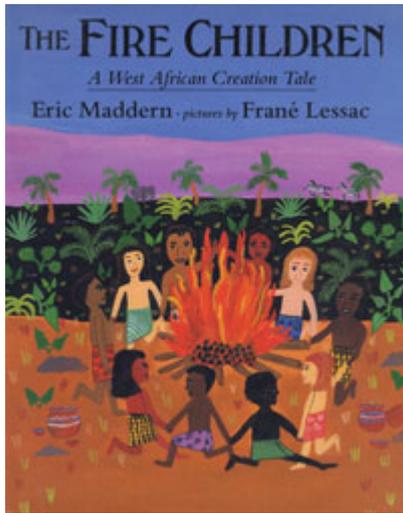


# Teachers' Notes

## The Fire Children



These notes to accompany *The Fire Children* provide suggestions for classroom activities based on or linked to the book's text and illustrations and highlight points for discussion. This is an enjoyable and beautifully illustrated book which can be used to support the requirement to read stories from other cultures.

### Teaching Objectives: Reading Comprehension

#### Text Level

To apply their word skills

To make sense of what they read

To predict story endings

To discuss story settings

To identify and describe characters

To prepare and re-tell stories individually

# Teachers' Notes

## Writing Composition

To use story settings from own readings

To write character profiles

## Sentence Level Work

To identify speech marks in reading, understand their purpose, use the terms correctly

## Teaching Aids

A globe; a large piece of paper with the words 'The Setting' written at the top; Photocopy on to card Nyame's head from the 8th spread and the Spirit People from the 9th spread. Fix each one on to a stick.

## Whole Class Shared Reading

### The Cover

Read the title and subtitle.

Show the globe and point out West Africa

Say that a folk tale is a story that people know off by heart - before writing was invented, people passed on stories like this one by just telling them to their friends and families.

Tell them that Eric Maddern wrote the story down, and that Frané Lessac is the illustrator.

Ask why Eric Maddern has written this folk tale down and what the title might mean.

# Teachers' Notes

## Endpapers

Open this out, reminding the children that this folk tale is set in West Africa.

Ask them to describe the setting - write their descriptions on the chart as you work your way through the book.

## Title Page

Ask what where this scene is set. Is it inside or outside the cave?

## First Double Page Spread

Give the pupils time to enjoy the wonderful illustration.

Read the text slowly, giving pupils time to digest the information

Ask if they have already noticed Nyame looking down at Earth (Title Page)

## Spread 2

Give pupils time to look at Nyame's face, and to notice the two spirit people looking out through his mouth.

Read the text and ask them to predict what will happen to the spirit people as he sneezes.

## Spread 3

Cover up the words 'down, down, down' on separate pieces of paper, and ask the class to work out the words from the grammar of the sentence. Ask if they think the layout of the words is appropriate.

# Teachers' Notes

## Spread 4

Draw attention to the use of adjectives to help the description of the setting - tall, hanging, dark, splashing, brilliant, falling.

Write these words down, and when you start the next session show them again and ask if they can remember what these words were describing.

## Spread 5

Read the text without saying which character is which.

Challenge the pupils to work it out for themselves through the use of the pronouns 'she' and 'he'.

Ask them the correct name for the punctuation marks placed around the spoken words.

## Spread 6

Read the text, and ask the pupils to think of another story where a lady makes an edible boy!

Ask if they have made anything in clay themselves, and had it fired.

Ask them to predict what will happen to these 'clay' children

## Spread 7

Cover up the whole text apart from the first two sentences. Read these in a dramatic voice and get the pupils to work out what the Spirit People are doing just before Nyame arrives.

In pairs, get them to discuss this, preferably a boy + girl pairing.

Choose several pairs to give an answer, then read the text to check.

Ask why the spirit people were so frightened by Nyame.

# Teachers' Notes

## Spread 8

Cover up the replies of the Spirit People and see if the class can work out the answers. Write the answers down, putting in the speech marks and talking about their use as you do this.

## Spread 9

Read the text, and then ask the pupils to role-play possible conversations between the two characters after Nyame has gone.

Now ask the pupils to predict the next part of the story.

## Spreads 10-12

Read these pages, making links between the last double page spread and the globe.

Explain that this folk tale is a way of explaining why the world is full of people of different colours.

Writing Composition (Modelled, Shared and Independent) followed by Plenary Session

Ask pupils in pairs to write the story as a play, giving different groups different sections of the book.

The whole class can then perform the play to each other, using the stick puppets.

Give a group small copies of the book, and ask them to prepare a re-telling. To help them with this, ask them to write down the order of events in a numbered list.

Write on the whiteboard the first sentence from the 4th spread beginning 'They picked themselves up and...' Show pupils how to substitute words to create a new sentence based on the original one, for example, show the pupils a print of an oasis desert scene - 'They picked themselves up and looked around at the tall palm trees and the spiky plants, the blue pool and trickling water, the strolling camels.'

Now hand out some coloured photographs or prints of places, e.g. Antarctica, mountains, beaches, etc

# Teachers' Notes

In pairs, ask the pupils to study their photograph/print really carefully and come up with a sentence written in the same way. They must imagine that each pair has just landed in this place, as the Spirit Children landed on Earth.

Ask pupils to prepare a description of each of the three characters on separate cards.

At Plenary, pupils must guess which character the pupil is describing.

At Plenary Session, make sure that pupils describe their task, followed by an example of what they actually did. Ask the other pupils to comment in some way e.g. I liked the way you... Was this an easy task? What was difficult?

It would be useful if the children, who are going to give a presentation at the plenary, have time to practise this with a teaching assistant.