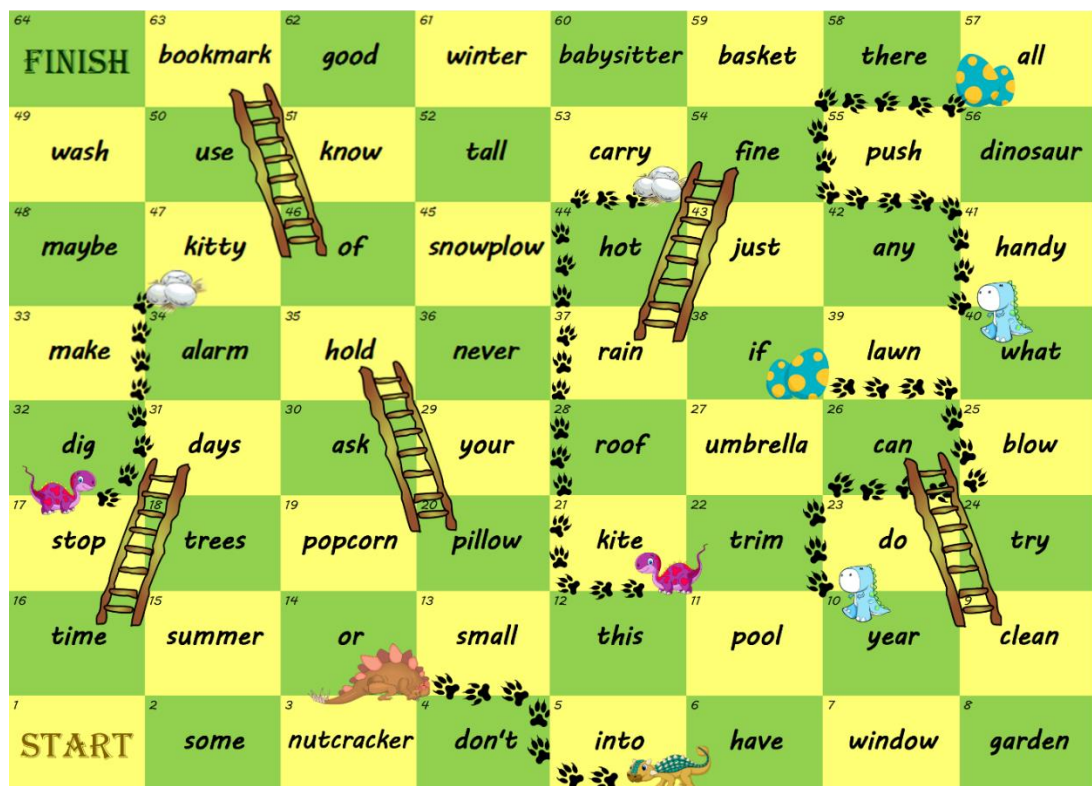


Figure 9. Dinosaurs & Ladders game board

The objectives of this activity are:

- to practice pronunciation
- to learn and memorize new words
- to develop learners' confidence while speaking in English
- to develop an understanding for others if they fail
- to promote respect and fair game
- to promote a positive attitude towards English language

### 13. The letter

There are two boxes in the classroom. On one it says *The author* and on the other one *The illustrator*. Each pupil writes a short letter to the author or the illustrator of the picturebook *If You Happen to Have a Dinosaur*. Pupils start the letter with *Dear Mrs Bailey* or *Dear Mr Jack*. They write whether they liked or disliked the picturebook and explain why. Pupils can also ask whatever they want regarding the picturebook. At the end of the letter, pupils greet the author or the illustrator and sign their names. When a pupil has finished the task, he or she folds the letter and puts it in the appropriate box.

The image shows two identical decorative letter templates side-by-side. Each template is enclosed in a rectangular frame with ornate, scrolled corners. The left template is addressed to 'Dear Mrs Bailey,' and the right one to 'Dear Mr Jack,'. Both templates have a large blank space in the center for writing the body of the letter. At the bottom of each template, the words 'Yours sincerely,' are printed, followed by a dashed line for a signature.

Figure 10. The letters (1)

The objectives of this activity are:

- to develop learners' writing skills
- to practice the formation of grammatical structures
- to express likes/dislikes and be able to explain them
- to learn how to write in a formal way

#### 14. In someone else's shoes

The letters are in the boxes. Now each pupil has an opportunity to take the role of Mrs Bailey or Mr Jack. Pupils open the boxes, and each takes one letter. They have to read the letter carefully and write a response to it as if they were the author or the illustrator. Pupils write their responses on new papers that the teacher has given them while they were picking letters from the boxes. At the end they can get creative when signing the author's or the illustrator's name and make up their signature. When students have finished the task, they give back the letters to its owners (pupils from the classroom). If they wish, some students can read their letters aloud.

The image shows two identical decorative letter templates side-by-side. Each template is enclosed in a rectangular frame with ornate, scroll-like corners. The text inside each template is as follows:

*Dear \_\_\_\_\_,*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Linda Bailey*

*Colin Jack*

Figure 11. The letters (2)

The objectives of this activity are:

- to develop learners' writing skills
- to understand what you read and provide the answer according to it
- to promote role play
- to encourage creativity
- to learn how to write in a formal way
- to create a positive atmosphere

**An alternative for Activity 13 and Activity 14** – instead of writing letters, pupils can write e-mails. In that case, every pupil would have to have a tablet in the classroom and an e-mail. Pupils would write their names on a piece of paper, and put it in one bowl. After, pupils would take one paper with another pupil's name, and that would be the person to whom they have to write the e-mail. This activity is useful for young learners because writing e-mails is a necessity today whether they are work-related, school-related, or just for personal purposes. Also, all the e-mails remain preserved so young learners can open and check them at any time unless they erase the e-mails. The task stays the same, but two more objectives need to be added:

- to promote the use of tablets and services for e-mail delivery
- to develop learners' media literacy

### **15. A dinosaur's lullaby**

The teacher opens the picturebook on the page where one dinosaur is holding a sleeping baby. The activity starts with the question *What do you see in the picture?* Pupils raise their hands and describe what they see. The teacher continues with the questions and pupils provide their answers.

Questions:

*What is dinosaur doing to the baby?*

*What do people usually do to help babies fall asleep?*

*What lullabies do you know?*

Then the teacher divides pupils into groups of four. Their task is to write a lullaby the dinosaur is singing to the baby. Each group has to write at least four lines (one pupil = one line), or more, and think of the lullaby's title. It is important to pay attention to rhythm and rhyme. When all the groups have finished the task, they read their lullabies aloud. In one group every pupil can read one line, or beforehand the group can pick one pupil who will read the lullaby.

Note: if pupils are not familiar with any English lullabies, it would be a good idea to show them a couple of popular lullabies, e.g. *Hush little baby*, *Twinkle, twinkle, little star*, *Rock a bye baby*, etc. and to emphasize paying attention to words that are usually used. This would facilitate the process of writing the lullaby.



*Figure 12. The lullaby handout*

The objectives of this activity are:

- to develop learners' observation skills
- to answer the questions
- to encourage learners to speak in English
- to develop learners' confidence while speaking in English
- to promote group work
- to encourage creativity and imagination
- to develop cultural awareness

### **16. Let's sing!**

During this activity, pupils will have the opportunity to express their creativity and become real composers for a short period of time. Their task is to sing the lullaby they have written. They can create and use their own musical instruments. For example, they can use pencils as drumsticks, put rice in *Cedevita* container and use it as maracas, the teacher can provide them with smaller instruments such as triangle, castanets, tambourine, or xylophone. Each group can use only one instrument while performing. The music for the song does not have to be complicated, or over the top. Later, each group performs its own lullaby.

The objectives of this activity are:

- to play musical instruments appropriately
- to promote group work
- to develop learners' sense of rhythm
- to develop singing skills
- to promote music as one of the arts
- to encourage creativity and singing in English
- to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom
- to develop a positive attitude towards English language through music and singing

## 17. Word Finder

Each pupil gets a worksheet containing three out of the many strange dinosaur names. Pupils' task is to make as many words as possible from the letters of dinosaurs' names. It can be any word class. When they finish the task, they can check the words with their pairs.

Here are some of the strangest dinosaur names.

How many words can you make from the letters found in each dinosaur's name below?

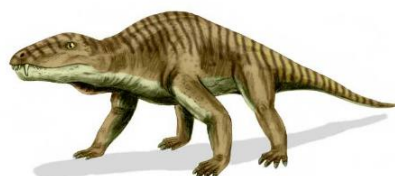
TITANOPHONEUS

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PIATNITZKYSAURUS



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MICROPACHYCEPHALOSAURUS

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Figure 13. A worksheet

The objectives of this activity are:

- to find as many words as possible
- to recognize different word classes
- to practice spelling
- to promote checking answers in pairs
- to motivate and interest learners by using interesting information, e.g. strange dinosaur names

## 18. Acting out

Pupils are divided into groups of four and there is one tablet in each group. They have access to *Wordwall*, a collection of interactive resources, and play *Show how a dinosaur* game created with *Random Wheel* resource. When it is a pupil's turn, he or she spins the wheel and acts out what the wheel says. *Show how a dinosaur* options: blows leaves, opens a can, mows the lawn, removes snow, babysits, pushes a grocery cart, digs a garden, or eats food from a picnic basket. After acting out the pupil eliminates that option, so it does not repeat again. Each pupil has a chance to act out twice.



Figure 14. Wordwall – Random Wheel



The objectives of this activity are:

- to encourage creativity
- to understand wheel's options, i.e. what they mean
- to develop a positive attitude towards English language through acting out
- to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom
- to promote the use of *Wordwall*
- to develop media literacy

### 19. A comic

The teacher shows a page from the picturebook on which a dinosaur is shopping for groceries with its owner. The problem is that the dinosaur is eating food from the grocery cart which is not allowed. Pupils' task is to create a short comic page and make up a conversation between the dinosaur and its owner during their shopping for groceries using *StoryboardThat* application on their tablets. It is an online storyboard creator used for creating a story and visual communication. Characters that pupils create do not have to resemble the ones from the picturebook. The focus is on creating the conversation and pupils' imagination. This task demands patience, paying attention to details (e.g. background), and creating a meaningful story. Pupils have to make three frames. They work in pairs and later read their comics. Each pair agrees on who will take the role of the dinosaur, and who will take the role of its owner.

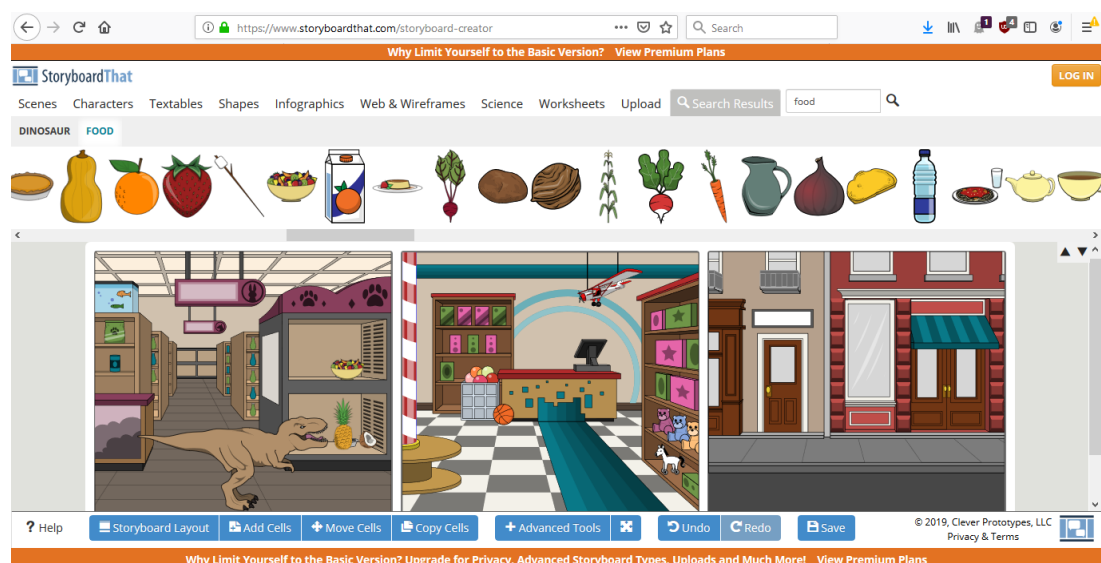


Figure 15. StoryboardThat application

The objectives of this activity are:

- to create meaningful conversation
- to pay attention to the background, e.g. food on the shelves
- to develop learners' design/aesthetic sense
- to promote pair work and role play
- to promote the use of tablets and *StoryboardThat* application
- to develop media literacy
- to develop a motivating and stimulating learning environment

## 20. What's in the picnic basket?

Pupils imagine they are going on a picnic with their dinosaur. But they do not have enough food in the fridge. Before grocery shopping pupils work in pairs and make a shopping list using *SoftList* application on their smartphones. This activity should not be too hard because pupils are familiar with words connected to food. They have learnt many of them during their four years of learning English, and with this application, they can learn even more new words.

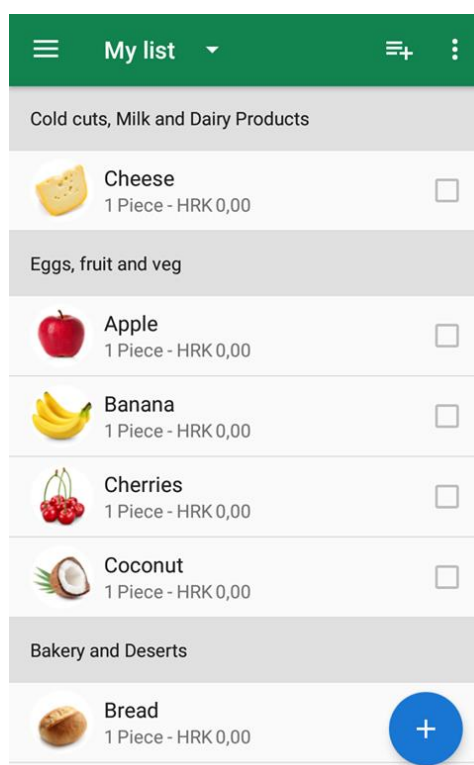


Figure 16. *SoftList* application

The objectives of this activity are:

- to revise food vocabulary
- to promote the use of smartphones and *SoftList* application
- to promote pair work
- to develop media literacy

## 21. Short story

The teacher shows pupils the page where a dinosaur rescues a cat. Pupils' task is to write in 3-5 sentences what happened to the cat and how the dinosaur rescued her. They work in pairs. When pupils finish the task, pairs share their stories so everyone can hear.

Where was the kitty? What was the kitty doing? How did the kitty end up there? How did the dinosaur rescue the kitty?

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*Figure 17. Short story handout*

The objectives of this activity are:

- to develop learners' writing skills
- to invent a meaningful short story
- to encourage imagination and creativity
- to practice grammar and spelling
- to promote pair work
- to develop learners' confidence while reading in English

## 22. Paper crafts

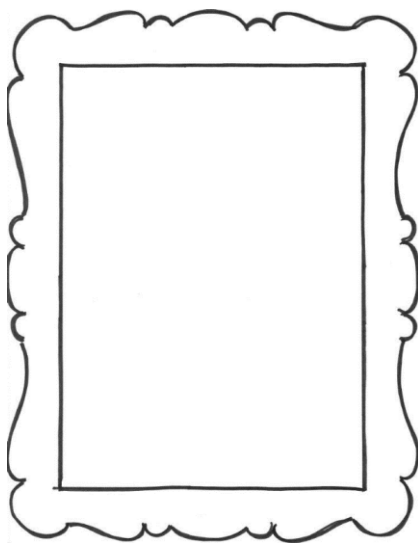
The teacher starts the activity by asking pupils if they remember as what can a dinosaur be used if it is small. One of the answers includes a bookmark. The teacher asks pupils if they know what is a bookmark and if they have one. Each pupil makes his or her dinosaur bookmark. Materials needed for this activity are: pencil, collage paper, glue and scissors. If they want, pupils can use additional materials such as flat wooden sticks, fabric, small slim ropes, tempera, marker or felt pens, etc. To inspire them, the teacher shows different techniques and types of bookmarks.

The objectives of this activity are:

- to promote working with hands
- to stimulate and encourage creativity
- to learn a new skill
- to value and respect other learners' work and your own work

## 23. Draw Your Pet

The teacher asks pupils if there is an unusual animal they would like to have as a pet. Their task is to draw the animal and later present it to the classroom. They have to write what kind of an animal is it, how would they name it and why would they like to have it as a pet.



This is \_\_\_\_\_ .

Its name is \_\_\_\_\_ .

I would like to have it as a pet because

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Figure 18. Draw Your Pet handout*

The objectives of this activity are:

- to express your opinion
- to encourage creativity
- to practice writing and spelling
- to create a motivating and positive classroom atmosphere

## **24. What if**

Along with the teacher, pupils make a classroom picturebook with the same title but a different animal of their choice. Each student makes one page for the picturebook. They have to draw the animal, e.g. a kangaroo carrying their school supplies in its pocket, and on a separate piece of paper write a sentence describing what is happening. In this way, children can use their imagination and express themselves artistically using watercolour. Sentences will be typed on a computer and pupils will glue them on their pages. The teacher will help pupils put together the pages and they have to decide on the order of the pages. They also have to think about the cover of the picturebook.

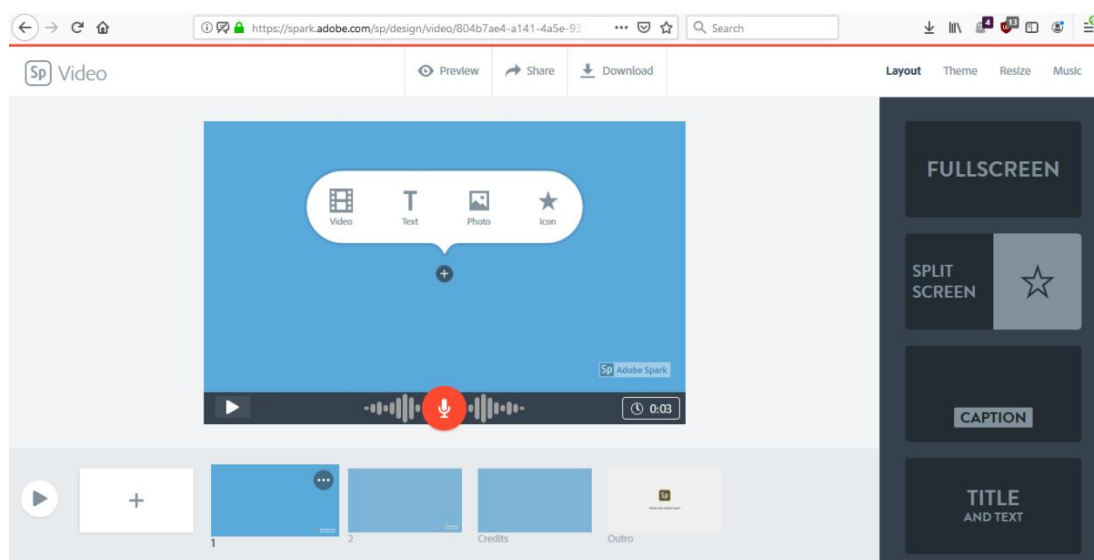
The objectives of this activity are:

- to develop and encourage creativity
- to stimulate and develop imagination
- to practice writing and spelling
- to value and respect the work of others and your own
- to develop a positive attitude towards English language through artwork
- to create a stimulating and positive atmosphere

## **25. Making a video**

When the picturebook is finished, the pupils' task is to make a short video about their picturebook in order for others to know what they have done and encourage them to read the picturebook. During the project the teacher can take photos of the pupils, with parental permission of course. Pupils make the video using *Adobe Spark* application. They can use either a computer or a tablet in school. That should not be a

big problem because the teacher will be there to help them, and the application is simple to use. They can upload pictures or short videos, record their voice, write something to attract young readers, etc. When pupils are satisfied with the video, they can download it and share with others. The most important thing is to mention title of the picturebook and why should others read it.



*Figure 19. Adobe Spark application for making videos*

The objectives of this activity are:

- to create a video in order to promote the picturebook
- to promote the use of tablets/computers and *Adobe Spark* application
- to develop media literacy
- to develop creativity
- to develop a sense of continuity
- to make mutual decisions
- to develop a positive attitude towards English language through making a video
- to develop editing skills
- to create a stimulating and positive learning environment

## CONCLUSION

The world is constantly changing, and so does society. Changes are indeed necessary, especially when it comes to the education system in Croatia. Today's children have different needs, interests, and their way of thinking differentiates from previous generations due to a vast exposure of media from an early age. Nowadays, it is harder than ever to maintain learners' attention and motivation. Teachers have to create a stimulating and positive environment for children to acquire a foreign language in the best way possible. Teachers are of the utmost importance in the education system; changes have to start with them.

Because of the rapid advances in technology and its easy access, teachers are more than ever in search for new materials and strategies to facilitate the process of learning a foreign language to make it more interesting and appealing. Unfortunately, teachers are not sufficiently familiar with all the possibilities technology provides in the context of its implementation in education. Furthermore, numerous positive outcomes arise if the media are used properly. To be able to work with the media, both teachers and learners have to develop media literacy. Teachers must keep up with the new media so they can plan and organize lessons that will develop children's media literacy.

It is not a surprise that picturebooks serve as an excellent tool for teaching young learners a foreign language. Wolfenbarger and Sipe (2007) say "satisfying picturebooks create a playing field where the reader explores and experiments with relationships between words and the pictures" (p. 274). Instead of just reading picturebooks to children, teachers can create projects based on picturebooks. Through projects and interactive activities, children are able to develop new knowledge and skills. It's important to strive for progress, not perfection whether talking about young or older learners. Although it may seem that 45 minutes is not enough to make any change, many would be surprised. However, it all depends on the individual teacher.

To sum up, the constant education of teachers regarding the development of media literacy is of great importance in the education system. The education system is in need of teachers who will not avoid using media, but tend to use all of their possibilities, of course, in appropriate way and amount. Using picturebooks and running projects are just two of many ways to make learning fun. But learning is not

only a cognitive experience; education goes way beyond. To quote Aristotle:  
“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”



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**Izjava o samostalnoj izradi rada**

Izjavljujem da sam ja, Petra Gutić, studentica integriranoga preddiplomskoga i diplomskoga sveučilišnoga studija primarnoga obrazovanja s engleskim jezikom Učiteljskog fakulteta u Zagrebu, samostalno provela aktivnost istraživanja literature i napisala diplomski rad na temu *Media in Teaching Literature to Young Learners*.

Potpis:

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